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To cite this article: Kathleen Holtz Deal DSW, LCSW (2002) Modifying Field Instructors' Supervisory Approach Using Stage Models of Student Development, *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 22:3-4, 121-137, DOI: [10.1300/J067v22n03_09](https://doi.org/10.1300/J067v22n03_09)

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J067v22n03_09



Published online: 08 Sep 2008.



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Modifying Field Instructors' Supervisory Approach Using Stage Models of Student Development

Kathleen Holtz Deal

ABSTRACT. There is a growing awareness of field instructors' need for training in their important role as educators (Abramson & Fortune, 1990; Raschick, Maypole, & Day, 1998; Raskin, 1994). Research suggests that due to workload demands field instructors tend to be expedient and practical in supervision (Rogers & McDonald, 1995), suggesting the importance of field instructor training that is relevant, accessible, and easy to implement. This article provides information about how and when MSW students typically learn certain skills coupled with a supervisory framework to help field instructors vary the structure, support, and supervisory focus of their supervision depending on the developmental level of their students. The framework is based on a synthesis of developmental stage models of students in social work (Holman & Freed, 1987; Saari, 1989) counseling, and psychology (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986; Ralph, 1980; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). Implications for field instructor training are discussed. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <getinfo@haworthpressinc.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2002 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

KEYWORDS. Field instruction, field instructor, student development, stage models, supervisory model

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Journal of Teaching in Social Work, Vol. 22(3/4) 2002
<http://www.haworthpressinc.com/store/product.asp?sku=J067>

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The important role field instructors play in social work education is widely acknowledged. This recognition, however, is coupled with a growing awareness of field instructors' need for assistance in their role as educators (Abramson & Fortune, 1990; Raschick, Maypole, & Day, 1998). Experts in field instruction strongly concur that field instructors lack adequate knowledge of learning theories, receive inadequate preparation for the field instructor role, and insufficient advanced education beyond orientation (Raskin, 1994).

Schools of social work routinely offer an orientation for new field instructors which usually includes how to develop a learning contract, teach specific skills, and evaluate student performance; information about the school's curriculum; and how to make the transition from social work practitioner to educator (Lacerte & Ray, 1991). Abramson and Fortune (1990) conducted an empirical study of a 10-session seminar for new field instructors that included information about learning processes, the use of process recordings, and standards for evaluation. They found that compared to untrained field instructors, those trained were more likely to teach conceptually and to use process recordings to provide feedback on students' work with clients. This same study also found, however, that even trained field instructors did not often use diverse teaching methods nor did they provide feedback that was sufficiently specific. Another study (Rogers & McDonald, 1992) taught critical thinking skills to field instructors to help them think in critically reflective terms about their supervision as well as to model reflective practice for their students. Field instructors completing this 10-week course scored higher on a measure of critical thinking than a control group but the study included no measure of the field instructor's actual supervisory behaviors.

One type of education model for field instructors is geared to enhancing a particular knowledge or skill so that trained instructors in turn can promote student growth in the targeted area. Models of this type have been developed to teach field instructors single subject research designs (Doueck & Kasper, 1990) and group work practice (Cohen & Garrett, 1995). Another approach is to educate field instructors about learning theory, principally how to identify their own and their students' learning styles, with the goal of improving the quality of field teaching (Raschick, Maypole, & Day, 1998).

Other models are more comprehensive, providing field instructors with a supervisory structure. Caspi and Reid's (1998) model structures the process, but not the content, of supervision by focusing on concrete goals, objectives and tasks to be negotiated between field instructor and

student. Tourse, McInnis-Dittrich, and Platt (1999) offer a comprehensive framework to enhance field instructors' understanding of both which skills students learn and how they learn them. Their learning model illustrates the lateral sequencing of students' development of 11 skills from the simple to the complex and how this skill development interacts with students' vertical learning progression from acquiring knowledge to applying knowledge to actual cases to evaluating their work. This learning model and competency framework offers field instructors a valuable tool to understand the complexity of student skill development, make an assessment of their students' current skill levels, and determine where in the model's vertical progression student learning may be stalled. Although suggesting broad guidelines for applying this information to supervision, it is principally a model of student learning, not a supervision model.

Field instructors, however, could benefit from having specific, easily accessible guidelines to help them connect information about what and how students learn with how to use such knowledge to conduct supervision. In part such guidelines are needed because, due to workload demands, field instructors have been found to be expedient and practical in focus and methodology (Rogers & McDonald, 1995). Field instructors also tend to be concrete and action-oriented (Raschick, Maypole, & Day, 1998). Such research findings about how field instructors actually conduct supervision indicate the importance of providing them with information that is not only relevant but also accessible and easy to implement.

Stage models for students in the helping professions offer one rich source of information on both the typical sequence in which students develop direct practice skills and the corresponding supervisory approaches recommended for each stage of development. Numerous supervisory models have been developed, tested, and refined by the psychology and counseling professions principally over the past two decades. (See Watkins, 1995, for a succinct summary of these models.) While social work has made limited attempts to develop models of normative student development (Holman & Freed, 1987; Saari, 1989), these models have not effectively made their way into the mainstream social work supervisory literature.

The purpose of this article is to provide a supervisory framework, based on the normative stages of MSW student development, that provides field instructors with specific guidelines on how to vary the structure, support, and supervisory focus of their supervision depending on the developmental level of their students. This framework is based on a synthesis of developmental stage models of students in social work (Holman &

Freed, 1987; Saari, 1989), as well as counseling and psychology (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986; Ralph, 1980; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). Implications for field instructor training are discussed.

SUPPORT FOR THE VALIDITY AND UTILITY OF STAGE MODELS

Social Work Models

The two social work models of MSW student development located were developed over 10 years ago (Holman & Freed, 1987; Saari, 1989). In Holman and Freed's study of the validity of their seven-stage model, they found that it was able to distinguish between first and second year MSW students. By the completion of their first-year field placement, field instructors of these MSW students rated them as being in Holman and Freed's Stage III, Experimenting. This stage is marked by students' shift in focus from self to client, tentative links between understanding and doing, and clinical skill lagging behind cognitive understanding. By the completion of students' second-year field placement, however, field instructors of these students rated them in Holman and Freed's Stage IV, Consolidating, marked by greater self confidence, a limited but more effective repertoire of interventions, and more consistency in performance based on a better-integrated intellectual framework.

Saari's (1989) five-stage model, based partially on Reynolds (1942), was tested in a longitudinal study by Platt (1993) who found considerable support for Saari's hypothesized developmental changes. At entry into the MSW program students conceptualized their clients in global terms and their interventions tended to emphasize advice, reassurance, and providing concrete services. By the end of their first-year field placement students were in Stage II of Saari's (1989) model in their use of interventions in a ritualistic way, their awareness of patterns, and their increased ability to see their clients as participants in problem-solving. By completion of their second-year field placement students were in Saari's Stage III marked by an understanding of the therapeutic process and more differentiated conceptions of their clients.

In an exploratory study of developmental changes occurring from beginning to completion of second-year clinical MSW students' field placements, Deal (2000) found support for three changes predicted by the stage models. As predicted by Ralph's (1980) model, students demonstrated an increased ability to recognize and address the interpersonal

processes between themselves and their clients. As Saari's (1989) model predicted, students described a greater differentiation of their personal and professional selves. A temporary regressive period occurred as suggested by Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987). A fourth developmental theme, an increase in students' receptive capacity, i.e., an ability to experience and attend to their clients without intruding or imposing their own thoughts or ideas, also emerged.

Psychology/Counseling Psychology

Two thorough reviews of research on developmental stage models for psychology and counseling psychology students (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Crethar, 1994; Watkins, 1995) both conclude that existing research supports the validity of such models, that is, supervisors and supervisees see supervisee learning in developmental terms. Self and other awareness, autonomy, and the willingness to consider the effect of the trainee's own personal issues on the therapeutic process are areas that were found to increase with experience (Watkins, 1995). Compared to the paucity of social work models of student development, it is noteworthy that in examining the psychology literature from 1986 to 1994, Watkins (1995) found six new developmental models to add to the 16 models previously identified by Worthington (1987).

Reviews (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Crethar, 1994; Watkins, 1995) of the psychology and counseling trainee research also concluded that supervisors tend to alter their supervisory behaviors as students develop. A pronounced supervisory change noted is in the direction of lessening structure and guidance as supervisees gain experience. One exception is that when faced with a crisis situation, i.e., a suicidal client, both beginning and advanced students prefer more structured supervision (Tracey, Ellickson, & Sherry, 1989).

Limitations of Stage Models

Although the validity and utility of stage models of student development have been generally supported, these models have several limitations. Stage models emphasize progression that is linear, sequential, and at least somewhat predictable. This view of development doesn't address the failure of some students to progress as expected or the poor fit between some students and the proposed developmental norms (Bernard & Goodyear, 1992). Stage models fail to include potentially significant variables, for example, the effects of students' personality

(Holloway, 1987) or students' personal or psychological problems (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 1997) on development. Research supporting developmental stage models consists largely of studies utilizing cross-sectional designs that fail to provide information on patterns of change for individual students (Holloway, 1987; Watkins, 1995).

Developmental stage models are not the only possible explanation for how changes in students occur over time. Holloway (1987), in a thoughtful critique of developmental models of supervision, offers several alternative explanations of student changes during professional training. Her proposed alternatives include understanding student development using learning and instructional theories, e.g., Kolb's learning cycle, or understanding students' move from anxious vulnerability to independence as a function of the nature of the supervisory relationship.

SYNTHESIS OF STAGE MODELS OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Overview

Five developmental stage models of student development were analyzed and synthesized, two from social work (Holman & Freed, 1987; Saari, 1989) and three from related professions (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986; Ralph, 1980; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). From this process, a behavioral, attitudinal, affective, and cognitive description of first and second year MSW student characteristics was developed. Similarly, the models' recommended supervisory approaches corresponding to the student's developmental stage were also analyzed and synthesized, providing guidelines to field instructors on how to modify their supervision depending on the developmental stage of their social work students. Both student characteristics and recommended supervisory approaches are summarized in Figure 1.

Certain cautions need to be noted, however. A given student may be ahead or behind what is typical according to the developmental stages depicted in this framework, for example, an second-year MSW student may consistently demonstrate characteristics closer to those of a first-year student or vice versa. In addition student development is not necessarily uniform across all areas but may be uneven depending on the situation. "For example, a supervisee may function with a relatively high degree of confidence and autonomy when conducting individual

FIGURE 1. Student Characteristics and Field Instructor Recommendations by Developmental Stage

Student Characteristics

Beginning First-Year MSW Student

1. Anxious

2. Dependent; invests supervisor with omnipotence

3. Focuses on self, i.e., own feelings of anxiety and incompetence

Recommended Field Instructor Approach

- Help student manage anxiety:
Empathize with student vulnerabilities
Support and encourage student efforts
Help student anticipate potentially confusing experiences
- Establish alliance with student re: learning goals, content, and process
- Provide structure
- Give concrete advice and suggestions
- Provide rationale for why the student's behaviors worked or didn't work
- Give positive feedback before constructive criticism
- Convey acceptance to counteract student's fears of discovery of incompetence
- Don't focus on relationship dynamics due to student anxiety and limited awareness of self and other

Student Characteristics

4. Performs concrete, action-oriented interventions consistent with concrete, undifferentiated thinking re: clients, situations, and theoretical concepts

Recommended Field Instructor Approach

- Assign simple cases that student can handle; avoid assigning complex or hopeless cases

- Don't assume that student use of terminology reflects understanding

By End of Student's First Year

1. Understanding greater than skills

2. Enjoys theoretical discussions

3. Beginning push for more autonomy; fluctuates between over- and underestimating own abilities

- Anticipate that behavioral consistency lags behind cognitive understanding
- Help student make connections between intellectual understanding and application
- Clarify and expand student's understanding of theoretical concepts
- Make connections between concepts and client characteristics and behaviors
- Gradually assign more complex cases
- Recognize student's decreasing dependency
- Limit and focus criticism
- Respond without harshness to student mistakes

FIGURE 1 (continued)

Student Characteristics

4. Increased understanding that simple behaviors, words, etc., can have complex meanings may lead to wariness re: intrusion

Recommended Field Instructor Approach

- Recognize student's fear of field instructor "intrusion"
- Recognize student's fear of "intruding" on client
- Keep supervision client and content focused

Second-Year MSW Student

1. Decrease in concrete thinking; increase in ability to think in more complex, abstract, and symbolic terms

- Provide more abstract and complex observations re: client intra- and interpersonal dynamics
- Help student identify and utilize underlying themes present in client interviews

2. Greater awareness of complexity in theoretical concepts and client's life; attempts to integrate learning can lead to uneven performance and decrease in self confidence

- Anticipate possible decrease in self confidence
- Anticipate possible temporary skill regression and reassure student about its meaning if it occurs

3. Increased interest in own and client's inner life; client conceptualizations reflect client's viewpoint; increased ability to empathize

- Supervisory focus shifts to include:
 - Student's own feelings, reactions
 - Countertransference issues
 - Relational processes
- Help student expand assessment of the client beyond client's perspective

Student Characteristics

4. Autonomy/dependency crisis; anger and/or disappointment with supervisor analogous to "professional adolescence"

Recommended Field Instructor Approach

- Balance allowance of greater autonomy and experimentation with continued support and availability
- Anticipate student disappointment with field instructor
- Don't discourage student autonomy due to own need to be in charge
- Jointly problem-solve difficulties in student-field instructor relationship

Student Characteristics

5. Need to display competence
6. Increase in ability to understand and apply learning re: the client-worker relationship as an interactive interpersonal process

Recommended Field Instructor Approach

- Recognize and value student competencies
- Don't "show off" own superior judgment at student's expense
- Support student skill in understanding and utilizing awareness of interpersonal dynamics between student and client
- Help student identify appropriate opportunities and ways to utilize process-oriented interventions with clients
- Model such skills through open discussion of any difficulties/differences in the student-field instructor relationship

psychotherapy with a depressed client but, due to little experience and training, may lack this confidence and autonomy when working with childhood sexual abuse" (Stoltenberg, McNeill & Delworth, 1998, p. 15). It is necessary, therefore, to make a careful assessment of each student's developmental level and not base a supervisory approach solely on the student's year of training.

Limitations

Problems are inherent in the synthesis of five complex models. The models chosen have differing numbers of stages, ranging from four for Stoltenberg, McNeill, and Delworth (1998) to seven for Holman and Freed (1987), complicating comparisons of stages across models. The models are most similar in describing the beginning stages of student development; greater variability exists in what developmental aspects they emphasize or include in their middle stages. Some unique aspects have been underemphasized, such as Friedman and Kaslow's (1986) use of the separation-individuation process to explain professional identity development. However, as Watkins (1995) concludes in arguing for the consolidation of supervisee development models, "the depiction of therapist/supervisee development across stages appears far more similar than dissimilar" (p. 650).

Another caution arises from the synthesizing of social work models with those from counseling and psychology. The process of analyzing and synthesizing the two social work models (Holman & Freed, 1987; Saari, 1989) with the models from counseling and psychology (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986; Ralph, 1980; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998) was possible because the similarities were so great. However,

some features were unique to social work, such as Saari's (1989) inclusion of a student's increasingly complex understanding of the meaning and value of the provision of concrete services to clients. Since little developmental supervision research has been conducted on professions other than counseling and psychology, it is unclear whether for students in related helping professions such as social work "the developmental process is different for them in some way, thereby calling for a modified model and modified supervisory behaviors as well" (Watkins, 1995, p. 672). More research is needed to determine similarities and differences between the skill development in social work compared to other helping professions. To address these concerns and increase relevance for social work educators, this framework emphasizes the areas of agreement among the five models.

Finally, this framework focuses on supervisory approaches aimed at enhancing student learning of direct practice skills but omits other important areas of supervision. For example, field instructors perform a valuable role in helping students develop and integrate social work values and ethics but these areas, highly complex in themselves, are beyond the scope of this model and not explicitly addressed.

First-Year MSW Students

In discussing the characteristics of the student starting clinical education, most theorists describe feelings of high anxiety, self-consciousness, and a lack of self-confidence contributing to self-preoccupation and some difficulty focusing on the client. Cognitively, the beginning student engages in concrete, globalized, simplistic, and undifferentiated thinking about the client and the theoretical concepts presented in the education process. In their behavior with clients, beginning students tend to evidence little planning (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986) and/or use concrete, action-oriented interventions (Holman & Freed, 1987; Saari, 1989).

When supervising social work students at the beginning of their MSW program, the models recommend that field instructors help students manage their anxiety through conveying support and encouragement. Friedman and Kaslow (1986) add that the supervisor needs to provide "accurate empathy" (p. 34) around the student's specific vulnerable feelings since, for example, some students defend against dependency needs through rejecting help or disguise their work out of a fear of having their incompetence discovered.

These models agree on the importance of establishing a learning alliance that focuses on the student's learning goals. Initially students should be assigned simpler cases that fall within the range of their conceptual understanding and behavioral abilities. As beginning students are not only self-conscious but lack self-awareness (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998), the content of supervision should focus on specific suggestions and advice, not on the supervisor-student relationship or the student's personality. As a student at this stage is quite limited in understanding how practice works or which interventions are appropriate, supervisors frequently need to provide structure and direction, e.g., "You need to set limits with this child to help him stop hitting. This will help him feel safer." Friedman and Kaslow (1986) suggest that supervisors focus on helping students anticipate and prepare for confusing experiences as well as how to organize their often chaotic experiences and feelings.

Saari (1989) stresses the role supervisors play in student's cognitive development. In order to help students gradually develop more complex conceptual understanding, she recommends that supervisors convey not only what they know but "what observations underlie their knowledge" (Saari, 1989, p. 39). To illustrate, pointing out to a student at this stage why the student's interventions worked ("When you switched from asking closed questions to follow-up questions on information the client already gave you, you helped the client feel listened to.") prompts the student to make a connection between an intervention and its rationale. Simply praising or supporting the student ("Good work in asking fewer closed questions this time.") does not.

By the conclusion of their first field placement, the stage models suggest that students are beginning to feel less dependent on their field instructors and starting to push for more autonomy. Cognitively, students are increasing their conceptual understanding and enjoy theoretical discussions. However, they have a very limited intellectual grasp of theoretical concepts (Saari, 1989) and are likely to underestimate the complexity of key concepts and/or choose an approach because they feel they can understand it, e.g., choose a client-centered rather than a psychodynamic approach (Ralph, 1980). Behaviorally students' skills lag behind their intellectual understanding; consequently, they are unable to control and consistently apply their skills (Holman & Freed, 1987). Students are beginning to understand that simple words or behaviors can have complex meanings, resulting in a hesitation to intrude on the client or be intruded upon by the supervisor (Saari, 1989).

Field instructors need to change their approach to meet the needs of their developing students. They need to actively recognize students' lessening feelings of dependency by being less directive, thereby understanding students' ability to disagree as movement toward independence. Supervisors can err by either demanding premature movement or not allowing increased student autonomy (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986). The supervisor should set limits carefully, keeping criticism focused and limited while the student makes mistakes necessary for learning (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986). Saari (1989) recommends group supervision or discussions at this stage due to students' interest in comparing experiences and observations with peers.

Since students at this stage are less anxious and therefore less self-focused, they can benefit from supervision that is client-focused (Saari, 1989). A student at this stage might benefit from the field instructor's initiating a discussion of how their jumping in too quickly affected the interview: "When you broke the silence so quickly, the client had less opportunity to direct the course of the interview. What meaning did this appear to have for this particular client?" This supervisory response stands in contrast to one recommended for a more advanced student who is ready to reflect on their own behaviors and motivations: "Have you noticed that you have difficulty tolerating silences with this client. Why do you think that is?"

It helps for field instructors supervising students at this stage to remember that such students' understanding is greater than their ability to perform consistently. To build on students' increased theoretical interest and understanding, field instructors can actively help students make connections between theory and its application. Students can be helped to label such concepts as triangulation, enmeshment, boundaries, and subsystems as they identify them when working with a family system. Concurrently, more difficult cases can be gradually assigned consistent with students' developing ability to understand situations with a higher level of complexity.

Second-Year MSW Students

As MSW students progress through their second year clinical field placement, they demonstrate an increasing desire for greater autonomy. Stoltenberg, McNeill, and Delworth (1998) describe a dependency-autonomy crisis for students at this stage in which students' increasing desire for autonomy comes into conflict with their realization that client problems and the helping process itself are more complex than they

imagined, threatening their self confidence. Students at this stage tend to want knowledgeable supervisors rather than supportive ones (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986); however, their need to display their newly developing sense of competence can make supervisory criticism feel threatening (Holman & Freed, 1987). Students may express anger and disappointment with their supervisor consistent with their increasing ability to tolerate a closer supervisory relationship (Saari, 1989).

Cognitive growth at this stage occurs in a lessening of students' concrete thinking and an increased ability to think about clients and situations in more complex, integrated ways. Students become more focused on the inner lives of their clients (Saari, 1989) and themselves (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986). This interest in clients may take the form of a student's adopting the client's viewpoint and overlooking other sources of information about the client that may provide a fuller clinical picture (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998).

An important cognitive shift that occurs during this stage is students' ability to grasp the concept of metacommunication, moving their views from client content or behavior to what happens within the process of student-client interactions (Ralph, 1980). Behaviorally, students are striving to make their interventions with clients fit consistently with their increasing intellectual understanding but their performance can still be uneven, sometimes seemingly regressed, as students strive toward integrating knowledge with practice.

Stage models encourage field instructors of second year clinical MSW students to lessen control as students become more confident, experimental, and eager to take charge. Allowing greater autonomy, however, needs to be carefully balanced with support and guidance, particularly in situations where students lack experience (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). Field instructors should anticipate that second-year students may at times be disappointed in them (Saari, 1989) or devalue them (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986) as part of normal development toward greater autonomy. A challenge for field instructors of students at this stage is to tolerate students' fluctuations, resistance, and learning mistakes while staying available, connected and non-defensive. This period of professional adolescence (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998) requires that field instructors have the sensitive balance of monitoring and letting go needed by parents of adolescents.

Despite students' push for greater autonomy, continued monitoring of students' actual work, not just what students report they did, remains vital (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). Some field instructors

of students at this stage stop using process recordings or similar means and rely on students' verbal accounts in monitoring students' work. Such a practice is problematic. Rogers and McDonald (1995) found that field instructors relying solely on student self-description tend to see students as competent and prepared for practice while reliance on direct observation of a student's work leads to field instructors concluding that the student is less prepared. These authors conclude that such competency-based supervisory methods as direct observation and co-counseling help field instructors evaluate students more realistically so they can supervise more effectively. A related problem in relying solely on student's verbal accounts of their work is that this practice allows students to avoid important clinical issues and fails to capitalize on stage-appropriate opportunities to help students develop more complex ways to think about their clients and the intervention process.

In order to enhance growth, trainees must be challenged to articulate their rationale for responding to various client concerns, and the cases for which supervisees may resist input, feel uncertain about, or become angry and impatient with may be the most important foci of the supervision session. . . . Conceptual interventions in which trainees are required to articulate alternative intervention plans or varying conceptualizations of the same client case by supervisors help to challenge and expand new information by trainees. (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 1997, p. 195)

Supervision focus should shift for students at this stage. Their increased awareness of self and other is linked to a strong interest in their inner lives and those of their clients, so supervision can now effectively include a student-focus. Countertransference and transference reactions can be effectively discussed (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). Students' ability to understand their work in relational or process terms, not just in client-focused terms, means that field instructors can make discussions of the interactional process between students and their clients an important focus of supervision (Ralph, 1980). Guiding students in the use of process-oriented interventions with clients can provide stage-appropriate learning, e.g., "When the client keeps telling you that no one cares what happens to him, what do you think he might be saying about your relationship with him? How might you discuss this with him?" Field instructors are also encouraged to discuss troublesome aspects of the supervisor-student relationship

with students as a model of how to process relationship issues with clients (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998).

Due to students' increasing ability to think in complex and symbolic terms at this stage, field instructors can effectively help students identify and utilize the underlying themes evident in client material. Field instructors can raise students' awareness of thematic material by asking questions about content ("What seems to be the underlying message the client is trying to convey in different ways during this interview?") and process ("Did you notice how you reacted in the interview whenever the client alluded to any thoughts about you?"). In addition the field instructor can help the student think with greater complexity by imagining alternative responses to client communications, e.g., "This is an important decision point in the interview. Let's think through what might have happened at this point if you'd focused on the client's fear rather than her child's behavior."

IMPLICATIONS FOR FIELD INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

This framework offers concrete, practical guidelines for field instructors supervising MSW students. It contains information about normative student behaviors and attitudes across the education process and offers field instructors suggestions on how to modify their supervisory approach depending on the student's stage of development. This framework can be incorporated into field instructor training programs offered by schools of social work. The guidelines can also be used by field liaisons as they offer consultation to field instructors around reasonable student expectations and alternative ways to structure supervision.

Understanding the particular characteristics and needs of students at different learning stages can benefit both field instructors and students. Although empirical research on the effects of educating field instructors in social work stage models is sparse, one study (Reardon, 1988) examined the outcome of training field instructors in Saari's (1989) developmental model. Reardon found that field instructors trained in this model were better able to assess students' behaviors within a developmental framework, focus on meeting student learning needs rather than try to indirectly treat the student's client, and generate learning goals and strategies appropriate to the student's current developmental needs.

The framework offered here represents an initial, incomplete effort to use developmental stage models to guide field instructors in student supervision. As a synthesized framework, it attempts to combine con-

ceptualizations from social work theorists with those from counseling and counseling psychology to capture the common elements in student development across these helping professions.

Developmental stage models themselves offer a promising way to think about students' learning processes as being identifiable and sequential as students progress toward greater competency. However, further research to determine the validity of these models for social work students needs to be conducted. Research is also needed on whether learning about students' developmental stage models and their corresponding recommendations for modifying the supervisory environment can assist field instructors in providing supervision more finely targeted to student needs.

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