Social Work Education Enhancement Program (SWEEP)

Social Work Field Practicum in Vietnam: Challenges and Recommendations for a Better Model

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Research Objectives

- Describe current field models in Vietnam
- Challenges in current field models
- Solutions and directions for social work field education in Vietnam
Methodology

- Qualitative

- Data collection:
  - Focus group
  - In-depth interview

- Sample:
  - 6 cities and provinces (Hà Nội, Vinh, Huế, Hồ Chí Minh, Đà Lạt, Đồng Tháp)
  - 24 focus groups with social work students, alumni, lecturers and field supervisors
  - 3 interviews with government staff who are responsible for social work sector
Collaboration Method

- SJSU professor got the IRB approval from SJSU

- 8 lecturers were divided into 4 groups to do Literature review and develop focus group and interview questions.

- 8 lecturers collected data at their universities and their provinces/cities.
Collaboration method

- Webex meetings to share results and difficulties during implementation
- Online training on related research skills: develop research questions, literature review, data analysis
- Using google site to share documents
FINDINGS
## Similarities of Current Field Programs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Field model</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
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| 1) Field visit                                  | 12-18 credits  | social service agencies; social protection centers; community in and outside province                                                   | observe, practice with a client, specific group; survey a community and develop community plan | - Students write a field report, diary.  
- Field supervisors assess students by looking at students’ work at the field agency  
- Lecturers assess students’ participation process and evaluate based on their reports |
| 2) Social work with individuals and groups practice |                |                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |                                                                                                       |
| 3) Community development practice               |                |                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |                                                                                                       |
Differences of Current Field Programs

- One university has a different practicum: students go to the field and apply research skills to study a population or an issue, then propose solutions for this issue.

- One has a practicum to practice in social welfare, social policies, and social work administration.

- Students evaluation: some universities apply the principle: 60-40 or 70-30; some changed to field instructors do all the evaluation.

- Length and names of field practicum vary greatly.
Strengths & Limitations

- **Strengths:**
  - Diverse and quite comprehensive content, appropriate to the curriculum
  - Some field instructors are enthusiastic
  - Clear plan
  - Diverse field placements
Limitations:

- Lack of qualified field instructors. Some of them haven’t taken any training in SW/haven’t got skills in supervision
- Conflict between students and field instructors
- Different expectations between field liaisons and field instructors
- Inadequate methods to evaluate students

- Weak collaboration mechanism
- Some universities lack official contracts with field agencies and mostly based on personal contacts of field liaisons
Recommendations

- Develop a competency based field education
- Equipping students with some soft skills before going to the field
- Increase time for field practicum
- Incorporate some of faculties’ research projects when taking the students to the field
- Better mechanism in matching students with the field agencies
- Provide allowance for field instructors
- Provide trainings for field supervisors
Ideal Model for Field Practicum

- General oversight
- Coordinate with Ministries to find field agencies

- Must have SW knowledge & skills
- Understand the students’ needs and have mentoring and supervision skills

- Matching students with field agencies
- Work closely with field instructors in mentoring students.

Field Education Office
Field Liaison (Adjunct, Tenured Faculty or Staff)
Field Instructor
Task Supervisor

Administrative Oversight and Support (One-on-One within an agency; Related Profession)
Ideal Model for Field Practicum

- Emphasize the activeness of students: actively seeking a suitable field agency, actively asking for help in the agencies.

- Field evaluation is done by 3 sides: Field instructor, student (peer feedback), and field supervisor.

- Have a reflection meeting after the field practicum is completed to withdraw lessons learned, what else need to be improved, group members provide feedback and evaluate each other.

- Field practicum accounts for 45-50% total program time
QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION