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**Enhancing social group work opportunities in field work
education**

Cohen, Carol Susan, D.S.W.

City University of New York, 1993

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A

ENHANCING SOCIAL GROUP WORK OPPORTUNITIES IN
FIELD WORK EDUCATION

by

CAROL S. COHEN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Social Welfare in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Social Welfare, The City
University of New York

1993

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Social Welfare.

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Abstract

ENHANCING SOCIAL GROUP WORK OPPORTUNITIES IN
FIELD WORK EDUCATION

by

CAROL S. COHEN

Adviser: Professor Roselle Kurland

The overall concern of this project is group work education and practice in the social work profession. It focuses on the field education experience of graduate school of social work students, with the Hunter College School of Social Work as the primary study environment. The project linked the field practicum assignments of students and the skills of field instructors, with the other educative activities of the school and the field placement agency.

The centerpiece of this holistic evaluation project was a training intervention with beginning field instructors, focusing on the enhancement of their planning and field supervision of group work assignments. A full report of the successful training curriculum and evaluation is provided. Building on previous research, the project suggests methods for expanding the study of group work in field work education on a large-scale basis.

Literature reviews discuss the history of social group work practice and education, and distinctive aspects of social work with groups. The qualitative and quantitative studies reported in this document were found to support the development and evaluation of the training intervention and provide a description of the School's view of group work in field education. The project provides a useful training model and points to additional activities to address the critical loss of group work content in social work education on a national level.

Preface

Context

As an advocate for the empowering qualities of group deliberation and choice, it is not surprising that I view the dissertation experience as a decision making enterprise. In fact, this dissertation project has considerable areas of similarity with the social group work experience. For example, both social work group and this study are grounded in a sense of purpose based on the assessment of needs. In both study and group, structure and content are chosen to serve the purpose, and should be judged on how well they accomplish this function. Similarly, there must be constant awareness of the interchange with the environmental context (agency, school, and profession), as the larger system in which the group and project operate.

Finally, composition plays a critical role in both group and study. Practice principles suggest that decision makers consider the need for some commonality among members (such as a similar characteristic and/or dedication to the same purpose). Paradoxically, although some commonality is necessary, members must also contribute individual differences in order to create necessary diversity in the group. The constituent elements of this dissertation

project have similar qualities. Decisions are guided by the need for both relatedness and difference among the elements. Synergism is the transcendent phenomenon that weaves the elements together.

Group work theorists have adopted synergism and the identity of the group-as-a-whole, using study, imagination, and the creative use of metaphor. Similarly, this dissertation study's methodology and presentation is a human construction and should be considered as one system of choices among the many available. The notion of synergism is applicable to a successful study as well as a group, since both are composed of constituent elements that when taken as a whole, are more than the sum of its parts. As synergism is prized for its ability to generate understanding and action in the world of practice, the test of an organizing scheme is its ability to inform decisions and facilitate understanding.

In earlier stages of this project, the research component was described as classic experimental design, focusing on evaluating the degree of goal achievement of a training intervention. In such a scheme, the literature review would serve to ground the reader and establish a history of inquiry. Interviews with key personnel would provide ideas for planning and the actual process of

training would be reported in an appendix. Through a series of decisions, the conception of the project has evolved to a more comprehensive, and hopefully, more holistic approach. Consequently, this project is seen as an evaluation of an institution's work in the area of enhancing group work assignments for students. Of course, the training intervention plays a major role, but this change of perspective opens more doors to the inquiry. This approach is explained in depth in the "methodology" portion of this report, but it should be noted that all project stages, beginning with literature reviews are considered part of this evaluation process.

My choices in both the progress of the project and the documentation of the experience, represent efforts to maximize synergistic effects wherever I thought possible. However, I am mindful that many paths can lead one to the same destination. The utility of this particular approach remains to be established by the study's consumers.

Organization

The first chapter of this document includes the introduction, serving as an orientation and overview. In addition, the methodology of the project is elaborated in this first chapter, since it sets the stage for the rest of the report. Purposes and stages of the program evaluation

are outlined and the role of each constituent element is identified. Issues in program evaluation are explored, including the rationale for multiple lines of inquiry and methodology.

Reports of the study's findings begin with the second chapter, a review and discussion of literature in two areas. Portions addressing: (A) The History of Group Work Practice and Education, and (B) Distinctive Aspects of Social Work with Groups, provide the context for identifying needs and opportunities, as well as underlying issues and problems.

Chapter Three through Six comprise the further research activities and their findings. They are presented in primarily chronological order, and include: Chapter Three, Study of the Orientation and Acculturation of Field Placement Agencies; Chapter Four, Survey of Field Instructors and Student Assignments During the 1990 - 1991 Academic Year; Chapter Five A, Report of Training Intervention, January 1992 "Planning and Supervising Group Work Assignments"; Chapter Five B, Evaluation of Training by Field Instructor Participants; and Chapter Six, Survey of Beginning Field Instructors and Student Assignments During 1991 - 1992 Academic Year.

Finally, Chapter Seven includes: Conclusions and Recommendations for Enhancing Social Group Work Opportunities in Field work Education. The Appendix includes 19 items, including research and training instruments, followed by the extensive Bibliography.

Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to this project; I felt their support and heard their words again as I completed this report.

The members of my dissertation committee guided this study, and most important, welcomed me into their world. As chair, Roselle Kurland provided important tools, but always helped me find my own answers. With her, Elaine Marshack and Robert Salmon demonstrated their belief in my capacity and passion for this work, challenging me to fulfill our expectations. The Hunter College School of Social Work provided an extremely rich environment for this work.

Beyond those of my committee, the recalled voices I heard most often while writing this report were those of Emanuel Tropp and Ruth Middleman. Twenty years ago at the Graduate School of Social Work of Virginia Commonwealth University, Emanuel Tropp's ideas helped form my professional identity and commitment to social group work practice. I am continually struck by the relevance of his words today, as students, practitioners, and clients recognize the potential power of social work with groups.

Ruth Middleman's influence on my work was more recent, but no less profound. Following our fortuitous meeting at the early stages of this project, her exciting work enabled me to make the critical link between social work practice and education.

For 17 years, Catholic Charities, Diocese of Brooklyn provided me with a supportive and challenging home for my professional life. I am grateful that the agency administration foresaw the positive impact of my return to school, enriching and invigorating my work with clients and staff. In particular, Marianne Chierchio and Robert Siebel made it possible to balance demands, in an atmosphere of warmth and mutual respect.

As I complete this project, I return to those whose voices were in my heart even when I didn't have time to listen to their words. With understanding, my friends and family saved my place in their lives. My parents gave the unconditional love they have always provided. Finally, on a daily basis, my family provided the love and support needed to see this project to completion.

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CHAPTER ONE A:

Introduction

This project is concerned with the following contemporary trends related to social work education and practice:

1. Increase in interest in group assignments for social work students.
2. Decrease in group work education in graduate schools of social work.
3. Increase of work with groups by professionals from other disciplines.

As human service practitioners and administrators explore cost-effective and professionally sound ways to provide needed services to clients, they increasingly look to social work with groups. Group work services address multiple client needs, and have demonstrated effectiveness with a broad range of client populations and concerns. After a period of diminished utilization in practice and decreased emphasis in professional education, group work services are increasingly in demand, as are trained social workers who can provide them.

Social group work has been taught and practiced as a method of social work since the late 1800's. It is

characterized by work with groups that operate on the basis of "common goals, by common decision and common action" (Tropp, 1965, 12). Although classroom instruction in group work has declined in graduate education, students are encouraged, and often required, to have group assignments in the field. As mandated by Council of Social Work Education's accreditation standards, diverse practice opportunities are critical in the development of competence on the graduate level of social work education. To achieve this goal, field instructors must act as essential partners in this teaching process. However, field instructors' practice skills may be concentrated in one area, often contributing to their reticence in creating assignments in additional methods.

The Hunter College School of Social Work, the project's institutional setting and sponsor, does not mandate, but "strongly encourages" field instructors to develop opportunities for practice assignments in more than one method. However, the result of 20 years of declining group work curriculum content in most schools of social work, is a paucity of social work professionals able to plan and supervise group work practice.

Reasons for the decline of social group work training include: the failure of social group workers to reach their

own consensus about the nature of social group work; intra-professional social work conflicts among case workers, group workers, community organizers, and administrators; as well as fears about group work. Social workers often fear the public exposure of groups and the collective power of the members (Kurland, Getzel, & Salmon, 1986). Although social group workers cannot escape their authority roles (Kurland & Salmon, 1988), they are often perceived by others as relinquishing control to the members (Miller, 1985). Group work practice requires distinct skills; many social workers imagine their transition to group work as very difficult. With these fears and concerns, social worker ambivalence towards group formation is seen as normative in agency practice (Kurland & Salmon, 1989A).

Although formal group work training is decreasing, group practice is increasing. To a great extent, the renewed call for group work skill is driven by agencies who see groups as both effective and economical. At the same time, work with groups among other professionals, such as psychologists, is increasing. According to Birnbaum, Middleman, and Huber: "Group services are increasing daily as resources and funds for social and health services shrink". (1989, 1). A problem for the social work profession is that these groups are conducted with less

frequency by social group workers, and increasingly, by persons trained in other fields. Even more alarming, there appears to be an increase in groups facilitated by workers without any group leadership training.

Thus, the social workers' retreat from social group work practice has evolved concurrently with the expansion of other profession's group modalities. The problem often is compounded when social workers who do work with groups are tutored by supervisors and colleagues from other disciplines, further diluting social group work's distinctive character. In an attempt to provide exposure to groups, field instructors may assign students to observe or assist group facilitators, offering limited opportunities for actual student practice.

There are some promising contemporary developments in reversing the decline of social work with groups. A call for the resurgence of social group work is supported and encouraged by the two primary social work membership and monitoring bodies, the National Association of Social Workers, comprising approximately 133,000 members, and the Council on Social Work Education, responsible for accreditation of 97 graduate and 364 undergraduate schools of social work in the United States. Recognizing the dire situation, a recent president of the National Association of

Social Workers called for the restoration of group work, noting: "The genius of social group work lies in its interweaving of social responsibility, social action, democratic processes and acceptance of diversity with a methodology that assists individuals in and through groups." (Edwards, 1990). The Council on Social Work Education is currently developing a new curriculum statement, and is considering how social group work will be included and strengthened in classroom education and field practice.

Further, in direct response to the diminution of group work content in social work education and practice, the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups was founded in 1979. As a collection of educators and practitioners, it has held 14 conferences, published proceedings, encouraged group work at the national professional policy level, and in general terms, is seen as having "rescued and revived a drowning group work and amplified its voice." (Birnbaum, Middleman, & Huber, 1989, p.14).

These developments may contribute to a renewal of social work practice with groups. Social group workers are still around (albeit in smaller numbers) and able to offer their expertise. A finding of great potential is that interest in social group work appears to be infectious when

positively nurtured (Birnbaum et.al., 1989). On the other hand, this project emphasizes that "interest in group assignments" is necessary, but insufficient to provide meaningful group work training to social work students. It takes the position that field work is an ideal arena in which to develop familiarity and beginning competency in group work practice, but a productive school-field partnership depends on a strong congruence of knowledge and skills. The increase in interest in social work groups remains unfulfilled if field instructors can not train students in social group work.

Under the rubric of holistic evaluation, this project focuses on two questions regarding the school-field partnership in enhancing social group work education and practice:

1. What are the expectations and experience of graduate students, field instructors, and faculty regarding group work in field education?
2. What strategies are effective in enhancing social group work training in field education?

Subsequent chapters will present literature reviews and other research activities linked to answering these questions, engaging the faculty, field instructors, administrators, and students of the Hunter College School of

Social Work.

A centerpiece of this project is a concentrated training effort to expand and enhance group work experiences of students in field work education. A key operational question of this intervention phase of the project is: What is the impact of training intervention with beginning field instructors on the number and quality of social group work assignments of social work students?

As the primary training vehicle for the profession, graduate schools of social work are recognizing the agency-based demand for group work services through increased attention to group work assignments for student interns. However, with the strategy to enhance group work opportunities in field settings, schools of social work are caught by the diminished capacity of field instructors (practitioners who supervise graduate student interns in agency-based learning assignments) to adequately design, supervise, and evaluate group work assignments. Although the Hunter College School of Social Work has maintained a substantive group work specialization (one of only nine schools of social work in the United States to do so), it is not immune to the cumulative diminution of group work education. For example, a 1989 study by Birnbaum, Middleman, and Huber showed that the majority of social

group work specialists graduated before 1970. As an economical, professionally sound service to address a broad range of client needs, group work appears as a method of choice in efforts to redeploy agency resources. In this context, social work educational institutions must respond and restore group work training if they expect to maintain professional legitimacy.

This project takes the position that a fully collaborative approach to enhancing group work assignments is necessary, and engaged key constituencies of professional social work education, including faculty, field work department, field placement coordinators, faculty advisors, field instructors, as well as school and agency administrators. The activities of this project had the sanction and sponsorship of the Hunter College School of Social Work. Project activities were presented to participants (faculty, administrators, and field instructors) as integrated into the School's efforts to enhance group work opportunities in field education and practice. The results and implications will be of value to the School, social work agencies, other schools of social work, group work constituencies, and all organizations engaged in field learning and curriculum integration.

CHAPTER ONE B:

Methodology

The overall concern of this project is group work practice and education in the social work profession. It focuses on the field education experience of graduate school of social work students, utilizing the Hunter College School of Social Work as the primary study environment. The project linked the field practicum assignments of students with the other educative activities of the school and the field placement agency. The centerpiece of this holistic evaluation project was a training intervention with field instructors, focusing on the enhancement of their planning and field supervision of group work assignments. The literature reviews and studies reported in this document supported the development and evaluation of the training intervention, as well as provided a description of the School of Social Work's view of social group work in field education.

The project was designed to assist in answering two framing research questions:

1. What are the expectations and experience of graduate students, field instructors, and faculty regarding group work in field education?

2. Is training of field instructors effective in enhancing social group work assignments in field education?

The dissertation project reported in this document took place over a three year period, from January, 1990 through January, 1992. The first year (1990) was spent reviewing literature, developing research designs, planning and conducting a pilot training project (Appendix I), and completing the project proposal. Highlights of the second year (1991) included: arranging School sponsorship of the project, interviewing key School personnel, and administering a large-scale study of all field instructors during the spring of the 1990 - 1991 academic year.

Utilizing the findings obtained in the two previous years, the third year (1992) began with conducting the training intervention with beginning field instructors and conducting an evaluation study by training participants. In the spring of 1992, activities included administering the same large-scale survey used the previous spring, to the beginning field instructors in the 1991 - 1992 academic year. The remaining months were spent analyzing data from the multiple research activities of the project, and preparing this final report.

This chapter continues with a discussion of a strategic framework for the project and a summary of each of its

stages. Following this explanation, is a description of the Hunter College School of Social Work as the study environment. The chapter ends with an analysis of methodological and theoretical issues in the development of the research design of this project. Detailed descriptions of the research methods used in each phase of the study can be found Chapters Two through Six, accompanying the findings of each activity.

Strategic Framework

Development of a plan for action.

Patton (1980) suggests that an evaluator must develop a strategic framework to unify and integrate activities. This "action plan" provides guidance in selecting, as well as limiting research options. In this project, the strategic framework links purpose and perspective to a time-related strategy of study, intervention, and analysis.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the verb "evaluate" is defined as: (1) to determine or fix the value of; (2) to examine and judge. (Webster, 1967, 287). Both statements reflect elements of identification as well as judgement. This project's methodology addresses both elements. For example, literature reviews provide a context for describing a system and planning an intervention. Furthermore, reporting the training intervention sets the stage for

evaluating its planning and implementation, as well as its impact. The purposes of this project are primarily descriptive and explanatory, seeking to identify the school's approach to group work assignments, and attempting to discover if training can enhance group work assignments in the field practicum.

Rather than a limited analysis of results, program evaluation encompasses the entire progress, or "natural history" of a program. Further, it can be seen as not only a linear process, but as a circular one as well. As Wildavsky states:

Evaluation should not only lead to the discovery of better policy programs to accomplish existing objectives but to alteration of the objectives themselves. (1972,510).

A strategic framework must provide multiple points of inquiry. These points of inquiry are developed on the basis of sequence (stage of the program's natural history), perspective (program as viewed by a variety of actors, including participants), and purpose (needs for the project and audience).

As developed by Tripodi, Fellin, and Epstein (1978), program evaluation includes the following stages:

(1) program initiation, (2) program contact, (3) program implementation, (4) program stabilization, and (5) assessment. This model is similar to the one proposed

by Sufflebeam (1971), containing the following elements:
(1) context, (2) input, (3) process, and (4) product. Both models address the need for a holistic view of evaluation as a process. This project adopted a five stage model that blends these paradigms.

Five stage strategic framework.

This portion of the report focuses on the presentation and discussion of the five stage model chosen as the project's strategic framework. To begin, the chart on the following page serves to outline the stages and corresponding research activities contained in this report.

ENHANCING SOCIAL GROUP WORK OPPORTUNITIES IN FIELD WORK EDUCATION

FIVE STAGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Stage	Research Activity	Methodology
Context	History of Group Work Practice and Education (CHAPTER TWO A)	Literature Review Qualitative
	Distinctive Elements of Social Work with Groups (CHAPTER TWO B)	Literature Review Qualitative
Contact	Study of the Orientation and Acculturation of Field Placement Agencies (CHAPTER THREE)	Informal Interview Qualitative
	Survey of Field Instructors and Student Assignments, 1990 - 1991 (CHAPTER FOUR)	Mail Survey Quantitative & Qualitative
Process	Report of Training Intervention, January 1992, Planning and Supervising Group Work Assignments (CHAPTER FIVE A)	Action Research Content Report Qualitative
Product	Evaluation of Training by Field Instructor Participants (CHAPTER FIVE B)	In-Person Survey Quantitative & Qualitative
	Survey of Beginning Field Instructors and Student Assignments, 1991 - 1992 (CHAPTER SIX)	Mail Survey Quantitative & Qualitative
Assess- ment	Conclusions and Recommendations for Enhancing Social Group Work Opportunities in Field Work Education (CHAPTER SEVEN)	Content Analysis Proposals Quantitative & Qualitative

In this project, the first stage, "context", incorporated the initial planning through the identification of needs, opportunities, and problems. It established a frame of reference for the project. Although not detailed in this report, the proposal formulation and initial planning of the training fit into this stage. These activities included informal interviews with persons known in the areas of group work practice and social work education including: Roselle Kurland and Robert Salmon (Hunter College School of Social Work), James Garland (Boston University School of Social Work), Julianne Wayne (University of Connecticut School of Social Work), Urania Glassman (Adelphi School of Social Work), and Ruth Middleman (University of Louisville School of Social Work & Moses Professor 1989 - 1990 of the Hunter College School of Social Work). Consultation with Irwin Epstein and Harold Weissman (Hunter College School of Social Work) was obtained in the process of refining the proposal and developing research methodology. Meetings with Elaine Marshack and Carmen Ortiz-Hendricks (Hunter College School of Social Work), contributed to understanding the environment of the work and the school - field partnership.

The bibliography contained in this report suggests the range of the literature relevant to this project. The scope

of the reading and assessment of needs through interviews, served to inform the researcher in the areas of group work practice, group work education, multi-method education and practice, field work education, adult education, feminist pedagogy, and curriculum design. This body of information was used in formulating the project design, in developing literature reviews, and in planning and implementing the training intervention. Formal literature reviews in this stage included the literature reviews of Chapter Two: "History of Group Work Practice and Education" and "Distinctive Elements of Social Work with Groups".

The researcher conducted a search of literature related to the interface of group work practice in field work education. A limited number of articles and reports of presentation were identified, including those by: Birnbaum (1990); Fishbein and Glassman (1991); Glassman and Kates (1986A); Lynn (1990); Karp (undated); Kurland, Getzel, and Salmon (1986); Murphy (1959); Rothman (1980); Schlenoff, Litwin, and Hricko (1981); Somers and Gitlin (1966); and Wayne and Garland (1990). As already mentioned in the "Introduction" and discussed further in the literature reviews and research findings of this report, the reason for the scarcity of information about field work education for group work practice is not surprising when one considers the

troubling lack of overall attention to social work with groups. The valuable, albeit limited material discovered in this search was utilized in two ways. First, historical material and articles discussing contemporary trends and research were incorporated into the formal literature reviews. Second, material directly related to building field instruction skills in supervising group work assignments was integrated into the curriculum of the training intervention, conducted during the "process" stage of this framework.

The second stage, "contact", included the development of the training curriculum, evaluation design, and the arrangements for the intervention. Guba and Lincoln (1981) stress the need to look at holistic evaluation as an inherently political process. As such, attention must be given in this stage to the identification of "stake holders", or constituencies involved in the process. In this project, the most obvious groups included students, field instructors, agency administrators, faculty advisors, group work faculty, field education faculty, and school administrators.

A great deal of the decision-making at this stage involved the limiting of the analysis. Flowing from the exploration of the school-field partnership, one can

identify critical people in the process of planning and supervising group work assignments. In the School, they include the Director of Field Education, Field of Practice Coordinators, Faculty Advisors, Seminar Instructors, Faculty, Students, Administrators. In an agency, they include field instructors, educational coordinators (where they are present), and administrators. All of these people, (some serving in multiple capacities), contribute to the creation of expectations and/or the fulfillment of goals; all have insights to offer on the process.

However, methodological choices are inevitably made in order to limit the scope of data collection and analysis. In this regard, three project priorities were established as follows:

1. Focus on environmental context (or school climate) regarding the expectations for assignments.
2. Focus on the field instructor as primarily responsible for the students' learning experience.
3. Focus on a training intervention with new field instructors.

These three directives suggested particular groups of people for further study and engagement in the project. School administrators, Director of Field Education, and group work faculty members were called upon to provide a

sense of perspective regarding expectations for field work learning in general, and group assignments in particular. As the group of persons entrusted with the acceptance and orientation of new field work agencies, Field of Practice Practicum Coordinators were chosen to illuminate the process of agency acculturation. Field instructors were called upon to identify training needs and to provide a picture of group work assignments for students in field work agencies. Instructors of the Seminar for Field Instructors were enlisted to report on the content and process of the seminars (Ortiz-Hendricks, 1989), and to act as partners in incorporating the training intervention into the seminar format. Lastly, new field instructors were chosen as training participants and evaluators.

Once that the project proposal was completed, the direction of formal research activities became clearer. As already noted, a qualitative study of the orientation and acculturation of field placement agencies (Chapter Three), was undertaken to understand the initiation process of new agencies into the school-field partnership.

Also in this stage of inquiry, a large scale, anonymous survey was developed and administered to all field instructors during the 1990 - 1991 academic year. As explained in detail in Chapter Four, this survey was

predominantly quantitative, seeking to identify specific characteristics of the students' field work assignments. It also included qualitative elements, asking open-ended questions about training needs in the planning and supervision of group work assignments, as well as asking for a general reaction to the survey instrument and/or content. The findings of this survey were used to establish a needs assessment of field instructors, add to the knowledge base of the field - school partnership, and prepare recommendations for training purpose, content and structure.

By the end of this stage of the framework, the training plan was finalized. Necessary arrangements were completed for the implementation of the training intervention with beginning field instructors.

The third stage, "process" contains the actual implementation of the training design. According to Epstein and Tripodi (1978), program analysis has both monitoring and evaluation components. They state that the monitoring function is fulfilled through developing clear standards, assessing the degree to which a target population has been reached, reporting the activities and quality of trainer and trainee performance, and comparing the actual implementation to the plan and underlying goals. The report and assessment of the training intervention contained in this stage of the

framework, fulfills this monitoring function.

Patton (1980) sees this reporting stage as critical, requiring the researcher to use observational analysis of the intervention. In this project, the observer/researcher/trainer must report what happened so that the "reader can understand what occurred and how it occurred" (Patton, 1980, 30).

The first half of Chapter Five explains the intended curriculum and actual implementation of the training intervention conducted in January 1992. Some 78 beginning field instructors (divided into four sections) participated in the training, "Planning and Supervising Group Work Assignments". As explained in greater detail in Chapter Five, two sessions of the School's annual "Seminar for Field Instructors" were devoted exclusively to this training, led by the researcher.

The fourth stage of the framework, "product", is concerned with assessing program achievements. This stage provides the evaluation component called for by Epstein and Tripodi (1978). Donald Kirkpatrick proposes that the common definition of training program evaluation is "the determination of the effectiveness." (1976, 18-2). Suggesting that "effectiveness" must be operationalized, his four step model for analysis is useful for consideration in

this project. The steps include: (1) reaction, the degree to which the trainees liked the program; (2) learning, the principles, facts, and techniques that were learned; (3) behaviors, the changes in behavior resulting from the program; and (4) results, the tangible outcomes of the programs in terms of operationalized objectives.

Chapter Five B, an evaluation of the training by participants, provides data on field instructors' reaction, as well as learning and behavior. As Kirkpatrick states, evaluation of results is the most difficult of the four stages. He suggests that it is possible only when the results are extremely clear, as in his example of increased typing speed after appropriate training.

At the onset of this project, this researcher believed that a larger number of student group work assignments among the trainees, as compared with the previous year's new field instructors, would be a clear indicator of training results. Chapter Six reports on a research activity originally developed to facilitate the comparison of group work assignments of students of 1991 - 1992 beginning field instructors who participated in the training intervention, with 1990 - 1991 beginning field instructors and veteran field instructors who did not participate in training. As already mentioned, and described in detail in later portions

of this report, this methodology was based on an incomplete understanding of intervening variables. However, this stage of the framework yielded a great deal of "product" related findings, including an expanded assessment of learning needs, additional descriptions of group work assignments, as well as reports of anticipated and actual utilization of training by participants.

The fifth, and final stage of the framework, "assessment", links the evaluation of the training intervention with the evaluation of the larger institution. Chapter Seven includes reference to the major findings of the project. This review is utilized to view the interlocking nature of the findings, in order to draw overall implications and recommendations.

In drawing together the experiences and impressions from a wide range of activities, the researcher is able to see the work as "whole". In this project, the assessment stage demands that the future be considered. There is recognition of the impact already made in the system, as well as acceptance of obligations taken on during the process. Thus, this section takes on a future orientation, through recommendations and proposals for carrying the work forward.

Environmental Context of the Project

This project focuses on the Hunter College School of Social Work as a graduate school experiencing the effects of the three trends highlighted in the introduction:

1. Decrease in group work education in graduate schools of social work.
2. Increase of work with groups by professionals from other disciplines.
3. Increase in interest in group assignments for social work students.

Although each institution is different, Hunter serves as a microcosm for these issues. Graduate schools of social work that offer major specializations in group work, as well as those that teach group work as part of an integrated or generic method of intervention, are subject to these forces. Hunter maintains a major method specialization in group work, as well as in case work, community organization, and administration. It is one of only nine graduate schools of social work that offer a major in group work in the country (Birnbaum, 1990), and thus represents a commitment to distinct method practice. The following table describes the majors of students attending the school of social work in the 1990-1991 academic year:

Table One

Hunter College School of Social Work Students, 1990 - 1991
Distribution by Major Method

<u>Major Method</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Percentage of Students</u>
Case Work	297	69%
Group Work	69	16%
Community Organization	34	8%
Administration	32	7%
Total	432	100%

Students majoring in group work are required to take at least 3 group work method courses, but students majoring in other methods are not required to take any group work courses. For the case work, administration, and/or community organization major, exposure to group work in the classroom may be completely absent.

As stated by Carol Meyer (1989, 152), "the future health and even life of the profession rests in the hands of social work teachers and field instructors." The school-field partnership is seen as a crucial bond for training professional inductees. The field work experience provides the arena for praxis; students are charged to reflect and act when working directly with clients in agency settings. However, to understand the linkage at this stage, it must be noted that the primary purpose of the school is education,

while the primary purpose of the agency is service. The common ground for the partnership is the professional educational experience of the social work student in the field agency. Among all the policy makers, teachers, practitioners, and students, the central figure in this experience is the field instructor, who shares the goals of both organizations.

In 1989, this researcher offered to lead a workshop for experienced field instructors who wanted to enhance their skills in supervising group work assignments (Appendix I). This workshop was targeted to field instructors who supervised students with majors other than group work, and was in synch with the Field Education Department's concern that non-group work students did not have sufficient opportunities for group work assignments. The researcher/trainer and Director of Field Education agreed that the ability to supervise group assignments was insufficient among some field instructors. Thus, the School accepted the researcher's offer, and sponsored the six hour seminar in March 1989. Eight experienced field instructors elected to participate, with the purpose of expanding their expertise in developing and supervising group assignments. Seminar participants reported expansion of their own engagement in group work practice in addition to enhancement

of their supervisory capabilities. One participant shared that the seminar "left me hungry to do more", and that she was inspired to form a supervisory group at her office to explore the problems and expectations of students.

Participants confirmed the ironic fact that although they were themselves novices in group work, they were in positions of helping others to learn. As a pilot project in training field instructors, the seminar suggested the need to expand the scope of the training effort. It led to the focus on the orientation of beginning field instructors, in a rigorous model of research, intervention, and evaluation.

The basic requirements for field instructors are three years of post-MSW agency practice experience. Each year, approximately 100 experienced social workers join the Hunter College School of Social Work as beginning field instructors. As do all new field instructors in the New York metropolitan region, they must attend a seminar (12 sessions) recognized by all local graduate schools. Approximately 70 - 80 of the beginning field instructors attend the seminar at Hunter College. This "Seminar for Field Instructors" focuses primarily on field teaching of social work students with diverse majors and interests.

The Director of Field Education maintains standards and a degree of uniformity within the seminars conducted at

Hunter College School of Social Work through periodic meetings with seminar instructors to review administrative arrangements, discuss alternate seminar schedules, review the content areas being taught and level of participants' engagement, and review required assignments. This coordination is important to exchange information, to respond and modify as necessary, and to evaluate the sessions. The School has particular guidelines for this Seminar, but also follows the general guidelines and standards recommended by the Greater New York Metropolitan Area Directors of Field Work and its special committee on Seminars for New Field Instructors.

Field work provides students with exposure to the reality of social work practice as they observe and fit together classroom and experiential learning. The scope of the Hunter College School of Social Work's field education program is extensive. On an annual basis, approximately 400 students are supervised by 315 field instructors at 250 agencies. Approximately 300 of these students follow the predominant plan for field work among schools of social work. In each of their two years of graduate education, students are assigned to an agency and field instructor for three days per week (600 hours per year). The remaining 100 students, participants in a job-related cooperative program,

are assigned to field work for four days a week (for one year) at agencies where they had been working before entering school (900 hours). During the course of the field program, tasks and productivity expectations increase to reach the level expected of entering professionals by the end of the practicum.

The primary objective of the field education component is to develop competence in practice skills within the framework of social work values and ethics. In field practicum experiences, students develop a professional commitment to social work practice, especially as it is carried out within the context of social agencies (Marshack, 1991, 1985). Opportunities for social group work assignments are crucial to the development of these future professionals.

The field work program articulates the mission of the school in its commitment to public services and programs serving the most disadvantaged populations. Placement agencies include hospitals, public welfare offices, centers for the elderly, school-based counseling programs, human rights commissions, youth outreach, programs for the physically challenged, city planning departments, juvenile justice programs, foster care agencies, services to homeless persons, human and family services, employee assistance

units, and substance abuse services. Agencies include those historically associated with group work practice, as well as those now discovering the efficacy of social group work approaches to client services.

The field education department receives many more requests from agencies seeking acceptance as field placements than it can accommodate. Therefore, the School can be highly selective in affiliation decisions. Agencies are selected by the quality of educational experience they can provide, in the context of program needs and the program mission, to prepare students for ethical practice with socially disadvantaged populations. This project raises the question of whether the school should identify opportunities for group work practice as a criteria for inclusion. The school suggests, but does not require, that all students have experience with a second method of practice in field instruction. Often, this second method of practice is social group work.

The Hunter College School of Social Work is an attractive arena for this evaluation and intervention project because of the support and sanction for this project from a variety of constituencies. The strong presence of group work faculty and student group work majors attracts and sustains interest in advancing group work practice.

Group work faculty offered this researcher a wealth of resources in developing interventions.

Administrative sanction and encouragement for this project was crucial to its implementation. During the first two years of the project, the Acting Dean was extremely supportive and took an active role in the project. During the third year, the new Dean continued the school's sponsorship, while personally taking a much less active role. The Director of Field Education shared the researcher's concern about the number and quality of multiple method assignments for all students, regardless of major. The Department of Field Education has established a record of support for this type of project, and sees the enhancement of group work education in the field as allied with its own efforts to expand educational effectiveness and meet criteria developed by the Council on Social Work Education.

Through the support of the group work faculty, administration, and field education department, an attempt was made to integrate the project with the school's mission to educate social work professionals.

Data Collection Strategies

In practice, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies rely on empirical experience and observation,

conducted planfully and systematically. Researchers must utilize both methodologies in order to understand and evaluate program effort, effectiveness, and efficiency. (Tripodi, Fellin, & Epstein, 1978). The complexity of this dissertation project demanded that both methods be incorporated in order to develop multiple sources of data to enhance formative evaluation.

Epstein characterizes the suggestion that quantitative and qualitative methods are incompatible, as: "senseless, idiotic, and simple-minded to say the least." (Epstein, 1988, p.194). The controversy surrounding these methodologies has merit to the extent that it illuminates issues in research and practice, and leads to an expansion of choices. With some exceptions, proponents of quantitative methods share a historical connection with psychology and sociology, while qualitative supporters are linked to social psychology. In these historical roots are seen the linkage with inductive (qualitative) or deductive (quantitative) reasoning, indicating a way of looking at the world. This is evidenced in language; quantitative methods utilize scientific and mathematical constructs, while qualitative methods utilize the vernacular of social reality.

The "logical positivism" of some quantitative proponents implies that only propositions that can be tested are true. However, qualitative advocates include all human experience in social reality and "truth". Yin distinguishes qualitative methods as having two conditions: first, they use intimate observation of the natural world, and second, they attempt to remain free of commitment to a particular theoretical model. (Yin, 1988, p.25).

Research cost clearly belongs in the practical category of concerns in choosing research methods. Qualitative approaches are purported to take longer than quantitative methods, of particular interest when the researcher is a practitioner whose main responsibility is direct service. However, in "macro" practice in particular, evaluation research can be built into the program. As is the case in this project, the feedback mechanisms should be integrated into practice, since they reinforce the model of participation and contribution.

As Orlans cautions, analysis of practice and policy brings one into the "carnal world of man", out of the "ethereal world of scholarship." (Orlans 1975, p.112). Thus, qualitative advocates feel that values must be acknowledged (rather than purged) in order to identify

sources of bias. (Rein, 1971, p.309). They dispute the contention that unobtrusive, objective research is possible, contending that every interaction has the potential to change reality; subjects and researchers mutually affect each other throughout the study process. Qualitative proponents are interested in the idiosyncratic way that participants experience events.

Emerging from the controversy between quantitative and qualitative strategies, are the particular strengths and weaknesses of each method. Research methods were chosen that were consistent with the dual purpose of the project (to evaluate a system as well as a specific training intervention). Detailed methodological statements appear in later chapters of this document, as part of the reports of each individual research activity.

Theoretical Considerations

This project incorporates a key element of "action research". Modifications to the design and implementation were intentionally made during the process. Individual research activities served a dual function, contributing to the overall evaluation as well as providing material for planning and feedback for adjustment during the project's implementation. This project took the position that it was a duty, rather than a breach of scientific inquiry, to

incorporate findings during the process and to report and reflect on their impact.

An example from the January, 1992 training intervention serves to illustrate this strategy. Participant evaluation was built into the training intervention for three reasons. First, as content for the planning and supervision of group work assignments, the training modeled the need to build evaluation into all student-client, and student-field instructor interactions. Second, as evaluative data, the discussion yielded findings related to the impact of the training on the participating field instructors. Third, as feedback, the information was utilized in modifying the structure and content of the training sessions yet to be held. Although such modifications were limited, the possibility for adaptation in order to provide the highest quality service was available. The context of holistic evaluation works in partnership with these action-oriented strategies, providing opportunities for discovery and change.

The project attempts to incorporate both deductive and inductive approaches. Encouraging the use of both types of reasoning, Patton suggests:

Discovery and verification mean moving back and forth between induction and deduction, between experience and reflection on experience, and between greater degrees and lesser degrees of naturalistic inquiry. (1980, 47).

Deductively, key variables were identified (school expectations and practices, training interventions, group work assignments, etc.), and as already noted, specific research hypotheses were posed as follows:

1. What are the expectations and experience of graduate students, field instructors, and faculty regarding group work in field education?
2. Is training of field instructors effective in enhancing social group work assignments in field education?

After deciding on these questions at the outset of the project, the design incorporated research steps to develop answers.

Inductively, the design allowed for findings that came once the project was underway, and provided clues to relationships between elements that would not be available through simply a deductive approach. With each research step, came another piece of information; the import or connection of each piece was not fully anticipated at the beginning of the project. Evaluation emerged through interaction with the institution during the course of the project.

In summary, this dissertation project is a holistic evaluation of an institution's work in the area of enhancing group work assignments for students. With this vision, the researcher's task is: "to understand the gestalt, the totality, and the unifying nature of particular settings." (Patton, 1980, 40). Thus, this project demanded a research design that provided multiple layers of inquiry.

The many research activities integrated in this project comprise a single evaluative study, as opposed to being an assortment of needs assessments, literature reviews, exploratory and descriptive reports, experiments, and evaluations. It remains possible to identify specific elements of this evaluation process; this portion of the report has described each research activity on the basis of both function and chronology. However, it is critical to view them as constituent parts, each changing and contributing to the whole.

CHAPTER TWO A:

History of Social Group Work Practice and Education

In order to understand and to enhance the development of student group work assignments, one must place contemporary issues into the continuum of time. A historical perspective of social group work practice helps to provide context and explanation for difficulties in encouraging, arranging, and supervising these important field work experiences. The purpose of this portion of the report is to explicate a history of social group work practice and education through a review of the literature.

Collins' (1938) history of social group work places its birth in 1855, with the organization of the YMCA. Most accounts identify the settlement movement of the late 1800's as the spawning ground for social group work. Collins credits the settlement houses with: "the beginning of the idea that the poor might be helped to help themselves". (1938, 3). During the early 20th century, national organizations such as Scouts and 4H institutionalized small social groups into practice.

According to Wenoucur and Reisch (1989), group workers and social workers in the depression benefited from the early public testimony of settlement leaders about poverty,

and the need for social action and direct aid:

group workers had been in tune with the times and continued to be so as social work practice unfolded during the Roosevelt administration. (Wenoucur & Reisch, 1989, 227).

Group work's interwoven foci of individual growth and social action were highly regarded by the political mainstream, giving social workers a comfortable middle ground. Group work's normalcy was reassuring; political forces preferred democratic pluralism over a particular political ideology.

A social group work section of the National Conference of Social Work was first established in 1935, and group work became increasingly professionalized under the social work banner. Wilber Newstetter articulated the 1935 definition of social group work:

Group work may be defined as an educational process emphasizing (1) the development and social adjustment of an individual through voluntary group association; and (2) the use of this association as a means of furthering other socially desirable ends. (Newstetter, 1935, 291).

The year 1939 brought the formation of the National Association of Group Workers (later changed to American Association of Group Workers) to advance the profession. The American Association for the Study of Group Work supported study groups, national commissions, books, and a bi-monthly publication, "The Group - In Education, Recreation and Social Work". Collins felt that group

workers were engaged in a period of "taking stock" and "seeing its place in the entire social work picture." (Collins, 1938, 5). Others recalled these early days as the time when the group work body of knowledge was developed:

Excellent material, which ordinarily would go around and around in some agency eddy, has now been freed and caught up in the main stream of a professional literature. (Bernstein, Coyle, Hendry, & Kaiser, 1940, 5).

A more radical analysis categorized the period as when group workers began their attempt to "penetrate the privileged portals of the professional enterprise". (Wenoucur & Reisch, 1989, 119). The 1949 statement of AAGW delineated the following functions:

The objectives of the group worker include provision for personal growth according to individual capacity and need, the adjustment of the individual to other persons, to groups and to society, and the motivation of the individual toward the improvement of society; the recognition by the individual of his own rights, limitations and abilities as well as the acceptance of the rights, abilities and differences of others. . . . Through experience he aims to produce those relations with other groups and the wider community which contribute to responsible citizenship, mutual understanding between cultural, religious, economic or social groupings in the community and a participation in the constant improvement of our society toward democratic goals. (Phillips, 1957, 25).

Although Grace Coyle was the president of the National Conference of Social Work in 1940 and the American Association of Social Workers in 1942 and 1944, the body of

group workers did not enter social work's professional organizations until the merger of seven membership organizations (including the American Association of Group Workers) into NASW in 1955.

The following categorization of NASW AND CSWE provide a key to group work's further development:

Taken together, these two professional associations represented the twin towers of a modernized professional social work enterprise, built primarily to private agency, casework specifications. (Wenoucur & Reisch, 1989, 242).

Phillips identifies the pitfall that group workers experienced:

In the early stages of the group worker's acknowledgement that their practice was part of the larger profession of social work, there was a tendency to absorb everything possible of insight from social casework. (Phillips, 1957, 41).

In professional education, group workers encountered well established social casework curricula. Two strategies, to liken group work to casework and to establish a distinct identity, were employed. The first social work program for group work students began in 1926, at the School of Applied Social Sciences of Western Reserve University. In 1943, 15 programs existed, in 1950, 21 programs.

Formed through merger in 1952, the Council on Social Work Education began to institutionalize curriculum policy statements and accreditation. The influence of caseworkers was felt in development of these statements, particularly in

the mandates for the study of human behavior. The "generic/specific" debate had been on-going since the Milford Conference (1929), but it primarily centered on "generic" as method vs. "specific" as field of practice. In 1929, method was synonymous with casework.

Casework continued to be seen as the methodological heart of the social work curriculum until the Council on Social Work Education's integrated curriculum of 1962. The 1962 curriculum statement defined method concentrations as a:

focus within the curriculum involving intensive study of a particular (direct service) method of social work in courses and field instruction organized sequentially through the masters program (Meyer, 1986, 8)

According to Meyer (1986), this curriculum statement opened the doors to the non-casework/social work knowledge base.

Somers' and Gitlin's (1966) search for innovations in social group work field instruction led to their 1964 survey of 42 schools of social work in Canada and the United States, that offered a two-year major concentration in group work. They found extensive evidence of creativity in field work, including: demonstrations of group work practice by group work faculty members, post-master's education of caseworkers in the use of group work practice, consultation by group work faculty to enhance overall agency services,

and the employment of group workers in agency settings who were supervised by school faculty in the absence of agency supervisors trained in group work. Stating, that "necessity is the mother of innovation and funding is its father" (1966, 56), they suggested that the new streams of federal funding developed during this period, encouraged and supported these activities.

Somers and Gitlin found that these innovations changed agency practice and the attitudes of staff. Not only did these changes increase the use and understanding of group work methods, they also found that:

there is eagerness among both agency and school personnel to develop innovations in service and field instruction that provide for the use and teaching of two, or even three, social work methods. (Somers & Gitlin, 1966, 57).

As found in today's service environment, Somers and Gitlin reported that agencies' needs had increased dramatically, causing agencies to look beyond limiting their work to casework services. They also found that students' interest in group work served to move the agencies into innovative strategies.

Ostensibly in the spirit of experimentation, the 1969 curriculum policy statement of the Council on Social Work Education required specializations, but did not specify what they should be. Hartman recalls that as a result:

an amazing period of creativity and growth in social work education ensued, but the diversity meant that attainment of an MSW did not guarantee the student's appropriation of an identifiable body of knowledge and skills. Naturally, this was of great concern to employers. (Hartman, 1990, 45).

Specialization by method concentration was no longer required, and became only one option for curriculum organization.

After a period of decline for group work education following the 1969 statement, Tropp celebrated the recommendations for method, or functional specialization of 1974 Council on Social Work Education study groups, with this prophecy:

"If it took twenty years to rediscover the values of specificity in fields of practice, it is fairly safe to predict that by 1980 social workers will be returning en masse to specificity in method. That movement has already begun. (Tropp, 1976, 22).

The study groups' recommendations for method specialization were not adopted, and Tropp's prediction was unfulfilled; today, less than 20 years later, only nine schools offer a full major in the group work method. (Birnbaum, 1990).

In subsequent policy statements, concentrations continued to be left to the school to design and justify. From 1969 to 1979, practice boundaries changed, with casework broadened and group work constricted. Middleman (1990A) interprets this change as the scope of group work

narrowing to "people-change approaches". She identifies the movement of many talented group workers towards developing an integrated or generic approach to practice during this period. It appears that case workers were able to claim practice with families (a natural group) for themselves, and community organizers increasingly incorporated social action groups into their sphere of expertise.

During the Nixon years, many social work positions were declassified, cutting salaries and decreasing incentives for professional study. While psychology "discovered" the group, and moved to institutionalize advanced degrees, social work appeared to deprofessionalize. In 1970, the Council on Social Work Education began accrediting undergraduate programs granting the Bachelor of Social Work degree. Thus, the BSW was identified as the entry level degree for professional social work practice. On the graduate level, the sharpest advance by generic practice curriculums took place from 1960 - 1972, growing from 20% to 72% of all MSW programs. Group work enrollments dropped from approximately 9% to 4%. It appeared that generic was "in", although Karp's 1979 study found that the generic curriculum was taught mostly by teachers with casework backgrounds. (Birnbaum, Middleman, & Huber, 1989). As Ruth Middleman (1990B) recently said: "There is no such thing as

a Renaissance person - You can't teach what you don't know".

The trend away from substantive group work education continued in the 80's, with pressures for "clinical practice". A counter-development was the founding of the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups in 1979. As a collection of educators and practitioners, it has held conferences, published proceedings, encouraged group work at the national professional policy level, and in general terms, is seen as having "rescued and revived a drowning group work and amplified its voice." (Birnbaum, Middleman, & Huber, 1989, 14).

The 1982 CSWE curriculum policy statement appeared to be "left open enough to encompass almost any conceivable curricular organization" (McCaslin, 1987, 2), suggesting a climate of innovation or experimentation for its own sake. With funding and service cut-backs of the 80's, the very survival of schools of social work became a priority, and graduate schools focused on maintaining enrollments. Group work education, never attracting a majority of students, further decreased. Projections for the future are not too promising, with NASW concentrating on specializations by field of practice, advanced credentials for clinicians, licensure, and political lobbying. Currently, CSWE appears to be concerned with BSW/MSW relationships with a generalist

approach at the undergraduate level and an advanced practice approach at the graduate level.

Rothman's (1980) study of group work field instruction looked at a growing pattern of co-leadership as a training method for graduate social work students. She cautioned that although this method had advantages, particularly in echoing diversity among the group members, co-leadership often had the disadvantages of limiting opportunities for student learning and increasing ambiguity for the members of the group. Approximately ten years later, Wayne and Garland (1990) noted that over half the group work assignments at the Boston University School of Social Work placed students in co-leadership roles. Conboy and Birnbaum's (1992) study of student assignments at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work appear to suggest that this move towards co-leadership is continuing, coupled with a limited emphasis on group work supervision by field instructors.

As suggested in the introduction to this proposal, interest in group work assignments for social work students is vital, but insufficient to insure that opportunities are created and chosen. The trends documented in this portion of the report have contributed to the decrease in group work education, and thus, to the diminution of the number of skilled group work practitioners and field instructors.

CHAPTER TWO B:**Distinctive Aspects of Social Work With Groups**

As part of the Council on Social Work Education's 1959 curriculum study, Clara Kaiser posed the following question: is group work "a process directed to working with individuals in groups or one working with groups of individuals?" (Murphy, 1959). This project takes the second position, focusing on the group as a collectivity and the unique contributions of participants as members. This decision about the basic unit of attention sets the stage for considering the distinct qualities of group work as a method of social work. Further, it provides the rationale for this portion of the report and the need for training in planning and supervising group work assignments. If social group work has qualities that distinguish it from other social work methodologies, then these qualities must be named and examined before designing a training program. As this project continues, these distinct elements provide clues in the evaluation of arranging and supervising group work field assignments that are supported by the school and agency setting.

Writing in the same 1959 study report, Grace Coyle agreed that there is some commonality between methods, but

that social workers must be:

free from any pressure to eliminate the basic differentials between casework and group work. . The pressure toward conformity which has appeared at points in an emphasis on the generic should not be followed to eliminate the essential features of a group worker's education to fulfill a function in part the same, but in part different, from that of other social workers. (Murphy, 1959, 105).

Gisela Konopka (1951) credited caseworkers with the serious consideration of their practice, and suggested that there was a similar body of group work knowledge that required mastery. For group work, concepts of "groupness" need to be explored. (Alissi, 1981, 3).

The search for an exclusively generic practice for social work can blunt the power of all practice methods; great riches lie in their diversity. This discussion will explore four areas of distinction, including: the group-as-as-whole; the dual focus of group work; the phenomenon of mutual aid; and special skills. These areas do not comprise a comprehensive description of social group work practice, but rather identify unique attributes of the method.

Group-As-A-Whole

Social group work practice proposes the group as the unit of attention, suggesting the somewhat mystical quality of the group experience. Boehm describes this quality as a "dynamic whole", in which a "change in the state of any sub-part changes the state of any other sub-part." (Boehm, 1959,

54). Similarly, Schwartz suggests that a social work group is an "organic whole" that must be appreciated as:

a complex of moving, interdependent human beings, each acting out his changing relationship to society in his present interaction with others engaged in a similar enterprise. (Schwartz, 1961, 27).

The group is seen as a system, with properties of all systems, as delineated by Carel Germain (1975):

1. Dynamic Equilibrium - Groups seek to maintain a vital balance among their parts and between themselves and environment, through the interchange of energy, information, and resources.
2. Boundary Maintenance - Groups struggle with identifying how to define boundaries, who should or can define them, where they are located and maintained, and their degree of permeability.
3. Negative Entropy - Groups seek to avoid entropy (disorder/destruction) that can result from both excessive and insufficient inputs. They attempt to build reserves to maintain a vital balance with the environment.
4. Equi-finality - Groups achieve end states that are independent of their own starting state within system limits. As organic systems they can utilize feedback and can adapt to achieve innovation and creativity.

Thus, as systems, groups have special, emergent qualities. First, is "interrelatedness" (Hartman & Laird, 1983), which gives rise to new realities through interaction. Thus, changes in one part of a system effect the entire system as well as every part, compounded with every motion. The image of ripples formed by a pebble in a still lake is insufficient to convey this notion. Rather, one needs an image of constant action, re-action, and interaction, animated by elements of purposiveness and serendipity, and both visible and invisible at the same time.

Second, social work groups are characterized by synergy, as defined in the Random House Dictionary of the English Language as follows:

1. the interaction of elements that when combined produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements, contributions etc.
2. the joint action of agents, as drugs, that when taken together increase each other's effectiveness (contrasted with antagonism) (1987, p.1929).

Synergy is central to both the fears and joys inherent in learning group work practice, and goes a long way in conveying the power and potential of the group experience. The identification of the group-as-a-whole as a distinct entity, or "second client" (Shulman, 1992), also sets the stage for specific practice principles for work with groups.

Dual Focus of Group Work

The dual focus of group work consists of the relationship of the group to individual members, and the group to society. Phillips calls this the uniqueness of group work purpose: "to help people use group experiences for their self-growth toward social ends." (Phillips, 1957, 42). Gisela Konopka's reaction to her work with refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria, conveys the power of the interface of group and individual:

I must say that my first encounter with social group work in 1941 was a revelation. Having just come from a society that seemed to present an inescapable gulf between the individual and the group - which insisted that the individual be sacrificed to the interests of the group - I found the concept of individualization in and through the group exhilarating. (Konopka, 1972, 7)

She defines the dual focus as concerned with democracy in action and with mental health.

Group work does not stand conveniently between casework (individuals) and community organization (community) (Brown, 1969); it has one foot in the "micro" and the other in the "macro" world of practice. This dual aspect has been largely ignored in generic practice models. Lewis bemoans the diminution of the societal focus, attributing it in part to caseworker dominance in the generic curriculum, leading to more focus on the individual within the group. The wider focus is then "relegated to a secondary purpose, an

incidental by-product of practice." (Lewis, 1981, 195). On the other hand, the dual focus does seem to be re-emerging in the field, and is seen as a vital component of self-help and social action groups.

Dewey (1929) has emphasized the democratic values of social work groups in training members for responsible citizenry. Lowy supports this in stating: "democracy, in order to be dynamic, must be practiced continuously." (Lowy, 1955, 66). In work with oppressed peoples, Lee calls for a reexamination of the old issue of "whose group is it?", thus updating democracy into the concept of empowerment for group members (Lee, 1989, 7). Concern for democratic values is closely allied with humanistic practice:

Membership in such a group enhances mental health by fostering responsibility for others and creating a little pocket of democratic humanistic life that in and of itself is healing. (Glassman & Kates, 1986A, 150).

Hirayama & Hirayama approach the same theme by calling for the worker to "make the group a reservoir of power resources where individual participants get help and receive support." (Hirayama & Hirayama, 1986, 124).

Thus, the group worker must bring skills that build both individual and collective capacities for empowerment. Ideally, each member becomes skilled in mutual aid and decision making. The worker is constantly evaluating and

acting to weave individual needs and strengths. As the group becomes an entity, there is a continuous movement flowing from group and individual purposes. An apt metaphor for the worker's role in this process is as orchestra conductor. The maestro's ability to hear individual instruments, sections, and ensemble, all at the same time, is closely allied with the worker's skill in "tuning in" (Schwartz, 1971) to the individuals, sub-groups, and group-as-a-whole. In both contexts, interventions are made in full recognition of the geometric effect on the constituent elements.

The dual perspective is sometimes mistakenly described as: first, the members' relationships to each individual member, and second, the members' relationship to the group-as-a-whole. This limited way of looking at groups supports the group's insularity and lack of relatedness to the world. The group models society, and does not separate from it. Adding the third component, the group's outreach as a unit, implies a degree of responsibility from the small group to the larger group of community. Not only do groups provide an arena for empowerment, participants are expected to actualize the experience in systems beyond the group. It is possible that this distinct aspect of group work might be re-named the tri-lateral focus to encompass its multiple

dimensions.

Phenomenon of Mutual Aid

Writing in 1914, Peter Kropotkin declared:

. . the mutual-aid tendency in man has so remote an origin, and is so deeply interwoven with all the past evolution of the human race, that it has been maintained by mankind up to the present time, not withstanding all vicissitudes of history. .

. . And whenever mankind had to work out a new social organization, adapted to a new phasis of development, its constructive genius always drew the elements and the inspiration for the new departure from that same ever-living tendency. . .

. . all have originated from the same source, and the ethical progress of our race, viewed in its broad lines, appears as a gradual extension of the mutual-aid principles from the tribe to always larger and larger agglomerations, so as to finally embrace one day the whole of mankind, without respect to its diverse creeds, languages, and races. (1989, 223)

Thus, Kropotkin draws together three key ideas regarding the phenomenon of mutual aid. First, it is based on natural science; second, it is responsible for the success of human endeavors; and third, it provides the hope for a utopian society.

Kropotkin drew his inspiration from the 1880 speech of Kessler, a Russian scientist, to the St.Petersburg society of Naturalists. It contained the following comment:

in the evolution of the organic world - in the progressive modification of organic beings - mutual support among individuals plays a much more important part than their mutual struggle"
(Kropotkin, 1989,8)

This view is in obvious contrast with Darwinian notions of survival of the fittest and a world based on competition. However, it is not necessary to choose one world view over the other. Social work paradigms, including the structural approach (Wood & Middleman, 1989), delineate the need for social workers to act as mediators between cooperative systems, as well as to act as advocates in adversarial conflicts. The phenomenon of mutual aid is an element of groups in social work regardless of one's world view. If mutual aid in the group models its function in society, then it enhances the "natural" qualities of social work groups. On the other hand, if mutual aid is unique (or exists in limited ways in society), it enhances the "special" qualities of the group.

Social group workers have embraced mutual aid, referring to it as both a naturally occurring phenomenon whenever persons join together, as well as a process that can and should be maximized by worker interventions. Mutual aid is distinct to group work in the fact that it involves member to member exchange. It places the source of growth in the membership, in the geometric effects of giving and accepting help among members.

According to Konopka (1972), the essential values of social work are justice and responsibility, combined with

mental health. All provide the underpinning of mutual aid. Justice relates to acceptance of each member with recognition of individual differences; responsibility incorporates the fundamental interdependence of people and the concept of mutual accountability; mental health implies the need of all people for inner strength and satisfaction as a precursor to helping others.

In identifying the group an "enterprise in mutual aid" (Schwartz, 1961), the stage is set for the role of the worker as mediator of the individual-group encounter (Shulman & Gitterman, 1986). The group worker exercises legitimate authority (Kurland & Salmon, 1988) to insure that the group operates on the basis of "common goals, by common decision and common action." (Tropp, 1965, 12). Conflict is acknowledged as an essential element of all groups and in the external lives of members. However, it is the collective efforts of worker and members to understand and resolve conflicts, that is the hallmark of the mutual aid.

Special Skills

A primary skill for practice with groups is the ability to comprehend and consistently apply a model for group life. Effective paradigms or models for practice have two basic qualities. First, they sensibly organize seemingly disparate and disconnected elements. Second, useful models

can be operationalized to give a sense of direction and consistency to the worker's interventions. These essential qualities of sensibility and utility characterize Kurland's (1978) planning model, setting the context for the generic and specific skills for social work with groups. The remainder of this chapter will elaborate on this connection, with emphasis on the following factors: needs, purpose, composition, pre-group contact, structure, and content.

The exploration of needs directs the worker to consider the whole experience of clients and more specifically, to look for common needs among the universe of potential members. Assessment skills are needed in understanding the arena for group. The agency and/or environmental context sets boundaries, defines and limits inputs, and may prescribe rules for individual and collective behavior. Worker skill is needed to translate ecological and systems theory to the group as well to the individual members and their reference groups.

Planning for the common purpose of the group involves generic assessment and engagement skills, but also calls for skills specific to groups, such as "scanning" (Middleman & Wood 1990B), enabling the worker to take in information from many sources. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of worker facility in this area, since the

success of the group is directly related to the worker's ability to help the members to forge a common purpose without sacrificing individual goals. Although the group members share accountability, the worker's skills in "orchestration", especially in early group stages, will be critical.

Shulman and Gitterman (1986) identify seven processes related to mutual aid phenomenon: sharing data, the dialectical process, entering taboo areas, the "all in the same boat" phenomenon, mutual support, mutual demand, and individual problem solving. These must be operationalized into special skills of the group worker since:

these will not necessarily happen by themselves. In fact, it is the difficulty for most groups in learning how to release these powerful forces for change and growth that creates the need for the group worker. (Shulman & Gitterman, 1986, 13).

In this scheme, the worker's efforts are directed to activating and enhancing the power of mutual aid.

Group Composition is probably the most obvious "special" group category, since it calls on the worker to maximize the beneficial effects of the group-as-a-whole phenomenon. In this area, Middleman & Wood's (1990B) system of skills includes a "continuous group skill" of fostering cohesiveness, and is further elaborated through the "skills for building groups", including: selecting communication

patterns purposefully, voicing group achievements, preserving group history and continuity, and encouraging the development of traditions and rituals.

The methodology of forming a group, including the pre-group contact, is based on appropriate assessment of individuals, but group work extends the needed skills to include the consideration of "fit" of the members. A mix of commonalities and differences enriches the group experience; the worker draws on skill to compose groups, as well as choosing and implementing a recruitment or outreach strategy.

Clearly, structural decisions should be purposefully made in all social work encounters, however, groups demand special attention. Structure as a noun, is the anatomy of the group; as a verb it is the process of creating a group identity (Middleman & Goldberg, 1972). The structure defines roles for worker and members, providing behavioral expectations and sanctions. Groups must consciously attend to their norms and rules, as mandated and/or created by them, in order to serve their purpose.

As integrated phenomena, both affective and instrumental behavior contribute to group process and goal achievement. With group work, it is fair to say that the "medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1964), but without the

message, there can not be a medium. Therefore, the worker recognizes the myriad structural opportunities for processes such as: collaboration, decision-making, conflict identification and resolution, celebration, and evaluation. Middleman and Wood's (1990B) skills for "facilitating the work of the group": amplifying subtle messages, softening overpowering messages, reaching for an information link, redirecting messages, inviting full participation, turning issues back to the group, reaching for consensus, and reaching for difference, seem extremely valuable in defining the structure of the group operation and the attendant skills of the worker.

Although a critical skill in all methods of practice, the ability to use content or program is attributed predominantly to group work. Group workers recognize the differences among members as a group strength, and in accepting equi-finality, understand that many paths can lead to the same place. These ideas demand a flexible approach to what the group does in order to accomplish its purpose, and can include talking and non-talking modalities. Verbal and non-verbal strategies can be further categorized into dimensions of time (present, past, or future) and place (within the group experience or outside the group experience). To illustrate, talking can be broken down to

include: focus on the immediate, jointly held concerns of the members (i.e. social action); focus on the immediate, external, but common concerns (i.e. single mothers' child-rearing experiences); and the non-immediate, past, future, or fantasy oriented concerns (i.e. reminiscence, planning for college, or imagining life on another planet). Non-verbal activities can be similarly identified, having foci both in time and place (i.e. painting a ward mural, and writing letters to deceased parents). Given the need for flexibility, the worker must develop facility in engaging the group in deciding on program elements. The worker must ask the question: "Which medium of exchange will the members choose in attempting to meet their common needs?" (Shulman, 1971, 225). The key skill in the use of program is the worker's ability to understand and operationalize the link between what the group does and how it does it. According to Grace Coyle, the worker maintains focus on the members, not the activity:

Success from the group worker's point of view is seen not in terms of games won, ceramics produced, or information learned, but in terms of what the experience means to the participants. (1948, 28)

The content must serve the group's purpose, with consideration of the differential needs and capacities of members, throughout the life of a group. As a "phoenix" in social work practice, program: "arises revitalized and

soars ever magnificently today with increased prominence and virtuosity" (Middleman, 1980A, 5).

In summary, the special skills required for group work practice are directly related to the peculiarities of the group experience. Among these, the group-as-a-whole, dual perspective, and mutual aid, appear paramount in understanding why group work practice demands skills in addition to those applicable to work with individuals. In essence, groups are composed of individuals, but generate a distinct entity with attendant qualities through the process of joining together.

CHAPTER THREE:**Study of the Orientation and Acculturation
of Field Placement Agencies**

This chapter reports on a qualitative study of the orientation and acculturation of field placement agencies. This study was undertaken to explore the initiation process of new agencies into the school-field partnership. Field of Practice Practicum Coordinators of the Hunter College School of Social Work were identified as the group of persons entrusted with the acceptance and orientation of new field work agencies. As such, it was assumed that they played a primary role in the "natural history" of assignment development, and influenced the agency's expectations for group work assignments. Informal interviews with a sample of three Coordinators focused on their interpretation and implementation of the School's expectations for field work assignments and learning opportunities.

According to the strategic framework discussed in Chapter One B, this study is part of the "contact" stage of this project. This chapter's format begins a pattern that will be utilized in Chapters Three through Six; this introduction is followed by four sections: Purpose, Methodology, Findings, and Analysis and Recommendations.

Purpose of Study

The overall purpose of this holistic evaluation project is to understand, intervene, and assess the potential for enhancing group work assignments for all students in field work. The purpose of this particular study is to examine the beginning stage of the "natural history" of assignment development.

The School's Field of Practice Practicum Coordinator is the person in the institution who is charged with the orientation and acculturation of new agencies as they become involved with the school as field work placements. Agencies often contact the Field Education Department or a faculty member directly with an initial inquiry. The office of the Director of Field Education is responsible for sending out and briefly reviewing two forms required for consideration of affiliation (Agency Exploration Form & Field Instructor Experience Outline). Following this step, requests for affiliation are quickly referred to the appropriate Field of Practice Practicum Coordinator. Thus, the Practicum Coordinator is generally the first person who represents the school to agencies. She is invested with the power to evaluate potential student placements, and to decide if the school will affiliate with the applying agency.

The study of the Coordinators' role in this process is integral to this dissertation project on two levels. First, it provides an early link in the "natural history" of assignment development. Analysis of the initial acculturation of agencies suggests hypotheses regarding: the types and scope of ultimate assignments, effectiveness and possible enhancements, and the interdependence of school and agency personnel in this process. As the primary, early guide to the school, the expectations conveyed by the Practicum Coordinator are critical. Second, this study provides concrete information for planning the training intervention. The training must be consistent (or at least not contradictory) with messages already given to agencies and field instructors.

Methodology

During spring 1991, three of the seven Practicum Coordinators were interviewed. The three respondents either taught case work in the past, or do so presently, as is the case of all seven of the Practicum Coordinators. The Coordinators interviewed were responsible for the placement of 217 students, comprising 50% of the total of 432 students in field work during the 1990-1991 academic year. They were responsible for 155 placement sites, or 53% of the 1990-1991 total of 290 sites.

The duration of the individual interviews was approximately one hour. Two of the three interviewees knew the researcher through the researcher's previous role as an agency field instructor. Appointments were arranged and Coordinators were interviewed during a busy time in the cycle of field work. The researcher decided that the three respondents were sufficient to give a picture of both the general process as well as individual adaptations.

The researcher prepared an interview guide in advance. (Appendix A) This guide was developed to insure consistency among interviews, and to achieve a degree of comprehensiveness. The researcher conducted the interviews privately using the guide in each session. Questions were generally open-ended, and the interviews had a collegial, informal quality. With the permission of respondents, extensive, hand-written notes were taken during the interviews. All three respondents expressed interest in the research and dissertation project.

Findings

Process of agency affiliation.

According to the three concentration coordinators interviewed, and the Director of Field Education, unaffiliated agencies generally express their interest in arranging for student placements through inquiries to the

Director's office. The Director suggests that they send a letter of interest, which includes information about the agency function, qualifications of field instructor(s), and potential student assignments. Based on this letter, the Director passes it to the appropriate Field of Practice Practicum Coordinator for review and follow-up.

Negotiations then continue through contacts between a Field of Practice Practicum Coordinator from the School and the designated "educational coordinator" from the agency. Agency "educational coordinators" can range from the potential field instructor, to a director of training. This follows from the school's position that the placement arrangement is between the agency and the school, not with an individual field instructor. If the possibility of a placement exists, the Coordinator contacts the agency and sends them two forms used to assess agency and supervisory suitability: (1) Agency exploration form (Appendix B) and (2) Field instructor experience outline (Appendix C). In this initial stage, when a match seems possible, the return of the written materials is followed by a meeting at the agency. This meeting includes a review of the submitted materials, with both parties sharing their philosophy, requirements, and capacities. The agency is evaluated on the basis of its purpose and program, in addition to its

ability to provide educational experiences and quality supervision. The agency and school are oriented to the others' approach to practice and there is a mutual assessment of whether the process should continue further.

In the school's decentralized system, the Field of Practice Practicum Coordinator ultimately decides if student placement is indicated. As one Coordinator commented: "If we REALLY want it we will push". Further, she controls the assignment of students and reviews the general appropriateness of the placement on an ongoing basis. If the placement is deemed appropriate and the required agency supports will be provided, the agency is accepted as a field work placement. Agencies are encouraged to accept more than one student, although this is not mandated; the vast majority of agencies have one student assigned to a placement site.

In the case of first year students, the Coordinator assigns the placement before meeting the student. Second year students are allowed some degree of choice, and negotiate their placement with the Coordinator. However, the power of approval remains with the Coordinator, and she informs the agency about placement decisions.

In a somewhat different manner, the OYR (One Year Residence) student proposes the agency to the school. As an

employee, this type of student requests that her place of work be accepted for field instruction, with a requisite change of assignment and supervision. In contrast to an unaffiliated agency's blind approach to the school for first or second year students, this evaluation process has significant constraints. The OYR student may be unable to attend school at all if the work placement is not successfully negotiated.

The OYR program was founded to serve experienced workers who could not afford to take two years off from financial responsibilities in order to attend graduate school. The percentage of people of color enrolled in the OYR program has been consistently higher than those enrolled in the full time, two year program. Although the Coordinators all addressed the need to maintain the school's educational standards for field work, they often found the negotiation of OYR agencies to be more complicated, requiring "compromise on both sides". In addition, many OYR placements last only as long as one student's course of study at the school, while the full time placements are expected to last through many students field education. Thus, when factored over the life of the agency/school affiliation, the time required to negotiate an OYR placement generally appears far greater than for a full time

placement.

Mission and method orientation.

All Coordinators noted the need to explain the school to the agency. Coordinators are one of the few school representatives who travel to the agencies. As one Coordinator elaborated: "we carry the whole mission of the school" to the agencies. She felt that her visits were appreciated, especially those to isolated agencies. In a related vein, another Coordinator felt that her paramount concern was to evaluate the fit between the agency's and school's mission, stating: "that's what I'm going for - all the other things I can work with." Coordinators reported eliminating agencies from further consideration on this basis.

The school has some firm ideas of what is "unsuitability" in a placement (such as the absence of a qualified field instructor), but there is a degree of flexibility in what constitutes "suitability". Some deficits can be mitigated by particular strengths in an agency setting. For example, the opportunities for interdisciplinary team work could be balanced with a limited client population. Practicum Coordinators meet regularly with the Director of Field Education, but they have decentralized authority. Each respondent stated that she

approached the task of evaluating agencies in her own way. In describing the "ideal" placement, a Coordinator gave the following list: "qualified field instructor, not overtaxed and overburdened; agency setting that supports supervisor; space for students; more than one social worker on site; more than one student from our school or from other schools."

Respondents agreed that after a general orientation, they explained specific elements of the school's operations and requirements. This included presenting general field work responsibilities, as well as the method and field of practice-based curriculum of the school. With self-deprecating wit, one Coordinator quipped: "We think they know - we think we're talking the same language - like case work, group work, or intervention. Our own students don't understand concentrations (fields of practice) and methods!" Coordinators concur that one important function of the initial meeting is to confirm and clarify the material submitted in writing. The second stage of elimination can occur at this point, if it appears that the agency has a structural barrier to affiliation, such as the absence of an appropriate field instructor, space for student, and/or suitable projected assignments.

At varying stages in the process, all Coordinators mention the school's interest in opportunities for multi-method and/or second method student assignments, but they vary on the premium placed on such assignments. One Coordinator stated: "Although we are a method school, we strongly encourage more than one method". She reported explaining that the rationale for this approach is that the field calls for mixed practice, presenting the school's interest as, "practically mandated, but not stipulated". The school's agency exploration form asks if there is an opportunity for practice assignments in a second method.

The supervision of practice in additional methods sometimes brings the issue of task supervisors into the discussion. Task supervision is defined as:

the teaching in some ongoing area of an MSW student's field practicum by a person additional to the designated field instructor. (Hunter College School of Social Work, 1992).

Task supervisors can be social workers or non-social workers. The school entrusts the screening and monitoring of task supervision to the agency, based on student and agency needs. Coordinators report that task supervision arrangements meet with varying degrees of success. However, one Coordinator observed that it is more and more common for the primary field instructor of non-group work majors to handle group work supervision.

The school does not limit the method area for secondary practice to group work, but the Coordinators agreed that when provided, group work for non-group work majors, and case work for group work majors appear to be the most common choices. One Coordinator commented that the majority of agencies seem able to give students one group assignment, as opposed to a major group work load. A second Coordinator concurred about the difficulty in arranging field placements for group work majors. A related concern, voiced by one respondent, was that agencies provide opportunities for practice with a variety of client populations, regardless of method.

Not all Coordinators discussed actual assignments at this early stage, although one felt that this was critical at the first meeting. She identified a dual focus of the exploration of assignments and the provision of information regarding expectations of appropriateness. Coordinators shared a view of this process as building a personal relationship with the agency.

Relationship with field instructors.

In some instances, less than perfect matches are made between the school and agency and between the student and field instructor. As one Coordinator commented, "they (the student) survive; the supervisor has SOME experience" (with

the school). All field instructors are invited to an annual fall meeting at the school, and field instructors who are participating in seminars in different schools as well as those new to Hunter, are invited to a meeting to discuss the school's academic and evaluation policies. Attendance is not mandatory at these events. As noted in earlier chapters, all new field instructors participate in the Seminar for Field Instructors at one of the New York City metropolitan area schools of social work. However, the small proportion of new field instructors who take the course at another school are not grounded in Hunter's particular mission and curriculum design. In addition, many field instructors who affiliate with the school have already taken the course, and/or were "grandfathered" due to exceptional experience. Task supervisors and agency-based educational coordinators are not required to participate in the Seminar.

The Coordinators differed in the importance placed on meeting with the field instructor at the first agency visit. For example, one Coordinator mentioned that she rarely talks with the field instructor in these initial visits, while another felt that meeting the field instructor was a priority at the first visit to a new agency. The third Coordinator attempted to include both administrators (to

discuss policy) and potential field instructors (to discuss assignments) at an initial meeting. In some cases, a meeting with the field instructor does not occur at all. In other cases, the field instructor may be the sole agency representative and the placement's negotiator, particularly in small agencies or units. Supporting the exceptional nature of the OYR placements, one Coordinator declared that, "With OYR, you must meet the field instructor." In fact, meetings can be arranged at the school if that will expedite the placement.

However, the primary concerns of the Coordinators lie in insuring that the educational contract is formulated and fulfilled. With rare exceptions, the Coordinators serve a largely administrative, rather than supervisory or consultative relationship with the field instructor.

Interface with faculty advisors and ongoing review.

Faculty advisors are charged with liaison functions between the student, school, and field instructor. In regard to field education, the faculty advisor provides a measure of quality assurance through meetings and telephone contacts with field instructors and students. The faculty advisor, not the field instructor, assigns the student's grade for field work, and prepares an annual critique of the agency's capacity as a learning environment.

There is a formal evaluation of the agency placement in January, but no formal mechanism for communication between faculty advisors and Practicum Coordinators. Rather, there is an assumption that faculty advisors will bring placement problems to the Coordinator's attention. All agreed that this assumption was subject to interpretation. Supporting the feeling that faculty advisors often waited too long to inform Coordinators of problems, one said that she only hears from faculty advisors when they are at the "end of their rope".

A Coordinator suggested that the absence of formal structure may be due to the high number of part-time faculty advisors. She cautioned that the "school is a small community", and that one needed "diplomacy" in areas of inter-unit coordination. Another Coordinator raised a concern that faculty advisors did not recognize the Coordinator's role in the chain of command regarding the arrangement and renewal of placements: "We are responsible for affiliation - for it working or replacing".

Coordinators may hear about problems from students directly, and then follow up with the faculty advisor. The following anecdote is particularly related to the focus of this dissertation project. Following her interview with the researcher, a Coordinator recalled a phone call from a first

year, group work major. The student was very upset about her placement at a primarily case work agency. The student had not been given any group assignments, and she kept raising this concern with her field instructor. According to the student, she was labeled "resistant" by her supervisor. The student exclaimed: "They interpreted my repeatedly asking for groups as resistance to the individual client!". The student was subsequently linked with her faculty advisor and the Coordinator of Faculty Advisement to investigate the situation further.

As the group charged with renewing placements, Coordinators stressed the need for early warning of problems. "Bumpy beginnings" are possible. In one case in which all parties were involved, the Coordinator disagreed with the faculty advisor's suggestion to "pull the student" early in the school year. With a good deal of Coordinator input, the placement improved and reached its potential. All stressed the need for early notice to enhance efforts at amelioration. One stated that if we first hear about problems in January, then "the whole placement is in trouble".

The Coordinators are responsible for affiliation, and make the unusually severe decision to sever ties if necessary. The types of reports that cause serious concern

about the placement include those in which students are not given assignments or there is supervisory irresponsibility. In such cases, the Coordinator and faculty advisor work together towards resolution. Coordinators reported having decided to end affiliation. One Coordinator shared a story in which she suggested that the agency take a break, rather than completely dis-affiliate. Although crises arise, and are sometimes exacerbated by delays in notification, the Coordinators agreed that most placements work out well and fulfill the school's expectations.

Analysis and Recommendations

The two purposes of conducting this study of the orientation of new field placement agencies were: (1) to explore the role of the Practicum Coordinator in the natural history of assignment development, and (2) to gather information to assist in planning the training intervention with new field instructors. The findings have served both purposes, providing description as well as direction for future work.

Impact of Practicum Coordinator in field work education.

It can be said that the Practicum Coordinator plays four pivotal roles in the process of field instruction. First, as an "envoy", she represents the school to the

agency. She is charged with explaining the school's mission, curriculum, and the attendant needs and requirements for student learning. Second, she serves as an "evaluator". As such, she uses skills in reviewing the documents submitted, interviewing the agency representative(s), and observing the agency setting. She forms judgments concerning the agency's services as well as its suitability as a learning environment.

In a third role, she is a "gatekeeper". As the person who decides whether or not to affiliate, she calls upon the data generated through the exploration process. In what is ultimately a principled, but subjective process, the Field of Practice Practicum Coordinator makes her decision on what she believes is good for the school and student. She assesses the agency's receptivity to her orientation, as well as to what it offers as an educational milieu. Her power goes beyond acceptance or denial of agency affiliation. Her fourth role of "matchmaker" is particularly important in light of a limited pool of students and an abundance of agency placements. The Coordinator exerts great influence on agency, school, students. As the person who brings together students with agencies, she controls whether, as well as which, students are assigned.

The critical impact of the Practicum Coordinator can also be identified through looking at the timing of her interventions with agencies. She is present at every stage of the development of the school-field partnership. In particular, "beginnings" offer productive opportunities for learning. The Coordinator is generally the person who acculturates the agency to the school environment. She strongly contributes to building expectations of field work and knowledge of curriculum. Her feedback on the written material submitted by the agency, and the quality of the negotiation process, will figure prominently in the agency's impression of the school. In this process, her interests and biases will be generalized to the entire institution. Her degree of emphasis on multi- and second-method practice with appropriate supervision will set critical standards for affiliation with agencies. If policy changes are implemented, she will be the first to present them and gain the support and understanding of agencies.

As noted earlier, Coordinators may have limited contact with field instructors, and may not be made aware of problems in placements until there is a crisis. If many faculty advisors have part-time status, then the Coordinators could be a valuable, on-going resource to agencies, field instructors, and students because of their

full-time status. The separation of the Practicum Coordinator's and faculty advisor's functions serves a variety of needs; however the absence of a clear model for communication can be problematic. Obviously, the ability to head off problems early would be enhanced by more communication. As pivotal figures, the Coordinators' ability to insure the fulfillment of all academic expectations for field learning can be maximized through enhanced communication.

More subtle concerns also arise; although all Coordinators reported that the plans for the placement are generally implemented, it might be hard to fully assess the implementation since it is the faculty advisor who completes the annual agency evaluation. When considered with the fact that the Practicum Coordinator is often excluded from knowing about problems until they become extremely serious, one can question if the nuances of the placement can be known. Related to the concern of this project, practice assignments in second methods generally, and in group work particularly, may go without scrutiny.

The Coordinators were clear about their strong interests and expectations in this area. However, without on-going, broad-based communication it is unclear how multi-method activities can be monitored. Unless they are central

requirements that could mean the loss of the placement, they necessarily receive less attention. Even with the best of intentions, the Coordinators must respond to crisis. It is hard to see the agency's failure to comply with the schools "advice" or "suggestion" to provide multi-method exposure with appropriate supervision, as such a critical event.

After her initial intervention, the Coordinator is an important party to the major annual event in the partnership: the assignment of student(s). Internally, she has facilitated the student's choice and/or has made the decision to place a particular student in a setting. Externally, she advises the agency of the choices made and shares impressions of the student with the agency. As already noted, she might also be calling the agency with the news that no suitable match was made.

This study suggests that the Coordinator's impact on assignment development is greatest at the beginning of the agency acculturation process, and at the moment of student assignment. Efforts to expand and/or mandate multi-method assignments can capitalize on these moments, through Coordinator involvement. As the years go by, these annual rites of evaluation, matching, and placement beginnings become integral aspects of the school-field partnership, institutionalizing the Practicum Coordinators' position.

Exploring the suggestion that "there is no such thing as a Renaissance person" (Middleman, 1990B), one must draw attention to the fact that all Practicum Coordinators are present or former teachers of case work. In addition, the four instructors of the Seminar for Field Instructors, mandated for beginning field instructors, come from practice methods other than group work. Finally, since Faculty Advisors are assigned with consideration of major method of the student, it is highly unlikely that non-group work students are paired with group work faculty as Faculty Advisors. The researcher does not mean to say that case work, community organization, and administration faculty are incapable of encouraging and assessing group work assignments. However, the literature and findings of this project's research activities appear to indicate that group work practice needs strong, informed advocates if it is to flourish in field work.

Planning the training intervention.

The Practicum Coordinator is generally the first (and sometimes only) school representative that the agency meets. Just as the "newness" factor works positively for training, it is present in the initial visits with agencies. The way that the Coordinator explains the mission and demands of the school will have an impact throughout the agency's affiliation. Therefore, it was pleasurably noted that all three respondents discussed the school's interest in multi-

method practice early in their negotiations with agencies. Further, group work practice appears to be the second-method of choice in a majority of placements. This information is extremely helpful in planning how the school's expectations for multi-method practice will be conveyed in the training sessions.

Three emergent issues in these findings temper the researcher's enthusiastic response. First, second-method practice is not a mandate, but a suggestion. As such, it can be subject to negotiation, particularly in the case of OYR placements that often come with significant constraints.

Second, in the general absence of on-going communication between faculty advisors (those responsible for monitoring the placement, assignments, and supervision) and Practicum Coordinators, it is not clear if secondary expectations (such as second-method and qualifications of task supervisors) are implemented. This concern is addressed more fully in the following chapter, but it has relevancy for planning. It is possible that these issues are not necessarily looked at in evaluating placement renewal, either by the faculty advisor or Coordinator. It appears that there is an absence of consistency in the discussion and expectation for second method, group work assignments for students.

Third, meetings between Coordinators and field instructors are not always held. Although there are sound

reasons, this finding raises a concern for this project and training. In cases where the field instructor does not meet with the school representative, one can ask how the instructor forms her vision of appropriate educational opportunities. The field work manual is a guide, as are meetings (if they occur) with agency-based educational coordinators who have met with the school, and voluntary group meetings with field instructors. In addition, the field work department provides new faculty advisors with information, and faculty advisors provide students with information to bring to their field instructors. It appears that this system could be characterized along a continuum from highly fragmented to having multiple points of reinforcement.

For those field instructors who attend the Seminar for Field Instructors at Hunter College, one can guess that the Seminar is the most important orienting process. Thus, the rationale for conducting training in planning and supervising group work assignments as part of the Seminar is reinforced, as well as the concern for the students of field instructors who do not attend the Seminar.

CHAPTER FOUR:**Survey of Field Instructors and Student Assignments
During 1990 - 1991 Academic Year**

The research activity described in this chapter is a large scale, anonymous survey administered to all field instructors of the Hunter College School of Social Work during the spring of 1991. The sample population consisted of all field instructors during the 1990 - 1991 academic year. This quantitative and qualitative study sought to identify characteristics of field instructors' and students' field work experience, specifically related to social group work.

A component of the "contact" phase in the strategic framework of this project, this survey was designed to contribute to a needs assessment of field instructors, to the knowledge base of the school-field partnership, and to the development of the training curriculum to be implemented as part of this project. This study is linked with the study reported in Chapter Six, as both utilized similar methodologies. Following the established format for Chapters Three through Six, this report continues with an elaboration of the purpose, methodology, findings, and analysis and recommendations.

Purpose of Survey

As in the case of all research activities in this evaluation project, this survey of field instructors was undertaken to provide data on two levels. First, this survey represents an attempt to develop a picture of group work assignments for the field work students at the Hunter College School of Social Work. The findings identify group work assignments of respondents' students during one year. The survey data can be segmented into various sub-groups for comparison. For example, group work assignments of students of all respondents can be compared with assignments of students majoring in methods other than group work, as well as to assignments of students supervised by field instructors who are in their first year of affiliation with the school. These findings provide information about what is happening among a broad spectrum of students, agencies and field instructors.

Second, the survey is directly related to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the training intervention, "Planning and Supervising Group Work Assignments", held in January, 1992. The survey respondents provided specific comments on training needs and interests, as well as more general comments about group work assignments for field work students. These comments were

taken into consideration in planning the structure and content of the intervention. The survey assists in outcome evaluation as well; this particular aspect of the survey will be explored in Chapter Six. Briefly stated here, by segmenting the responses of the new field instructors of 1990 - 1991, a non-experimental control group can be established for comparison with the new field instructors of 1991 - 1992 who responded to the same survey instrument in the spring of 1992.

Methodology

Survey design.

This large scale survey, directed to all field instructors during the 1990 - 1991 academic year, has both quantitative and qualitative elements, and is predominantly descriptive in nature. The survey was adapted from the one used by Julianne Wayne and James Garland (1990) in their study of group work assignments at the School of Social Work of Boston University. (A letter of cooperation is provided as Appendix D of this report). Following similar methodology, the instrument and distribution plan developed from their model was used to assess the state of group work assignments. The study attempted to capture the field work experience as it relates to the number and type of group work assignments, the agency climate for group work

practice, and the experience and expectations of the field instructor. Surveys were targeted for completion by field instructors, who reported on the experiences of their students.

The majority of the questions called for either yes/no or numbered responses, that were subsequently coded for quantitative analysis. Two questions called for qualitative responses, and addressed areas of training needs, opinions about group work assignments, and reactions to the survey and overall project. These comments provided rich detail, complementing the predominantly quantitative data.

The distribution goal for the survey was to reach 100% of the field instructors, as well as to save some mailing costs. The survey was distributed in person to students during April, 1991, when they picked up their spring evaluation forms from the field work office at the school. A checklist was kept to insure that a packet was picked up for each field instructor. Students were asked to give the survey to their field instructor. Assuming that all surveys were distributed as planned, 369 field instructors received copies, covering the field experience of 432 students.

All survey documents were provided in a large envelope. Its contents included: a cover letter signed by the Acting Dean and the Director of Field Education, explaining the

anonymous survey and encouraging participation; a 12 page survey form; additional 5 page form(s) in cases where the field instructor supervised more than one student; a stamped return envelope for the survey, addressed to the school; and an addressed, stamped postcard that identified the field instructor, for separate mailing to the school when the survey was returned. (Appendix E & F).

Returns of the survey and postcard were sent directly to the field work office, where they were stamped on date of receipt. A log of respondents was kept, based on the postcards. Although the cover letter asked for the return of surveys before May 10, 1992, all returns were accepted and logged.

Beginning in June 1991, non-respondents were contacted. The first group to be contacted were new field instructors in the 1990 -1991 academic year. Next, the researcher attempted to contact the remaining non-respondents. Contacting continued through the fall of 1992. The researcher telephoned the field instructor and in the case that they were available, discussed the survey and requested that the field instructor respond. At that time, an offer was made to send a new survey packet if necessary. It was not possible to provide return postage on these duplicate packets, but they were the same as the earlier ones in every

other way.

If the person was not in, a message was left and a business number was given for the researcher. When calls were returned, the same information was conveyed. Messages left at the researcher's office by field instructors, were returned. In cases where a message could not be left, and there was no answer, repeated calls were made. In cases of new field instructors, up to three contacts, including multiple messages, were made. For the remaining field instructors, only one message was left if the field instructor was not available at the time of the call. On some occasions the non-responding field instructor had left the agency. If the potential respondent remained through the placement of the student, efforts were made to reach them at a forwarding number. If they had transferred field supervision responsibilities for the 1990 - 1991 student to another social worker at the same agency, the new supervisor was contacted and encouraged to participate in the survey.

Reactions to the survey.

Field instructors were offered the opportunity to comment specifically on the survey document, and process of completion. 13 of the 117 field instructor respondents chose to do so. Their comments are helpful in considering re-design of the survey, and are reported in the broad

categories of negative and positive feedback. Beginning with the negative, two field instructors commented that the survey was too long. Capturing this feeling is the comment: "enough already!". One respondent recommended additional questions related to the type and duration of groups, suggesting that the survey be lengthened. Five field instructors identified particular aspects of the survey that they found either ambiguous or irrelevant to their situation. These comments appear to fall into two categories. First, they reflect issues outside of the scope of the survey, as exemplified by: "this form is also vague in what it wishes to accomplish for other majors not in the group work field". Second, they address disagreement and/or misunderstanding of categories in survey questions, including: "The types of groups you describe for instance, have not been so neatly defined in real life, for me, in any case." and "Survey assumes group was lead at primary field instructors site."

On the more positive side, the comments of five field instructors indicate their sincere interest in the issues of group work education. This feeling is illustrated by the comment: "I am happy that you are doing this survey. In my field of practice, group could become a powerful tool in the reform of education." Although reported by only a few

respondents, an unanticipated consequence of this survey was bringing the issues of social group work to the attention of the field instructors. This exposure was noted with pleasure by the following comments of three respondents:

1. After filling out this research project I realize that as a graduate student at Adelphi University (1980 - 1982) my exposure to group work courses has been highly limited. Although I was a case work major, basic group work courses (in retrospect) should have been required. All my social work experiences indicate group work knowledge is essential. My training has been primarily "on the job" and in working with other practitioners in the field.

2. About the questions concerning authors - I really had to jog my memory - that was a good practice for me. Otherwise, a very detailed comprehensive survey.

3. I hope you will let us know how this has helped and influenced. Some of the questions required best guess answers; and I learned from this task.

The third comment in this group adds another dimension for consideration: future interaction with respondents. The survey was at least 12 pages long, and asked for time and concentration from respondents. 117 field instructors responded, indicating some level of commitment to the school and/or the subject matter of the survey. Some respondents reported being affected by the experience, and one can assume that others who spent the time to complete and return the survey felt similarly. As discussed in the next chapters, the respondent sample may represent the most

motivated field instructors in regard to group work education in the field.

In the researcher's opinion, the entry of this survey into the field instructors' lives represents an important action. It appears to raise expectations and interest in group work assignment among field instructors, and a plan of follow-up would be a reasonable next step. An example of follow-up could include notifying participants of the range of findings and the use of their suggestions in the training intervention. The school could offer voluntary and/or mandatory training and consultation directly to field instructors and participating agencies. Alternately, the school could link field instructors with outside resources, such as the Annual Symposiums of the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups. Without some indication of further action, survey participants (both respondents and non-respondents) might see the interest in group work assignments as a passing fancy; their renewed interest could turn to cynicism without continued support.

Analysis of respondent sample.

As noted, it is assumed that 369 field instructors received survey packets. Some 115 respondents can be categorized by whether they returned the survey without or with prompting by the researcher: 95, or 83% of the

respondents did so without prompting; 20, or 17% of the respondents did so after a prompt, after the initial deadline for responding had past. As returns were logged, the researcher began to form an impression that the earlier returns (without prompting) seemed to report more group work assignments than those surveys returned after prompting. In order to check out this impression, a comparison of the reports of those who required a prompt, with those who did not, was made. Tables presenting this data along a variety of dimensions are offered as follows:

Table Two
Existence of Group Work Assignments
by Response of Field Instructor
1990 - 1991
All Field Instructor Respondents N=115

	Student has a Group Work Assignment	Student does not have a Group Work Assignment	Total
Response Without Prompt	75 (78.9%)	20 (21.1%)	95 (100%)
Response After Prompt	12 (60%)	8 (40%)	20 (100%)
Total	87 (76%)	28 (24%)	115 (100%)

Table Three
Existence of Group Work Assignments
by Response of Field Instructor
1990 - 1991
All Respondents, Except Supervisors of Group Work Majors N=99

	Student has a Group Work Assignment	Student does not have a Group Work Assignment	Total
Response Without Prompt	61 (75.3%)	20 (24.7)	81 (100%)
Response After Prompt	10 (60%)	8 (40%)	18 (100%)
Total	71 (72%)	28 (24%)	99 (100%)

Table Four

Existence of Group Work Assignments
by Response of Field Instructor
1990 - 1991
Field Instructor Respondents in First Year of Affiliation N=38

	Student has a Group Work Assignment	Student does not have a Group Work Assignment	Total
Response Without Prompt	17 (71%)	7 (29%)	24 (100%)
Response After Prompt	7 (50%)	7 (50%)	14 (100%)
Total	24 (63%)	14 (37%)	38 (100%)

Table Five

Existence of Group Work Assignments
by Response of Field Instructor
1990 - 1991
Field Instructor Respondents in First Year of Affiliation,
Except Supervisors of Group Work Majors N=35

	Student has a Group Work Assignment	Student does not have a Group Work Assignment	Total
Response Without Prompt	15 (68%)	7 (31%)	22 (100%)
Response After Prompt	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	13 (100%)
Total	21 (60%)	14 (40%)	35 (100%)

There appears to be a significant relationship (.0002 for all respondents and .0004 for all respondents with the exception of group work majors) for the data presented in the tables two and three, between students having group work assignments and the circumstances (without prompt or with prompt) of the field instructor's response. The findings indicate that field instructors who returned the survey without prompting were more likely to supervise students who carried group work assignments than field instructors who returned the survey only after prompting.

Although untested at this point, a hypothesis that could be drawn from this data is that field instructors who supervised students with group work assignments were most motivated to return the survey without prompting. A corollary hypothesis follows that the field instructors who returned the survey after prompting represent a group less motivated than the first respondents, but more highly motivated than those who did not return the survey at all. With a minimum of twelve pages to complete, this hypothesis posits that field instructors who did not have students with group work assignments, or were not particularly interested in the issues about these assignments, were the least likely to send in the survey, regardless of prompting.

A secondary area for comparison of sample and general population, is the relationship of the student's major to the response of the field instructor. Out of a total of 432 students listed as having a major method, 122 students are represented in the survey responses. Among the 91 students supervised by field instructors in their first year of affiliation with the school, 38 students are represented in the responses. Tables describing the distribution (actual number and percentage) of students by major method in both the general population as well as in the respondent pool are presented as follows:

Table Six
Distribution of Response Rate by Major Method of Students
1990 - 1991
All Students

Major	General Student Population N=432	Students of Respondents N=122	Percentage of Responses*
Case	297	90	30%
Work	69%	74%	
Group	69	17	25%
Work	16%	14%	
Community	34	5	15%
Organization	8%	4%	
Adminis-	32	10	31%
tration	7%	8%	
Total	432	122	Total Response Rate = 28%
	100%	100%	

* The final column on the right, "Percentage of Responses" represents the response rate for students within each major method.

Table Seven
Distribution of Response Rate by Major Method of Students
1990 - 1991
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation

Major	General Student Population N=91	Students of Respondents N=38	Percentage of Responses*
Case	69	27	39%
Work	76%	71%	
Group	10	3	30%
Work	11%	8%	
Community	4	3	75%
Organization	4%	8%	
Adminis-	8	5	63%
tration	9%	13%	
Total	91	38	Total Response Rate = 42%
	100%	100%	

* The final column on the right, "Percentage of Responses" represents the response rate for students within each major method.

The preceding distributions indicate that the pool of respondents deviated from the overall population in a variety of ways. Among all respondents who identified their student's major method, the field instructors of administration majors had the highest response rate, at 31%, followed by case work (30%), group work (25%), and community organization (15%). The highest rate of difference from general to sample population was among the case work majors who comprise 69% of the general population, but 74% of the sample population. The breakdown of beginning field instructors who identified student methods, displays a different pattern. Field instructors of community organization students led in response rate (75%), followed by administration (63%), case work (39%), and group work (30%). However, even with the dramatically varied response rates, the percentages of each student major in the sample did not differ more than 4 percentage points from those in the general population.

The comparatively low response rate for supervisors of group work majors in both table seven and eight is surprising, especially in light of the hypothesis that motivation plays a positive role in response to the survey. However, it is important to note that the length of time needed to complete the survey increases in proportion to the

number of the student's group work assignments.

Assessment of methodology.

The findings presented in this chapter raise questions about the degree to which the respondent pool of 117 can be used as a sample for the larger population of 345 field instructors. The categorization of respondents according to major method suggests that the sample does not truly echo the composition of the larger population, but this finding is not sufficient by itself to compromise validity. Of greater concern is the significant relationship between mode of response (with or without prompting) and the group work assignments of students. Further testing would be needed to establish the reasons for non-response to the survey, but it is possible that the non-respondents represent a high number of field instructors whose students do not have group assignments.

In this researcher's opinion, a definitive generalization from sample to population is not possible. Thus, the goal of developing a picture of the state of group work assignments for all field work students, through anonymously surveying their field instructors, can not be fully achieved. Although a great deal of information about the assignments, supervision, and group work experiences of the respondents was gathered by the survey, it is of limited

utility in describing the general population. The aggregate data describes the respondents alone, rather than providing a picture of the overall student and field instructor body, as originally hoped. Thus, a limited report of these quantitative findings is contained in this text.

In retrospect, the particular goal of describing the state of group work assignments and supervision could have been achieved through other means. One way to identify student assignments is to go directly to their school records and to draw the salient information from field instruction evaluations and faculty advisor reports. This information could be correlated with information from the data sheets required for all agencies and field instructors affiliating with the school: the Agency Exploration Form (Appendix B) and the Field Instructor Experience Outline (Appendix C).

A second way to obtain basic information as well as some more detail on the field instruction process, is to survey students directly. Following a preliminary presentation of this project, Conboy & Birnbuam (1992) have adapted the questionnaire developed by this researcher, and administered the survey to students at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work of Yeshiva University. This design change, of surveying students rather than field instructors, makes

large scale use of the survey more feasible for replication at additional schools of social work.

However, the survey reported in this chapter is highly useful in a variety of ways. Because of unanticipated consequences of the research design, the sample does appear to represent a fairly well-motivated group of field instructors who are interested in the issues of group work assignments for students. Some 78 of the 117 field instructors who responded wrote narrative answers. Their comments are extremely valuable in identifying specific training areas and in analyzing agency receptivity for group work assignments. These responses, coupled with the quantitative data, provide ample evidence supporting the need for additional focus on group work assignments.

Findings

Aggregate characteristics of respondent sample.

Based on the responses of 117 field instructors, it is possible to identify the extent of group work assignments for 123 students in field work during 1990 - 1991. The tables on the following pages illustrates these findings. The data presented in table eight and table nine were obtained from different questions on the survey. As such, there is slight variation in the number of respondents who answered a particular question. It must be noted that cross

tabulations for the variables presented in this chart were calculated, and that relationships of significance were not found. Thus, these values are presented in summary form as aggregate findings, without suggestion of causality.

Table Eight
Existence of Group Work Assignments for
Students of Respondents, 1990 - 1991

Category of Students	One or More Group Assignments	No Group Assignments	Total
All Students 1990 - 1991	94 76%	29 24%	123 100%
All Students without Group Work Majors	76 72%	29 28%	105 100%
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation	23 62%	14 38%	37 100%
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation without Group Work Majors	21 60%	14 40%	35 100%

Among these 123 students, 76%, or 94, were given at least one group work assignment (as defined by their field instructor). All students majoring in group work (18) had at least one group assignment. When one eliminates the group work majors from the sample, the percentage of students with at least one group assignment goes down to 72%, an impressive number of students working with a second

method assignment of a group. Segmenting the 37 students supervised by new field instructors (in their first year of affiliation with the school), the percentage of students with group assignments drops to 62%. Elimination of group work majors from this sub-group yields 60% of students with at least one group work assignment.

When one describes the number of group assignments for the same categories of students, the following distribution is seen:

Table Nine

Number of Group Work Assignments for
Students of Respondents, 1990 - 1991

Category of Students 1990 - 1991	Number of Group Work Assignments						Total
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five+	
All Students 1990 - 1991	30 24%	42 34%	21 17%	23 19%	5 4%	2 2%	123 100%
All Students without Group Work Majors	30 28%	40 38%	19 18%	15 14%	1 1%	1 1%	106 100%
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation	14 37%	13 34%	5 13%	4 10%	1 3%	1 3%	38 100%
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation without Group Work Majors	14 40%	13 37%	4 11.5%	4 11.5%			35 100%

Adding to the findings of the previous table, the breakdown of the number of groups per student indicates that once group work majors are eliminated, the majority (53%) of students with group assignments as a second method, work with only one group during the field work year; among the 76 non-group work majors who worked with groups, 78% worked with one or two groups. In comparison, the number of group work assignments for these students is larger than the sub-group of students who are supervised by field instructors in the first year of affiliation with the school. After eliminating the group work majors among students supervised by new field instructors, 62% of the 13 students with group assignments had only one group. In this sub-group, 81% of students with groups were assigned one or two groups during the year.

Although there is not a significant relationship between the length of affiliation of field instructors (first year or longer) and whether or not their students have at least one group work assignment, there is an apparent difference. Students of field instructors in their first year of affiliation appeared less likely to have any group work assignments, as compared with the assignments of the students of the total respondent population. Similarly, there is a noticeable difference between the

length of field instructors' affiliation and the number of students' group work assignments. It appears that students supervised by field instructors in the first year of affiliation, who work with groups, had fewer group assignments than those supervised by experienced field instructors. The implications and recommendations based on these findings are discussed at the end of this chapter of the report.

Needs assessment.

This portion of the report begins the presentation of qualitative findings, gathered in response to the two open-ended questions on the survey form:

27A. List the issues regarding group work practice and group work assignments that are important in your field supervision, and/or you would like to explore further (list as many as you want).

44. Additional comments (elaboration and/or reflections on survey form and content).

Both questions were followed by 4 - 5 inches of lined space for comments. 78 of the 117 field instructors who returned the survey chose to answer one or both questions. As already noted, answers to these two questions yielded an unanticipated richness of response, providing data reported under these headings: Needs assessment, Agency context and school curriculum, and Areas for training design and content.

In attempting to assess the needs of field instructors in regard to group work assignments, this researcher obtained a wide range of field instructor opinions. After reviewing comments made by supervisors of non-group work majors, one could say that they run along a continuum from negativity and/or lack of interest in group work practice and education, to interest and/or commitment to working with groups. An exemplar of disinterest is the comment: "we don't supervise group work students in our setting." Obviously, this field instructor did not subscribe to the school's expectations or wishes for group work assignments. These words echo another respondent's statement: "we don't do groups here". It is perhaps the emphatic tone that make these comments so troubling, and raise the greatest challenge for a trainer.

Moving along the continuum is the comment: "I am not comfortable in group work". In these words are the seeds of expanding group work assignments. They direct attention to developing a training intervention that raises confidence by helping the field instructor to identify their existing skills and to begin filling gaps in knowledge. Further along, are comments of field instructors with self-identified group work skills who do not see opportunities for students, as in the following:

This placement is NOT group work although there are many groups in pediatrics, maternity, o.b. out-patient and in-patient. My student is not placed in any of the above areas. The medical/surgical adult inpatient service has no groups. . . Although I have 10 - 15 years of pre MSW group work experience I do not utilize this expertise in this setting.

This comment suggests that training include re-assessment of agency opportunities for student group work assignments.

Closer to the hopeful end of the continuum are comments by field instructors who struggled (some unsuccessfully) to arrange group work assignments, as in the following:

Our office had inexperienced group leaders at MSW level. We felt reluctant to team them up with students for their first group work experience -- this will change next year.

In this common case, the field instructor demonstrated at minimum, assessment, analysis, planning, and action.

However, this case also suggests a limited vision of group work assignments (co-leadership with experienced workers).

Training could address needs to open one's frame of reference to include multiple possibilities to enhance learning and to provide alternatives when one option is closed.

In this continuum, an exemplar for dedication to group work assignments is found in this excerpt:

Opportunities to involve students in group work are limited; one has to carve out an assignment out of existing programs. If there is no group evolving out of an existing program one would then have to establish one for the student. The group that the student participated in was in the paperwork stage when he became involved.

This comment represents the commitment needed to establish group work assignments, and the flexibility to insure that they occur. The field instructor identifies a key element for training, that a group work assignment begins with the planning process, not at the first session. In addition to describing the development of assignments for students, this process of search and adaptation is often the strategy for forming any group in agencies without a clear commitment to group work services.

In summary, it can be said that field instructors hold diverse views on group work assignments, suggesting that there is a range of needs that must be addressed in training. Further, this diversity raises the concern that the training reach participants on a variety of levels. In the researcher's opinion, these levels should not be reached for sequentially, but simultaneously. In other words, the training elements must have the potential for differential application among field instructors with a range of

expertise and interest. The composition of the training groups is a critical factor in planning the structure and content of the training. These findings support the premise that intensive planning is necessary.

Agency context and school curriculum.

The following comment, by a field instructor whose case work student did not have a group assignment, brings the impact of the agency context to life:

In times of increasing demands on agencies. . .
e.g. severe pathology in families referred,
accountability etc., agencies have a difficult
time offering clients services perceived as
luxuries, such as group services when we have NO
trained group workers.

The findings of this study confirm the issues discussed extensively in the literature review. In the example just cited, group work is seen as a frill, and is among the first to go when priorities shift. The field instructor quoted above did not consider how group work could help meet the demands on the agency. Rather, she saw it as diverting energies from essential services.

Perhaps the key issue in this and similar comments by field instructors, is the absence of an advocate for group work practice for workers and students. The question of advocacy includes the need to tune-into the agency ideology and place of group work practice, as illustrated in the following comment:

This form is difficult to complete in reference to this setting. The student was a one year residency student, with a casework concentration. He did not have the opportunity to co-lead any groups. It is hard to answer specific questions relating to group work services at (agency name) because there are nine different settings . . . , and I do not know specifically what kind of treatment services are available in each of those facilities.

Other field instructors reported their disappointment when their students were unable to work with groups, as in this example:

My student was not assigned a group this year due to agency flux and reorganization. Our students usually do run groups and next year we hope to start-up the practice again.

It would be hard to describe this field instructor as unconcerned about group work education, but the comment points to a difference between life in an agency and life in a school. In this researcher's experience, agency life has a sense of history and future that extends far beyond the academic year. In comparison, the school and student must focus on the yearly placement period. When groups are put on hold for students, the student misses the opportunity completely.

Another field instructor's comment: "The director strongly feels group work is a part of social work training.", relates to James Garland's (1990) premise that group work must be championed from the top of an

organization. Surprisingly though, the student supervised by this field instructor did not have any group assignments. It is possible that this apparent anomaly rests in the mixed message regarding the expectation of the school for multi-method practice, or in that field instructors' discomfort at supervising group assignments.

In the case of the following comment, another possibility is suggested:

I would just like to clarify that our agency's home care setting does not lend itself to the group work format. However, since we are a large agency and various outreach programs and two in-patient facilities, it is possible for a motivated student to gain some group work experience outside the home care setting.

A critical element in this comment is the focus on the motivation of the student in seeking group assignments. Students are an important constituency in assignment design, but it is ultimately the field instructor who is charged with insuring a quality placement experience. The non-group work major student of this field instructor worked with two groups during the year of field work. That fact is encouraging, but one must not neglect to ask if a non-motivated student would have gotten the same range of experience.

The question of motivation is linked to the curriculum design of the school of social work. As discussed in

Chapter One, students can graduate without having any academic exposure to group work practice. The comments of respondents in this study support this finding, suggesting that while the skills of the group work major may be extensive, many students have no knowledge of group work practice to bring to the field work experience.

Correlating with the analysis of the orientation of field agencies (Chapter Three), there appears to be a range of impressions about the expectations for multi-method, second method, and group work assignments. On one hand, is the response of this field instructor:

Finding groups for several students is very difficult and if they hold that as an expectation coming in, they're disappointed.

On the other hand, the following comment suggests strengthening the commitment to group work assignments for non-group work major students:

The student came as a "casework" major and therefore group work was not given the importance that I think it should be given - students should know that they are going to run groups - and be asked to provide process, summary, and to be able to discuss group issues, etc.

In this survey, fifteen field instructors commented directly on the linkage between school curriculum and field expectations. Among them, nine focused on the skill-building partnership for social group work.

The following comments represent a range of opinions:

1. students have only theoretical approaches when they enter their residency.
2. in conjunction with student participating in groups at (the agency), student ought to be taking a group work course.
3. it would be good to systematize the way group work is taught. Group work is a wide field and the range of professional training and expertise varies - student training can be very uneven.

The first comment expresses the dilemma for all social work graduate education, in which students need exposure to clients in order to complete the learning process. The second comment, echoed by other field instructors, is more specific. It raises a reasonable concern about the school's commitment to group work education (especially when so few field instructors have specific group work expertise), and legitimately views the agency placement as a cooperative enterprise.

It is possible that the comment of the third respondent could be addressed by enhanced communication between field and school, since in fact, the group work curriculum is quite systematized (Kurland & Salmon, 1989A; Getzel, Kurland, & Salmon, 1987). Although one can not generalize that communication is absent, field instructor requests for "more awareness of current group work theory being taught to students" and "more effective ways to coordinate the classroom with the field experience" present important

opportunities to expand group work assignments and to build advocates for group work services.

Additional comments reflected a desire for closer communication, as well as more direct exchange, such as the suggestion of "getting a group work consultant from the faculty as a supplemental supervisor". In addition to the 64 field instructors with content area suggestions (reported under the next heading), approximately ten field instructors specifically suggested that the school sponsor workshops in group work supervision. When suggesting training at the school, field instructors identify skill building, school linkage, and peer support as reasons. Field instructors motivated to provide group work assignments may not find the needed encouragement within their agency confines, as in the following statement of benefit from training: "getting another perspective on experience from other supervisors of students which isn't available at agency".

These findings relate directly to the dual focus of this project. First, in regard to the institutional assessment, it appears that the expectations for group work assignments may need clarification, and that the context of agency placements play a critical role in the implementation of field work assignments. Second, the training must integrate these expectations and the impact of agency

context on group work assignments. These findings indicate that the quality and quantity of group work assignments will not be enhanced without attention to the permeability of the agency boundaries to changes in perspective and action.

Areas for training design and content.

As noted, 78 of the 117 respondents offered narrative comments in the survey. Of these, 65 field instructors suggested areas for training and development. Without a clear statement of the researcher's plans, ten respondents specifically suggested a workshop in group work, as illustrated by the following comment: "a seminar in how to supervise groupwork practice would be supportive". In addition, four respondents suggested written materials on group work practice and supervision as well as a bibliography.

The vast majority of respondents mentioned particular areas that they would like to explore further. In order to utilize the findings, it was necessary to establish a rudimentary classification system to address the diversity of suggestions. It appeared that comments fell into three basic groups and that some field instructors contributed suggestions in more than one category. The first area, with 58 field instructors contributing comments, related to basic group work practice and the supervision of group work

assignments. In the second, with the comments of 19 field instructors, were suggestions linked to fields of practice and group work with particular populations. The third area, with 11 respondents contributing comments, related to advanced group work practice and clinically focused skills. The development of the actual curriculum is explained in Chapter Five of this report. The following pages describe the field instructors' comments in greater depth.

The majority (46 of 58) of the respondents in the first category suggested training in group work practice, while ten respondents offered comments related to field teaching and supervision of group assignments. Among the practice areas noted, were group processes and dynamics, including themes of conflict, authority, stages, roles, and group cohesion. Other respondents identified interests in the varieties of groups, including task groups, time limited groups, social action groups, and group therapy.

Over 15 field instructors noted areas that are associated with planning for groups. In addition to comments mentioned previously in regard to agency context, they included the following, with accompanying examples: needs assessment ("varied level of functional abilities"); purpose ("why organize a group?", "different types of groups used and the reasons they were chosen"); group composition

("selection of members", "issues of co-leadership when there is unequal position"); pre-group contact ("outreach", "individual screening"); structure ("norms, rules, time limited vs. ongoing"); and content ("worker's ability to plan and use activities").

Ten field instructors suggested areas of need that related directly to their work with students. The impetus for making these comments appeared to range from the field instructor who declared her "low level of comfort" with "teaching group work method", to the field instructor who appeared more confident but stated:

I let student struggle with issues of leadership, membership, group design and resisted her desire to have me tell her how to proceed. I'd like to get a better sense of how to balance the learning process for student with group process.

Field instructors asked for guidance in "dealing with student's anxiety about groups", as well as dealing with the "feelings of being out of control that are inherent in groups". Some field instructors suggested specific issues in supervision, including: "documentation of group processes", "usefulness of student process recordings", and "observations of student solo leadership". Further, field instructors also focused on the school/field partnership in suggesting attention to the following areas: "split loyalty between allegiance to student's experience and needs of

group members"; "more effective ways to coordinate the classroom with the field experience"; and "turning group over to someone else after student leaves to maintain continuity".

A second group of responses related to group work with specific client populations and/or particular fields of practice. A list of these areas, developed by the researcher, are as follows, with the corresponding number of respondents who mentioned them:

Mental Health -----	(4)
Adolescents -----	(4)
Addictions -----	(2)
Schools -----	(2)
Aging -----	(1)
Rehabilitation -----	(1)
Residential Treatment -----	(1)
HIV -----	(1)
Crime Victims -----	(1)
Physical Health -----	(1)
Developmental Disabilities -----	(1)

(note: categories not mutually exclusive or comprehensive)

Although there are generic themes in some of the respondents' suggestions, they were focused on work within a particular service or client system.

The third tentative category for classification of field instructors' comments was advanced group work practice and clinically focused skills. After some initial reflection, the researcher felt that these suggestions went beyond basic group work practice. Although exciting to discuss, and perhaps not considered advanced by experienced

practitioners, they appeared beyond what could be included in a four hour training experience focused on field work supervision of groups. In addition, this category included numerous suggestions related to group therapy and clinical considerations, including the following: "counter-transferential issues", "resistance", and "reframing and paradoxical approaches". Of note, this type of suggestion came exclusively from supervisors of case work majors. Suggestions made by supervisors of group work majors tended to focus on issues more closely allied with group work practice as taught in the school, as indicated in the following examples: "sticking to purpose", "nonverbal cues and latent content", and "handling of difficult issues such as discipline or limits, sexuality".

Analysis and Recommendations

Design considerations.

As discussed in the methodology portion of this chapter, the respondent sample is not generalizable to the larger population of field instructors during 1990 - 1991. However, multiple areas of value and utility remain within these constraints.

The survey experience has pointed out both positive, negative, and unanticipated consequences of the design. As noted, participation in the survey process engaged

respondents in thinking about group work assignments and practice. For some, this experience could be likened to consciousness raising or revisiting a past interest. If one hypothesizes that non-response was evidence of disinterest, then additional study and action is warranted. Further, this inquiry has expanded to include adaptation at other graduate schools, as evidenced at Wurzweiler School of Social Work (Conboy & Birnbaum, 1992). With modifications of target population and sampling procedures (survey of students in person, during class time), the survey has the capacity to study important correlations, including those between assignments and the parameters of groups, as well as the nature of leadership and quality of supervision of group work assignments. In this context, the survey design used in this project can be seen as a step along the path to further refinement.

Assessment of training needs.

The narrative comments of the field instructor respondents provided some of the most useful findings of the survey. As indicated in the comments reported under the heading of needs assessment, there is a continuum of experience, interest, and skill in planning and supervising group work assignments. Clearly, training would have to take this diversity into consideration, and would have to

reach participants on multiple levels.

Corroborating the findings in Chapter Three, respondents demonstrated a range of expectations regarding group assignments, and present a range of interpretations of school expectations. Although the training can address gaps in knowledge about the school's curriculum and vision of the field work experience, training alone will not expand field instructors' commitment to multi-method practice assignments without action on other fronts as well. Field instructor respondents have demonstrated that they hold as diversified views on the subject as school personnel charged with orienting them to the demands of the institution.

Similarly, respondents' comments regarding agency context suggest a major area of focus for the training intervention. The process of developing groups and group assignments in agencies unfamiliar and/or hostile to group work practice by social workers is extremely difficult. Discussed extensively in Chapter Five, training for changes that will be carried out in another setting is difficult to achieve and measure, without additional supports in both the agency and school setting. Based on comments of field instructor respondents, training should meet the supervisor at a range of levels; some field instructors should be challenged to begin looking at the impact of the agency

context, and others should be encouraged to take specific steps to advocate changes.

Extensive data on specific areas for training were collected from respondents. Without knowing about the plan, respondents appeared to confirm the advisability of training related to group work assignments. In fact, they suggested it directly and provide suggestions for content. These suggestions have been summarized in the following outline:

Summary of Respondent's Suggested Areas for Training

- I. General comments and suggestions
 - A. Training in group work practice and education
 - B. Written materials
- II. Basic group work practice
 - A. Group processes and dynamics
 - B. Elements of planning groups
- III. Field work supervision
 - A. Encouragement of assignments
 - B. Supervisory tools
 - C. School and field work linkages
- IV. Group work with special populations
and fields of practice (chart earlier in text)
- V. Advanced skills and practice
 - A. Clinical issues
 - B. Group work by experienced practitioners

The material covered under the outline headings of I, II, and III include the suggestions of the majority of field instructor respondents. Further, these first three headings represent the core of group work practice and supervision that can be individually adapted to different settings and client populations. Thus, the data suggests limiting the focus of training to this core in order to reach all participants, with diverse levels of interest and expertise. In order to assist in the individual adaptation process, examples of groups in a variety of settings can be incorporated into the training. Participants with extensive group work expertise can be drawn into the training as valuable resources to other field instructors.

It is important to note that only ten of the 58 respondents with specific training suggestions, commented on student supervision. The other 48 respondents identified areas in practice for further study. In planning the training intervention, this finding suggested the need to focus on the planning and supervision of group work assignments as a unifying theme to address the common need of all participants. Even with this effort, this finding foreshadowed the experience of many training participants. In the beginning stages of the training, they tended to focus on themselves as group work practitioners, rather than

as field instructors.

Focus on new field instructors.

Although it was not fruitful to describe every parameter of the non-representational sample, the limited presentation of aggregate statistics suggest specific targets for intervention, as well as areas for further study. Intriguing comparisons between the assignments of all students and those supervised by new field instructors, were noted in the description of the sample's aggregate characteristics. After eliminating the group work majors, it appeared that 72% of all students had one or more group work assignments during the field work year 1990 - 1991, as compared to 60% of students supervised by new field instructors. In addition, among students who did have group assignments, 53% of all students with majors other than group work had only one group assignment, as compared to 62% of students of new field instructors who had only one group work assignment. In other words, it appeared that when a student had a group work assignment, it appeared that those supervised by beginning field instructors had a lower number of group assignments.

These findings may have multiple explanations; however two possibilities are offered here: (1) new field instructors focus more on primary method assignments in

their first year of affiliation, and are more likely to branch out into multi-method practice assignments when they have more experience as field supervisors; (2) new field instructors are more likely to be subject to the trends leading to the diminution of group work practice outlined in the literature review of this report, and feel less inclined to plan and supervise group work assignments.

Both possible explanations support the recommendation to work with new field instructors in order to enhance group work opportunities for students in field work. Assuming the first possibility, the school must reach field instructors early in their acculturation process in order to reinforce the expectation of multi-method practice. If field instructors are left to become comfortable in their "primary" task in their first year, and then encouraged to branch out, many opportunities are lost. For one thing, the student assigned to them during the first year of field instruction can lose exposure and experience with group work practice. Another consideration is that without intervention at this early stage, the field instructor may feel that multi-method assignments, or group work in particular, are frills, rather than part and parcel of field work.

Assuming that the second possibility is in operation, beginning field instructors need as much early exposure to the planning and supervision of group work assignments as possible. Intervention with new field instructors can become a potent effort to address the trends of increasing demand for group work services, coupled with diminished capacity of social work professionals to meet the demands. Rather than ceding the provision of group services to other professions, early intervention can encourage field instructors and students to build group work services and professional competence.

Those without exposure to groups can begin to build the skills needed in assignment planning and supervision. Even if beginning field instructors do not immediately utilize these skills, the process of exploring agency context and support for group work practice will hopefully have been started. Among the sample of respondents, the majority of field instructors attempt to provide at least one group work assignment to students. Early training is an excellent way to provide a frame of reference to view appropriate assignments and supervision. It gives field instructors, many without formal group work training, an opportunity to understand the school's vision of quality practice and supervision. Thus, the training intervention provides some

degree of quality control of second-method assignments, an area where a limited level of accountability is demanded. Training can also reinforce and encourage field instructors with skills. Those with dormant and active interests in social group work will be encouraged to pursue group work assignments for their students. Within this framework, field instructors of group work majors can be acknowledged and enabled to share their expertise with fellow field instructors.

In summary, the survey findings corroborate the research reports in the literature review. In this sample, new field instructors were less likely than their experienced counterparts to provide group work assignments for their students. However, their beginning stage of affiliation with the school makes them ideal candidates for interventions that encourage quality, group work assignments for students.

CHAPTER FIVE A:**Report of Training Intervention, January 1992
"Planning and Supervising Group Work Assignments"**

This Chapter of the report describes the work undertaken during the "process" stage of the project. It identifies and examines the training intervention conducted by the researcher during January, 1992, with 78 field instructors in their first year of affiliation with the Hunter College School of Social Work. Following discussion of the purpose and methodology of the intervention, this chapter explains the findings, or intended curriculum and actual implementation of the two-session training experience. The chapter closes with analysis of the intervention and recommendations within the context of the overall project.

Purpose of Training

The primary purpose of the training intervention was to enhance the quantity and quality of group work assignments for social work students through the training of beginning field instructors. Secondary purposes included:

1. To evaluate field instructors' interests and expectations regarding group work assignments.

2. To pilot a model of method-specific training that could be incorporated in to the Seminar for Field Instructors or other formats.
3. To increase exposure and interest in group work practice in agency settings.

Among these secondary purposes, the first linked this intervention to the larger institutional evaluation. Field instructors' feedback and participation during the training provided an additional data set, enriching the understanding of the school's expectations and performance in this area.

The second area mentioned as a secondary purpose, was driven by the school's growing need to demonstrate a commitment to multi-method practice assignments. As noted in previous portions of this report, the Council on Social Work Education's guidelines support multi-method practice opportunities for students. Group work was a logical place to begin since the majority of second-method assignments were with groups. Therefore, with this training effort as a model, or "first step", the school could immediately demonstrate efforts to increase multi-method practice, as well as launch an on-going effort to provide training in all methods.

After analysis of the literature and needs assessment studies, the last secondary purpose was included. It

recognized that the arena for training-generated change was the agency setting, and was predicated on the belief that field instructors had to feel comfortable with what they taught students in the field. Thus, whether because of agency constraints or individual hesitancy (or a combination), many field instructors needed exposure and some understanding of group work on a practitioner level, before implementing group work assignments for students. The literature suggests that understanding and direct experience with groups might turn field instructors into advocates for group work practice for students as well as for themselves and other staff.

Methodology

As described in Chapter One, the development and implementation of this training intervention took place over an extended period of time, and included numerous informal and formal activities. This chapter will utilize the five stage strategic framework developed for this project in describing the planning and implementation of the training intervention.

The "context" phase began the process, with a historical analysis of social group work, as well as identification of the distinctive aspects of group work practice. Agreements were made regarding the research tools

and the context of the training was explored. The researcher began assembling information and discussing ideas about curriculum design, training methods, and the nature of the field work experience. Also during this time, training was developed and given to a voluntary group of field instructors who wanted to learn more about group work practice and supervision. From these activities, the researcher began formulating the assumptions for training that are reported under a separate heading in this portion of the chapter.

During the "contact" phase, formal research activities (described in Chapters Three and Four) were undertaken, and combined with informal activities, used to develop the process and content of the training. This phase also included the final negotiations of agreements about the format of the training. Negotiations with the field education department yielded two critical agreements. First, training sessions were to be incorporated into the Seminar for Field Instructors for supervisors in their first year of affiliation. The seminar has generally consisted of 12 sessions. The focus of these sessions has been and remains, on developing the participants' ability to move into the educative role with student interns. Examples of assignments are utilized to illustrate various aspects of

field teaching, but there is little focus (by design) on practice methodology. During the 1991 - 1992 Seminar, two of the sessions were exclusively devoted to the training intervention, "Planning and Supervising Group Work Assignments". To accommodate this change, the number of sessions were expanded to 13, and regular Seminar instructors made curriculum adjustments to free another session from the twelve they planned for originally.

Second, it was agreed that the sessions were to be conducted by the researcher. As such, she was responsible for the sessions and documenting attendance. Attendance by regular Seminar instructors was optional, and somewhat discouraged by the researcher, in an effort to engage their commitment to the project by providing them with opportunities for release time. As arranged during the planning period, one instructor (the Director of Field Education) decided to attend both sessions of her Seminar Section. All instructors were asked to notify participants of the sessions, and they appeared on the schedule of meetings distributed at the beginning stages of the Seminar.

In preparation for implementation, the researcher interviewed Seminar instructors (three in person, one by telephone) about their Section of the Seminar. These conversations included their impressions of the range of

participant interests, the extent of group work assignments, the general structure of the sessions, the tenor of the group, and the content covered thus far. The researcher utilized this information to become sensitive to differences between Sections and to prepare for entering an existing group experience. All instructors offered encouragement and appeared committed to the purpose of the intervention.

The third phase of the project, "process" included the actual implementation of the training. In January, 1992, a total of eight training sessions were held. Two sessions were held in each of the four Seminar Sections. Actual content of these sessions is reported under the "process of training" heading. Attendance figures for each Section (A,B,C,D) are reported in the following table:

Table Ten

Attendance: Seminar for Field Instructors, January 1992

	Attended First Session Only	Attended Second Session Only	Attended Both Sessions	Total Attendees
Section A				
1/7/92, 1/21/92 A.M.	6	7	7	20
Section B				
1/8/92 1/22/92 A.M.	8	1	9	18
Section C				
1/8/92 1/22/92 P.M.	5	4	7	16
Section D				
1/16/92 1/30/92 A.M.	5	2	17	24
Total	24	14	40	78

Sessions were held in the rooms regularly assigned to the Seminar Sections. For each Section, there was a two week hiatus between the two sessions. Following the pattern already established in the seminar, each session was two hours in duration. One ten-minute break, at approximately mid-point was provided. The researcher remained in the classroom during the break and after the session to speak with any field instructors who so desired. Although varying from Section to Section, numerous participants took advantage of the opportunity to speak individually with the trainer. In each case, the researcher spoke with the

Seminar instructors in between the two sessions.

Although most of the activities in stages four and five of the strategic framework were conducted after the training intervention, it is important to finish placing the training intervention into context. Built directly into the second session, evaluation of the session by the attendees signified the beginning of the fourth phase of the project, "product". In addition to this on-the-spot evaluation (reported in Chapter Five B), evaluation issues were addressed in the mailed survey conducted in the spring of 1992 (reported in Chapter Six). As previously discussed, four areas of change were explored: reaction to training, learning of content, behavioral changes engendered, and results in terms of operationalized objectives. (Kirkpatrick, 1976). The fifth stage of the project, "assessment", brings together the findings for an analysis of implications and recommendations.

Report of Training

The following pages describe the training's content and process. An abbreviated, chronological summary of the content was provided to the Seminar instructors after the training (Appendix J), with all handouts distributed during the sessions. Although specific purposes were articulated for each training component, they were unified by the

overall purpose of enhancing group work education of students through increasing the interest and competence of beginning field instructors.

As noted in an earlier chapter of this report, in group work practice and education, the "medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1964). In this context, the structure of the training was as important as the content. The trainer sought to model group work practice (within appropriate limits), in order to bring the content to life. Therefore, the following descriptions of the training elements contain reference to the individual purpose, content, and structure of delivery and engagement. The different elements of the sessions are numbered; items one through seven were part of the first session and items eight through 16 were part of the second session. This chronology is altered in the middle and end, with reports of activities immediately after the conclusion of each session. When relevant, differences in process and content among the Seminar Sections are highlighted.

1. Session one: Instructor's introduction.

The initial unit of training was the introduction of the instructor to the group. This served the purpose of linking the two sessions with the rest of the Seminar and to help the participants make a shift to a new leader. In

identifying the sessions with the expectations of the school, an early attempt was made to legitimize the trainer and the training focus. The experience in Seminar Sections A & B was similar. In these cases, the trainer was expected, and greeted pleasantly. In Section C, most of the participants reacted with complete shock to the presence of a new leader, declaring that they were completely unaware of the two special sessions. The trainer's explanation of purpose was met with many questions and a good deal of grumbling. Participants gradually became engaged in the session, but questions of relevance to their situations often surfaced. In Section D, the instructor was present, and the trainer's introductory remarks represented passage of leadership from one to the other.

In each Section, the brief introductory process was didactic, in that the trainer explained the place of the two sessions in the overall Seminar, describing how they had come about and fit into the school's vision of field work. In addition, the trainer shared brief biographical information to establish a sense of confidence in her leadership.

2. Participant's introduction.

This element was the first opportunity for the participants to share their feelings about group work practice and education. The trainer asked all field instructors to introduce themselves by name, agency, and by sharing one "fear" or "fantasy" about their student or themselves working with a group. As noted by Kurland, Getzel, and Salmon (1986), this suggestion and participant responses opened up exploration of the barriers to group work education and practice. In addition, it allowed for differential participation. Answers generally correlated with the participant's level of group experience and/or agency setting. A list of the responses in each Seminar Section follows:

Seminar A: rebels, nobody talking, no one showing up, running a group and turf issues, drop off in attendance, so much to do all at the same time, group leader plays favorites, co-leader very difficult to deal with, co-leader brilliant, lack of funding, lack of clients, aren't enough people, confidentiality, set up -- agency context, travel costs to participants and childcare needs, resistance - high anxiety areas, is it worth it?, flyers, rebel against the leader.

Seminar B: members not willing to share, who's going to show up?, violence in groups, showing up, planning for them and no one showing up, getting it, hostility from group members towards other group members, group out of control at the same time, being safe, handling flashbacks, people not showing, depressed group, silence in group, non responsive --too responsive, monopolizer.

Seminar C: scapegoating, feeling no connection to group, no one shows up, loss of control, challenge of members, silence, follow through, no coffee, no crises, group work only by people who know it.

Seminar D: chew her up and spit her out, who's the leader?, what's a leader, violence, just formulating - at very beginning, what would it mean for other work with clients?, co-leadership, seriousness of issues, own competency, conflict in the group, giving grades for participation, floor open, group should be constructive - not be vindictive and destructive, activity groups, right number of patients to make group meaningful, group function - going to another discipline, another method to TEACH!, power and control issues.

This activity enabled the participants to lay out their concerns regarding group work practice and supervision. Participants provided a great deal of material for reference during the discussion of planning and elements of group process.

The responses accompanied by the personal introductions provided an initial sense of the differences between the groups. For example, Section A and Section C's comments seemed to indicate a low level of familiarity with groups and few participants with experience with groups. In the course of introductions, more than five field instructors in Section A indicated that group work assignments were NOT possible for their students. Many participants in Section B made comments related to violence and authority issues. After a brief discussion of this phenomenon, it was established that a large number of participants worked in

correctional and child welfare settings where these issues were of daily concern. It appeared that the greatest number of supervisors of group work majors were in Seminar Section D, the largest of the four Sections. The majority of responses of Section D participants were linked to supervisory issues, as opposed to an emphasis on beginning practice in the other Sections. In this Section, it appeared that all field instructors had at least considered group assignments, and no one described their setting as impossible for groups.

As an "ice breaker", this activity demanded participation by all attendees. The task was relevant to the overall purpose, and brought vitality to the session. Laughter was encouraged, as well as serious consideration given to the fact that supervision of group work assignments might be very difficult for some trainees. This element was an important component in the modeling of group work practice within the learning environment. The discussion of the individual fears and fantasies served to further identify training needs and to build a sense of common purpose.

3. Listing challenge.

This activity began with the division of all participants into teams of 3-5 persons. The teams were asked to quickly list items of a group that one needed to consider either in planning or supervision. The trainer asked them to prepare to share these items as a team with the whole group until only one team could share a non-duplicated item. As the items were called out with each team's turn, the trainer wrote them on the blackboard, beginning the process of grouping items into categories. The emphasis was on fun and participation, with the trainer parodying a game show host, and participants encouraged to arbitrate game disputes, provide songs to accompany team struggles, and applaud winners and losers.

As developed by Roselle Kurland, this activity included all participants in brainstorming elements of the group experience and set the stage for developing a model for planning group assignments. Embedded in an engaging activity, was the beginning development of a common language and understanding of groups in social work. By including everyone, it credited all participants as having knowledge to contribute. The game format modeled the use of innovative program with groups, and for some, de-mystified group work practice. In each of the four Sections, the game

increasingly engaged the participants, often to their surprise.

4. Model of planning for social work with groups.

This training activity was organized around the handout, "A Model of Planning for Social Work with Groups" (Appendix K). The trainer explained that this model was useful in understanding the elements of group work practice, and would provide training participants with a common language. Further, in relation to the supervision of students, this model provided a basis for planning assignments with students. The planning process was identified as the beginning of the group work assignment, rather than viewing the beginning as the first meeting.

The diagrams in the handout were used extensively to organize the information and suggest a useful paradigm for conceptualizing and planning group work assignments. For the majority of participants this was new material. A few participants indicated familiarity with the model, but rather than disengaging, they appeared to enjoy the attention to the material.

Following introduction of the model and further categorization of the items listed in the previous activity, the discussion soon shifted to issues in planning groups with students and the importance of considering the impact

of the agency context. This brought together the fears discussed earlier, with the school's expectations.

Participants were encouraged to identify and discuss common pitfalls with group assignments, and to engage students in planning group assignments along with the supervisor. All items were recorded by the trainer for follow-up in the next session.

At the end of this unit, participants were asked to review all items on the board and to assess if they were applicable in practice with individuals as well. Participants discovered that few items were exclusive to group work. Further, it became clear through the discussion that those items not applicable to work with individuals were often present in community organizations and administrative teams, in addition to being present in groups. On one level, this reinforced the importance of planning in the development of any assignment, and bridged areas of methodological expertise. On another level, discussion of those elements that were linked to groups, was helpful in introducing the method's distinct qualities, as outlined in Chapter Two of this report. This activity represented an example of the trainer's attempt to present group work practice and education as accessible to non-group workers, and open to analysis through the particular area of

expertise of each participant.

5. Diverse and common elements of social group work assignments.

Following the development of a common vocabulary and introduction to the elements of basic group work practice, discussion focused on expanding ideas of appropriate groups for students. Participants were encouraged to consider a wide variety of groups, including standing and ad hoc committees, advisory boards, staff groups, time-limited task groups, and single session groups.

The trainer explained that although appropriate group assignments could be extremely diversified, social work groups shared four elements that distinguished them from other types of collectives. These included:

- a. members agree on common goals;
- b. atmosphere of group acceptance and freedom;
- c. responsibility paired with participation; and
- d. flexibility and adaptability.

This discussion was designed to provide assignment suggestions and a framework for innovation.

In each Seminar Section, new ideas for groups emerged among some participants. Representing one end of a continuum, the participants in Section D were able to share ideas freely, and offered personal experiences with

innovative groups. At the other end, some participants in Section A and C stated that group assignments were simply not possible because of agency constraints. One participant in Section C continued to question the purpose and relevance of the sessions, and another member complained that the trainer did not include "self-help" and "twelve-step" groups in her suggestions of group work assignments.

6. Responsibility/effectiveness/vitality paradigm.

This unit consisted of the presentation and discussion of a framework to use with students for evaluating and examining a single session, or an entire life of a group. A handout (Appendix M) was distributed, based on the work of Emanuel Tropp (1971). This activity was chosen for its use of generic concepts, providing a simple framework for looking at groups. It provided participants with immediately applicable material to utilize in supervision and/or in their own practice with groups. This purpose fit with ideas about adult education, particularly regarding the need for utility and application of learning experiences. The evaluation tool was explained through applying it to the training session; the participants discussed the extent to which elements of responsibility, effectiveness, and vitality were incorporated into the training design and implementation. Thus, it served as a review of the session,

and as an applied example of practice. Unfortunately, this unit was not included in Seminar Section D, although the handout was distributed. In that group, the larger number of participants extended the time spent on previous activities.

7. Discussion of next session.

The trainer attempted to build continuity to the next session in a variety of ways. First, she distributed the "Group Planning Worksheet" (Appendix L) and suggested that during the intervening two weeks, participants could test the utility of the planning framework by identifying and planning an assignment with their student or colleagues. The trainer mentioned that this form would be used at the second session to collectively plan some assignments, encouraging participants to bring back some ideas. Following a brief discussion of the content, date, and structure of the next session, the session was concluded.

After the first session.

Immediately after the session, the trainer remained in the room, answering questions and speaking with participants. In each Seminar Section, at least four participants sought out the trainer. Without exception, discussion with each participant included their description of a group they were working with directly, or an idea for a

group that had been sparked during the training session. As initiated by the participant, the trainer engaged in brief planning and problem solving with the field instructor regarding his/her direct practice with a group.

With the exception of Seminar Section D, the trainer sought feedback on the session from the final participant requesting this consultation. Each respondent was pleased with the session (they were among the most motivated participants). In Section A, the participant suggested that a more "teacherly" approach, with slower delivery and repetition for emphasis, might be more helpful for the majority of participants, noting that the group had been subdued throughout all the Seminar sessions. While stating that she enjoyed the Seminar, she added that she also enjoyed the stylistic differences between the trainer and regular instructor. She noted that the small group activity engendered some of the first feelings of unity with her fellow participants.

In Section B, the participant solicited for feedback had approached the trainer with the following compliment: "you gave a whole group work course without seeming like it was too much -- I can't believe you could do it!". As a veteran of Roselle Kurland's course, this was familiar material to her, and she suggested an increased focus on the

utility of the information. This participant focused on the development of a parenting group that she was leading. The trainer and participant briefly discussed ideas in the context of increasing vitality, responsibility, and effectiveness of the particular group.

The trainer found the first session of Seminar Section C to be the most difficult. Two participants were openly hostile and some others appeared detached. Although the class periodically came together, as in the case of the listing challenge, the trainer struggled to keep the group focused and engaged. It was thus surprising and affirming when a participant began her after-session comments with: "I never had thought about groups before!". She went on to observe that: "It's funny, everyone kept pushing it (the discussion) to working with their own groups. You kept bringing it back to students - but they (the participants) don't think that way."

8. Session two: Introduction.

As soon as the second sessions began, it became clear that the attendance pattern had changed the composition of the Sections. Collectively, 14 new participants joined the training at the second session. The impact was most dramatic in Section A, which had 7 new participants and 7 continuing participants in the second session. New

participants introduced themselves, primarily for the benefit of the trainer.

Due to the new entrants, the session introduction was somewhat lengthier than planned, and included a brief overview of the previous session. The trainer reflected on the content and process of the session, and proposed a slogan for the training, as: Group work assignments are "Not Often Impossible". This statement was an attempt to reframe the negativity of some participants and to open the door to untraditional group work possibilities. The shift of emphasis to a pro-active stance was chosen to set the tone for a more demanding session.

While the emphasis in the first session was on exploring fears and feelings about group work practice and assignments, the emphasis in this session shifted to an examination of the barriers and opportunities, in order to plan and supervise assignments.

9. Multi-method practice.

This element consisted of a lecturette by the trainer, conveying the increasing hope of the school for second method practice assignments for students in the field. The trainer related practice demands for flexible practice approaches, and linked this with the strong interest in multi-method practice of the Council on Social Work

Education. With the support of the Director of Field Education, the trainer advised the participants the possibility that the school would mandate second method assignments in the future.

The purpose of this element was to reinforce the school's interests in multi-method practice, and to demonstrate the fit of the training into this organizational direction. Covering some of the material briefly noted in the first session, the trainer was stronger in articulating the emerging expectations. The trainer explained the research components associated with the training and encouraged trainees to respond (regardless of student group assignments) to the survey in the spring. This discussion set the stage for utilizing the session to plan a group work assignment and/or enhance skills to supervise existing assignments.

10. Listing challenge handout.

The trainer distributed a handout (Appendix N) of the list the participants had compiled through brainstorming at the last session. Organized by the elements of the planning paradigm, this list served as a review of the concepts covered in the previous session. In each of the four Seminar Sections, the participants displayed limited interest in discussing their reactions to the handout. The

list enabled new participants to have a sense of history, but the lukewarm response was dramatically different from the tone of the group while creating it. It is possible that such an animated learning event could not be re-visited through this device. The trainer's expectation that this unit would enhance continuity was not clearly met. Some additional items were suggested by participants, and the unit was quickly finished.

11. Agency analysis.

This unit's focus was the analysis of the agency context as the practice environment. This theme had begun with the "fears" introductions and continued through the planning discussions. In this unit, attention was directed at raising the awareness of participants of agency based myths, ideologies, and fears that limit group work practice and education. The following focusing questions (from an undated handout developed by Irving Karp) were posed to the participants, with each question followed by extensive discussion.

- a. Is there an agency ideology on group methods?
- b. Are there other types of groups used?
- c. What has been the agency experience with groups?
- d. If no other agency staff work with groups, what can be the "real reason"

- e. Do certain groups of staff have a monopoly on working with groups?
- f. In what ways will agency policies, procedures, and informal organization complicate or enhance the student's work with a group?
- g. Are there unmet needs in this agency which can be appropriately met through use of group methods?

Questions "a" through "f" reach for an increasing concentration of attention, while question "g" places all the answers in perspective, by suggesting that the bottom line should be the needs of constituents. This unit's structure was suggested by the needs articulated in the survey of field instructors. Field instructors were viewed as members of their agency's culture. This exercise challenged them to critically examine agency context in order to raise awareness, a pre-cursor of change.

In fact there appeared an attitudinal change among the majority of participants, over the two sessions. There appeared to be a shift from an emphasis on conflict and terror about groups in the first sessions (particularly in Section B), to an emphasis on the group as a "force for good" in the second sessions. Participants' concerns remained, but they were often reframed as realities to deal with, in order to achieve benefits for participants. As

noted earlier, many participants in the first sessions stated that group work assignments were "impossible" in their setting; in the second set of sessions, the trainer engaged participants in challenging these assumptions. It is possible that a reappraisal process began for those who attended the first session. They then returned to their agencies with new tools for analysis, returning to the second session with an expanded perspective.

Each group appeared excited and challenged by this discussion. Since Section C had been the most difficult for the trainer, the change in their tone was immediately apparent. Five of the original participants were not present in the second session, and four new participants joined the second session. However, there appeared to be a more open stance among the entire group of eleven, as evidenced in the following example.

A participant who challenged the purpose of the training on multiple occasions during the first session, had returned. Although the purpose of the sessions was explained at the beginning of each session, this field instructor asked yet again during this particular unit of discussion, "what is the purpose of all this?". In the past, the trainer had taken these comments as an opportunity to engage the class in a discussion of the purpose of the

sessions. This time, rather than immediately answering, the trainer turned to the group and asked, "is anyone else wondering about this?". After receiving smiles and shaking heads in response, the trainer continued: "well, if it is not a question shared by others, let me answer you briefly." After stating the purpose as "assisting field instructors to plan and supervise group work assignments", the lively discussion of the agency context resumed. The participant who asked the question appeared satisfied. In the next unit, he began to participate more fully in planning a group work assignment for the student assigned to another participant.

12. Group planning.

This unit was designed to give all participants a chance to participate in planning a group work assignment. It began with a discussion of any ideas for groups that had emerged since the last session. At least one idea was offered in each Section. The trainer then asked for volunteers who would be willing to share an idea that could be fleshed out by a small group. In Section A, when no others volunteered, this planning work was done together by the whole class. In the three Sections that followed, three to five sub-groups were formed around an idea and its generator.

In each of the three Sections that utilized this framework, the trainer used strategies of cajoling, and direct appeal in order to have enough "volunteers". The small groups of approximately four participants were then charged with discussing the idea, applying the planning paradigm, and tentatively planning the group assignment. The planning worksheet introduced at the end of the first session was used to guide the discussion. After approximately 15 minutes, a representative of the group (usually the "volunteer") reported to the larger class, on the plan developed and the small group process.

This small group structure gave the most motivated participants an opportunity to leave the training with a beginning product. The other participants became involved in the process and learned about planning and assessment through working on a real project. All participants took part in a process of bringing an idea to life, and in operationalizing the planning model presented in the first session. Through the small group, field instructors who did not attend the first session were exposed to the model. In addition, the activity gave participants with a range of previous group experience an opportunity to share their particular expertise with others.

The activity served a modeling function in two ways. First, as a small group experience, the groups reported on their process of working together, and their own sense of purpose, structure, etc. The discussions were lively and incorporated mutual aid. The "volunteers" expressed pleasure with the exercise, even in cases where the discussion did not advance as far as anticipated. Second, the exercise modeled the planning experience of field instructor and student. Participants were able to identify and report on pitfalls in the planning experience, and clarified many issues with the other members and the trainer. In this regard, participants were given the opportunity to "rehearse" planning and to apply a now accessible framework to their work with students.

13. Co-leadership.

This brief unit began with questions about the participants' experience with their students' co-leadership. These examples were incorporated into a lecturette by the trainer, framing unequal co-leadership arrangements as apprenticeship models. The trainer contrasted this model of field education originally utilized by the profession, with the current model of independent practice and reflection in supervision. Judgments were not made on this practice; the ideas provided a new way of looking at the situation. This

conception, elaborated by Wayne and Garland (1990), was extremely appealing to a large number of participants, who immediately reported looking at co-leadership in a new way.

The needs assessment and literature review supporting this training design indicated a growing use of co-leadership in student group work assignments. Upon closer examination, many of the students in these arrangements were not equal co-leaders, but rather, assistant leaders or observers. These findings were borne out in the reports of the training participants, many of whom independently raised the issue of co-leadership as an area of interest early in the training.

Equal co-leadership was discussed briefly, as a complex and rewarding learning opportunity. It was noted that such arrangements required a great deal of supervision, but provided a singular opportunity for collaboration. Co-leadership was thus presented as a structural choice to be considered in planning a group assignment.

14. Learning tools for supervision.

This unit included a range of "tips" and "tools" for supervising group work assignments. First, the trainer discussed the unparalleled benefit of process recordings in supervision. She then offered other suggestions as adjuncts to this method. A handout of a "summary group recording"

form (Appendix O) developed by the trainer for student supervision at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Brooklyn, was distributed. Rather than asking for a play-by-play report, this format asked the student to report in relation to group process, including the affective and instrumental aspects of the group meeting.

Drawing from the work of Glassman and Kates (1988), additional tips included role playing aspects of the group in order to bring it to life in supervision, and moving the supervisory conference to the group's meeting room. Innovative approaches, such as arranging the chairs as they were in the meeting and taking different seats during the supervisory conference, were discussed with excitement by the trainees.

The dual purpose of this unit was to provide some immediate tools to field instructors, and to engage them in considering the learning strategies they use in supervising a variety of student assignments. It is important to note that useful technical tools are developed from years of methodological inquiry, but a novice may not recognize this investment, and may use the tool inappropriately. Further, tools can communicate information quickly, but they may also block the path to deeper understanding (Lewis, 1976). Therefore, the trainer chose to introduce these techniques

in the final stages of the training, following a grounding in basic group work practice and supervision.

15. Discussion of student recording.

In an effort to bring the content to an operational level with actual student practice, an abbreviated process recording was distributed (Appendix P). Participants were asked to read it, and rather than critique the student's practice in general, to focus on particular questions. These questions were written on the blackboard.

- a. Does the recording appear authentic?
- b. What could be one theme for supervision based on this record?
- c. What might be your opening question to the student?
- d. What could be one area of the record for focusing on in relation to this theme?

This activity was done individually and then discussed as a class, except in the case of Section A, which was divided into small groups for the discussion. The first question related to the utility of the recording for learning; participants agreed that it appeared authentic. The other three questions represented an attempt to encourage participants to use multiple frames of reference and areas of expertise in supervision.

As the final activity of the training, this task capitalized on the transferability of field instructors' skills. As class members quickly reported a large number of themes, the trainer pointed out the diversity of ideas, many of which did not rely on extensive knowledge of group work methodology. Suggested themes included: Feelings about discipline; responsibility for children; cultural and age-related value systems; diversity; group cohesion; countertransference issues; commonality in group composition; problem solving; staying focused; and maximizing mutual aid. Participants in each Section appeared surprised at the diversity of appropriate and useful points of intervention with students.

The experience demonstrated that each field instructor could find an appropriate point of entry. The purpose was not to confirm "expert group worker" status on the participants, but rather, to encourage them to enter into group work assignments and supervision with confidence in their existing skills and an understanding of what group work education has to offer.

16. Wrap-up and evaluation.

Although verbal evaluation comments were solicited, few were offered beyond thanking the trainer for leading the sessions. The written evaluation was distributed and

collected before participants left the room. A full report of this evaluation study is contained in Chapter Five B of this document.

After the second session.

The experience after the second session was similar as well as different from what happened after the first session. Many participants sought out the trainer, sharing thoughts about the session. In this instance, however, their comments focused almost exclusively on their work with students, in contrast to the previous experience where they focused on their direct practice with groups.

Analysis and Recommendations

The training intervention represented an effort to enhance group work assignments of students by training beginning field instructors. In effect, the trainer developed the curriculum as a group worker would plan a group. A somewhat abbreviated planning framework is utilized for its evaluation.

Purpose.

The trainer glimpsed many moments of recognition and growth during the sessions. Whether these were evidence of enhanced supervisory abilities and dedication to increasing group work assignments is difficult to say with assurance. However, the trainer's observations of positive growth in

attitudes towards group work and anticipated behaviors in regard to planning and supervising group work assignments, are supported by findings discussed in Chapter Five B and Six contained in this report.

Examination of the secondary purposes reported in the first pages of this portion of the report, yield more definitive results. The participants corroborated the comments of previous respondents about the state of group work practice and education. With the exception of field instructors who did not return after the first session, there appeared to be growing appreciation of multi-method practice in general, and group work in particular. Many participants appeared to thrive in the sessions, confirming a vision of adults as "life-long learners". For those participants interested in further reading, a bibliography was provided (Appendix Q).

Although the training experience captured limited examples of application, the participants demonstrated awareness of agency norms and a beginning ability to strategize to increase opportunities for groups. In one example, one of the "volunteers" who worked with other field instructors to develop a plan for a new group during the second session, reported that she has since implemented the plan. This field instructor indicated that she had never

considered the possibility before the training. Not only has the group been successful for its members, it has caused dramatic shifts in the way the agency looks at group work practice.

Composition.

The choice of beginning field instructors as trainees appeared to be fruitful. The training capitalized on their openness to learning during their orientation phase with the school. In addition, the sanctions concerning attendance may have brought some participants to training. There was a great deal of diversity among trainees; at minimum they were unified by their status as beginning field instructors.

The choice of the trainer to discourage attendance by regular Seminar instructors was short sighted. In retrospect, the instructors were not as interested in having time off as the trainer supposed, and would have been willing to give up one of "their sessions" as well as attend the special sessions. On one level, this choice may have influenced attendance in Sections where instructors were not present. More importantly, the regular instructor missed the opportunity to participate in the training experience in order to make connections in future Seminar sessions. In addition, the instructors who did not attend the training missed the opportunity to reassess their own approaches to

the planning and supervision of group work assignments. This training experience could have enhanced their on-going work with the new field instructors, in both this and subsequent years of the seminar. The Seminar instructor who did attend the sessions reported that the training affected her own view of group work assignments, and influenced her subsequent work with field instructors. A chance to geometrically (each instructor with each new annual section) expand the effect of the special training intervention was not exploited to its best advantage.

The decision to view the training participants as professionals with extensive skills was helpful. Although competent group work practice and field supervision requires a distinct repertoire of skills, this enhancement process was begun by crediting the existing knowledge of training participants.

Structure.

Among the structural decisions made by the trainer, the sequential scheduling of sessions and the mixture of activities, appeared to have contributed positively to the training. Four hours seemed like very little time for the training, but it was decided upon with a full consideration of the school context, purpose of the training, and the characteristics of the trainees. Thus, the material was

fast paced, but appeared appropriately scheduled. In most cases, all content was covered within the available time.

The trainer advised the participants that modeling would be an explicit part of the training process. This appeared to have been one of the most effective aspects of the training. The trainer's stance often modeled that of a group worker with a group, as well as a field instructor with a student. In addition, the participants were engaged in modeling both the worker/group and supervisor/student dynamic. Of critical importance, these examples were discussed, and were characterized by mutual respect.

Finally, the criteria of continuity, sequence, and integration (Towle, 1954) are useful in evaluating the structure of the training. First, continuity suggests that the major elements appear and reappear. Second, sequence addresses the need for reiteration, but also the progression to a broader and deeper level of understanding. The third criteria, integration, is found in the relationship between training activities and the experience in the field. The training report appears to provide evidence of these three critical elements.

Content

The training curriculum indicates many choices of areas to cover as well as methods for presenting material. A particularly effective element was escalating the demand for work from the first to the second session. The participants appeared able to shift gears often, and responded favorably to the variety of training activities. They particularly enjoyed the listing challenge. However, many were also engaged by more "serious" elements, including the agency analysis and discussion of co-leadership. The majority of the training units achieved their individual purposes. The most significant exception was the presentation of the listing challenge items, during the second session.

One of the values of the curriculum was its ability to engage participants with extremely diverse interests and experience. As such, the content of this training can serve as a model for other training programs, whether in this or related areas of interest.

CHAPTER FIVE B:**Evaluation of Training by Field Instructor Participants**

This section of Chapter Five adds the dimension of participant evaluation to the description of the January, 1992 training intervention with beginning field instructors of the Hunter College School of Social Work. It reports purpose of the evaluation, methodology, findings, analysis, and recommendations related to this post-training evaluation study. As part of the "product" stage of the project, it examines the effects of the training through a mixed quantitative and qualitative design, and links this research activity with other aspects of the dissertation project.

Purpose of Evaluation

As noted, this part of the project was developed to gather immediate, post-training impressions and comments by participants in the training intervention: "Planning and Supervising Group Work Assignments, held in January, 1992. It is closely related to the project purpose of identifying effective methods of enhancing group work assignments in the field.

As discussed in other chapters, the effects of training can be seen in changes in participants. These changes can

be classified as reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Kirkpatrick, 1976). Since participants had little or no opportunity to implement training suggestions before they completed the forms, the scope of this study was limited to the examination of reactions, learning, and anticipated behavior.

The study also served a purpose as an integral part of the training intervention. The training attempted to build a sense of the school's hope and/or expectation for multi-method practice, with particular emphasis on the planning and supervision of group work assignments. The inclusion of an evaluation study in the training content reinforced this message, by demonstrating that the training was worth evaluating.

Methodology

The anonymous, one-page evaluation form (Appendix R) was distributed and collected at the end of the second training session of each Seminar Section. Participants completed and returned the forms before leaving the training site. Forms were given to all participants present at the end of the session, including field instructors who attended both sessions and those who attended only the second session. The evaluation form did not ask about attendance; all responses were weighted equally. Field instructors who

attended only the first session were not given evaluation instruments, and were not represented in the study.

According to imperfect attendance records, 24 participants attended the first session only. The attendance figures were dependent on participants signing a circulating list. It is possible that at least two persons failed to do so at the second session, since the number of returned surveys was 56, while the attendance figures account for 54 persons attending either both sessions or the second session only.

Returns were identified by Seminar Section, and aggregate findings were prepared for each Section as well as for the combined population. This data was presented to Seminar instructors and the Director of Field Education as interim findings, along with the content outline (Appendix J) discussed in Chapter Five A.

The evaluation was printed on each side of a single sheet of paper. Each side consisted of one of the two evaluation sections. The first section, "Evaluation Checklist", was almost exclusively quantitative in nature. Participants were asked to rank 15 items through the use of a four step, Lickert scale, ranging from poor to excellent. These items were clustered under three headings. The first heading, "organization of activities" included items related

to the format and content of the training. The second heading, "instructor" included qualities of the trainer. The third heading, "overall rating" included only one item, an overall impression of the training. The final question called for an optional, narrative response to the question: "What other (if any) questions and ranking could be used to help in this evaluation effort? In essence, this question asked for suggestions and comments on the evaluation process itself. This format was initially developed by the researcher for the field instructor training conducted in March, 1990. Ideas were drawn from forms used by the Center for the Study of Social Administration of the Hunter College School of Social Work.

The second side of the page was titled "Evaluation Narrative", and was exclusively qualitative. The first three of the four questions focused on different aspects of training utilization. The first asked for specific examples of utilization with students; the second asked for specific examples of utilization in areas besides work with students. The third question asked for areas of the training that appeared particularly applicable to the participants' work, although not necessarily of immediate utility. The final question asked for specific suggestions for improving the training sessions. This format was developed especially for

this application by the researcher.

A total of 56 forms were returned. Respondents did not answer every question. In the evaluation checklist, the number of respondents ranged from 52 to 56 for the quantitative questions. In the evaluation narrative, question A was answered by 45 respondents (80%), question B by 38 respondents (68%), question C by 36 respondents (64%), and question D by 35 respondents (63%).

Findings

Quantitative findings: reaction to training.

The "Evaluation Checklist" asked participants to assign ratings to 15 items related to the training experience. Given four choices (poor, fair, good, and excellent), respondents shared their reactions to various aspects of the training. A summary table follows, providing aggregate data for each Seminar Section, as well as for the combined population of respondents.

Table Eleven

Evaluation Summary
Mean Responses of Participants for Each Seminar Section
and Combined Sections (A,B,C,& D)

Rating Choices: Poor=1; Fair=2; Good=3; Excellent=4
N = 56 Participants Submitted Forms

Evaluation ChecklistSeminar Sections and Combined Sections

	A	B	C	D	Combined	N
<u>Organization of Activities:</u>						
1. Development of the basic concepts in terms of clarity and comprehensiveness	3.08	3.64	3.40	3.50	3.41	54
2. Solicitation and incorporation of participants interest	3.00	3.73	3.55	3.60	3.46	56
3. Organization of seminar content	3.14	3.12	3.73	3.35	3.37	56
4. Adaptability of seminar to my level of experience	2.64	3.23	3.27	3.40	3.15	52
5. Pacing of the material	2.57	3.00	3.27	3.15	3.00	56
6. Encouragement of discussion	3.29	3.82	3.80	3.70	3.64	55
7. Use of experiential activities	3.08	3.36	3.44	3.50	3.36	54
8. Integration of assignments and practice-based examples	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.40	3.24	54
9. Helpfulness of handouts	3.21	3.45	3.33	3.65	3.44	53
<u>Instructor:</u>						
10. Knowledge of the subject	3.68	3.91	3.73	3.95	3.83	56
11. Clarity of expression of ideas	3.75	3.64	3.73	3.75	3.72	56
12. Ability to respond to seminar participants' concerns	3.36	3.64	3.82	3.80	3.66	56
13. Tolerance of differences of opinion	3.54	3.64	3.60	3.79	3.66	53
14. Ability to relate content to seminar purpose	3.39	3.36	3.60	3.70	3.54	54
<u>Overall Rating:</u>						
15. Evaluation of the 2 sessions	3.07	3.41	3.70	3.63	3.45	55

These findings indicate that reaction to the training content, process, and leadership was favorable, with an overall evaluative score of 3.45. The combined respondents ranked all categories between good and excellent, with mean scores ranging from 3.00 (Pacing of the material) and 3.15 (Adaptability of seminar to my level of experience) to 3.72 (Clarity of expression of ideas) and 3.83 (Knowledge of the subject).

Individual Seminar Sections differed in reactions to the training. Section A gave the lowest ratings, with the overall score at 3.07. Next came Section B, with a score of 3.41. The third group was Section D, at 3.63 and the group rating the training most highly was Section C, at an overall score of 3.70. As discussed in the report of the training (3C), the Sections were different, and called upon differential teaching skills of the trainer. The finding that Section C ranked the training most highly, was not surprising, after considering the qualities of the educational experience. Although this class was the hardest to engage during the first session, the second session was dramatically different. As discussed in the previous chapter, the second session was characterized by excitement, intensity, and hard work.

Section A, the group with the lowest satisfaction rating (albeit good), was the first Section to be trained. The content and process was slightly different than in Sections that followed. For example, this Section was not broken up into small groups for the group planning activity in the second session. As already discussed, it was a relatively passive class, and it was difficult to find more than one "volunteer" to lend a focus to the small group activity. Rather than push further, this exercise was done with the full class of fourteen, and a small group component was incorporated into the student recording activity, later in the session. After this experience, the trainer gained more confidence, and decided to press for the small group discussion in the following Sections. Another factor in these findings may be the fact that Section A had the highest number of participants who entered training in the second session; seven participants, or 50% of the respondents, attended only the second session.

Qualitative findings: suggestions for training.

In Section Two of the evaluation, questions were related to the utility of the training (questions A,B,and C), and to ways of improving the training (question D). Training suggestions will be reported first, followed by training utilization comments. As documented in the

methodology statement, 56 participants submitted evaluation forms, but respondents were not mandated to answer every question.

In response to the request: "Please give specific suggestions for improving any aspects of these sessions which you have not mentioned earlier", one trainee suggested limiting the training to one session, while five participants suggested expanding the number of sessions. Among the latter group was the following response: "Make this at least a four session program and let us draw on our agency experience in class".

Although comments were similar among participants in all Sections, a response from a Section A participant appears related to previous speculation about their relatively lower estimation of the training:

I felt some clarity lacking re: purpose of sessions, and I think that may be because I attended only one session. I also think the class was generally somewhat burned out because of the time of year - this may not have been the best time to do this. I think it's a valuable workshop and an important addition to the SIFI (Seminar for Field Instructors).

Respondents also offered simply positive responses, including: "Very clear, direct and helpful", and "Seminars were specific enough within the limited period of time to serve the purpose." Other respondents' comments appeared contradictory; one participant identified the first session

as too elementary, but the second session as challenging, while another participant called the second session only a review, following the meaty first session.

Structural or process areas proposed for expansion included: more experiential or hands-on activities, more case examples, and more small group experiences, as illustrated in the following comment:

I enjoy group exercises and found the more you can use or incorporate in teaching the better. I understand time constraints probably restricted this, but I would like more group exercise involvement.

A content area suggested for inclusion was the stages of group development ("helpful in finding order in chaos") and for expansion, was agency context ("agency problems, agency needs vs. student/or supervisor's need"). Calling for further attention to the agency setting, the following respondent added the dimension of cultural sensitivity:

I think it is important to emphasize the socio-political context of agencies and the issues/themes in the development of groups. The cultural considerations are important and essentials in understanding the hidden agendas, etc. - as well as the value judgments that people make about other groups.

This comment appears to fall into the category of advanced group work practice, as established in Chapter Four; however, the issues are important in even the most elementary overview of group work education.

One respondent noted some dissonance with the other sessions of the Seminar, and four respondents suggested moving the sessions earlier in the Seminar. Among them, one respondent suggested a radical timing shift for the training:

Ideally, I wish some of the SIFI classes including these two were provided before we begin work with the student. I think we could be more effective with some preparation.

This comment and the large number of valuable suggestions, correlate with the findings of the other studies in this project. It appears that the SIFI is the primary or singular vehicle for the acculturation of beginning field instructors. Participants appear both invested in the learning process, and anxious for orientation.

Qualitative findings: learning and behavioral change.

The first question in the Evaluation Narrative asked for specific examples of how the field instructor has used or will use the training material with field work students. Some 45 participants responded to this question; their comments ranged from reports of overall changes of attitude to particular activities they expected to pursue. Beginning with the general, three respondents reported attitudinal change, as dramatically illustrated by the following comment:

The sessions jarred me into realizing that I hadn't done anything to encourage student's beginning a group.

Nine field instructors stated that they expected to use the training experience in formulating an idea for a student group work assignment, as in the following example:

(I) will not continue the passive role I've taken as field instructor, but will ask students to brainstorm a group opportunity.

This comment is representative of field instructors who reported shifting their views about the development of student assignments as a result of the training. In addition, eight participants reported that they expected their student to work with a group as a result of the training, as evidenced in the declaration: "My student will begin a group!".

Among those respondents who mentioned specific activities, were extensive references to using the handouts and charts in supervision. In this regard, 12 participants directly identified that they have, or intend to use the planning worksheet with their student. Six respondents stated that they would utilize process recordings in their group work supervision. Additional activities mentioned, included assessing the agency context, identifying client needs, understanding the purposes of groups, and considering co-leadership strategies.

Responses appeared to indicate that the training was useful for participants with different levels of skill. The majority of participants acknowledged their beginning level of comfort with groups. On the other hand, one respondent stated:

The information gathered from the sessions have reinforced my knowledge/skill of group work. This in turn allows me to better share my knowledge with the student.

This process of re-connecting with one's own knowledge base appears to be a powerful effect of the training.

The range of participant interests and skills was also evident in responses to the second question, asking for application of the training in professional activities besides field instruction. The response, "My own apprehension of running groups may be relieved to a degree", appears to confirm the efficacy of "starting where the supervisor is" in the training, and building from the known to the new. Another respondent provided evidence of learning and anticipated behavioral change in the following comment:

The session I attended focused on group work, an area I have no experience with. Incorporating group work into my agency's service plan for clients will better meet clients needs. It is a possibility we have not thought of before.

On the other hand, 14 of the 38 participants responding to this question, stated that they had already begun, or

planned on using the training materials in their own direct practice with groups.

It appeared that this particular question generated six types of responses. First, training was reported to have relieved anxiety among those with negligible experience with groups, who felt as this respondent: "Before attending class I had vague concepts; today they have become more focused". Second, as in this example, it re-awakened interest in group work practice:

It has been an encouragement, motivation to me personally to utilize groups to a greater extent. Certainly the instructors enthusiasm has been the major influence for me. I have always liked group work - you simply reminded me of how much and why!

Third, the training provided material of use in other aspects of practice, including case work and staff supervision. Fourth, participants identified ways they planned on sharing the training with others. An illustration of how this can create a geometric effect follows:

I will be running some educational/seminar groups for our staff and will use the material to help organize my sessions. Also will model the breaking into smaller groups - brainstorming, etc. in sessions.

The fifth type of response was related to ways in which the training provided tools, such as the planning worksheet and summary group recording form, to participants with some

group work background. As the following comment indicates, utilization of a tool from the training could have a profound effect on agency-based practice:

Process recording form will be used with student and other workers in order to keep a record of groups that we currently run in the agency but are not formally documented or supervised.

This comment was closely related to the sixth type, responses specifically focused on exploration of the agency context. The following statement demonstrates the impact of awareness on practice:

Seminar has helped me to tune into some of the aspects that agency context minimizes groups - although overtly encourages them. I've been thinking about starting a family support group in the in-patient unit. I will, and I feel more inspired to do so.

The third question of the Evaluation Narrative asked respondents to identify applicable areas from the training, even if they can not be applied immediately. In response, participants specifically pointed to supervisory tips, planning and group formation, client assessment, and recordings. Again, evidence of learning was found in responses such as: "ideas for translating service needs into objects for group work practice" and "agency context - what restraints there are and why groups sometimes don't succeed". Two participants pointed out learning connections between group work and other methods. The "re-awakening"

theme surfaced again in a response by another field instructor, who saw the training as a "reminder of how valuable I believe group work training is", and added that the sessions gave her a "clear conceptual framework for thinking about group work". Echoing this sentiment was the comment of another participant: "The planning information is most useful to me as I tend to minimize its importance. No more!"

In a final note, seven field instructors stated directly that they did not expect their students to work with groups this year, for a variety of reasons. They reported that they saw the utility of the training in planning for that eventuality; in the interim, it was applicable in other aspects of their professional lives.

Analysis and Recommendations

On balance, the design of the participant evaluation study appears to have served its purposes well. Immediate, post-training impressions were gathered regarding participants' reactions, learning, and behavioral changes (implemented and anticipated) that were directly attributed to the training.

The addition of a few demographic questions would have enriched the analysis further. These could have included: training attendance (one or both sessions) and the major

method of the student supervisee. Cross tabulations using these characteristics might have identified the presence or absence of significant statistical relationships. In the case of study replication, some consideration could be given to incorporating participants who did not attend the second session, into the process of evaluation. Understanding their attendance pattern might enrich the analysis.

Taken all together, the evaluation of the training by the participants appeared extremely positive. Most reactions to the training ranged from good to excellent, and the individual Seminar Sections provided responses consistent with what was expected by the trainer. A wealth of qualitative data indicated a strong impact of the training on the participants who responded. Findings indicated that the content and process of the training differentially reached the beginning field instructors, with their varied levels of experience with group work practice and education. The findings suggested that the training experience generated changes from awareness to action.

The respondents pointed out that the impact of the training was not limited to the arrangement and supervision of groups for students. Rather, field instructors reported profound effects of the training in their own work with clients, and in their relationships with the agency. Thus,

the rationale for expanding the concept of training success beyond an increase in group work assignments during the academic year, was supported by these findings.

Given that participants return to the agency environment to actualize their plans, two recommendations can be offered. First, regarding research methodology, it appears advisable to consider incorporating elements of longitudinal study in any re-formulated study design. As the final chapter of this report will explore further, following the natural history of the high hopes of many of the respondents, would provide important data to enhance group work practice and education.

The second recommendation relates to strengthening the school-field partnership. Norms about group work practice can be seen as products of the organizational culture (Allen, 1976). As discussed in an earlier chapter, field instructors are members of both the culture of the school and the culture of the agency. However, the influence of the school peaks during the first year of affiliation, and dissipates as the field instructor completes the Seminar and operates more independently. The agency culture remains a constant, critical influence on the planning and supervision of group work assignments, as well as on group work practice in general.

CHAPTER SIX:**Survey of Beginning Field Instructors and
Student Assignments
During 1991 - 1992 Academic Year**

This chapter reports on a mailed survey to all beginning field instructors during the 1991 - 1992 academic year. Echoing the previous year's study, described in Chapter Four, this survey was conducted in the spring of 1992, and sought data on the expectations and experiences of field instructors concerning group work education in the field. The focus on field instructors in their first year of affiliation with the Hunter College School of Social Work insured that the sample had not been surveyed the previous year, and that many respondents were participants in the training intervention conducted during January, 1992.

As part of the "product" phase of the project, this survey relates to the assessment of training effects, as well as to overall program evaluation. The last chapter to follow this format, this section of the report continues with the following headings: Purpose of Survey, Methodology, Findings, and Analysis and Recommendations.

Purpose of Survey

This research activity was designed to assist in answering two framing research questions:

1. What are the expectations and experience of graduate students, field instructors, and faculty regarding group work in field education?
2. Is training of field instructors effective in enhancing social group work assignments in field education?

This effort builds on the survey conducted with field instructors during the 1990 - 1991 academic year, reported in Chapter Four. Regarding the first question, this study widens the pool of respondents, adding the dimension of study over time. In relation to the second question, the survey obtained responses of participants and non-participants in the training intervention held in January, 1992. Their quantitative and qualitative responses were both descriptive and explanatory in nature, giving a picture of their students' assignments with groups as well as their attitudes and interests about group work education and practice.

Methodology

Study design.

With the exception of adding one question on the first page, regarding participation in the training, the survey form used in spring, 1992 (Appendix H) was identical to the one distributed to all field instructors in spring, 1991. The survey instrument was adapted from the one developed by Julianne Wayne and James Garland (1990) in their work at Boston University School of Social Work. Field instructors were targeted as respondents, and asked to report on student interns' group work assignments, agency context for group work practice, and their experience, expectations, and interests in the area of social group work.

This study differed from the previous year's in its distribution plan. Survey materials were mailed directly to the field instructors, rather than distribution through student pick-up at the school. Some 92 survey packets were mailed; each packet included: a cover letter signed by the Dean of the School of Social Work and the Director of Field Education; a 12 page survey form; additional five page form(s) in cases where the field instructor supervised more than one student; a stamped return envelope for the survey, addressed to the school; and an addressed, stamped postcard for the field instructors' identifying information for

separate mailing to the school when the survey was returned. (Appendix G & H).

As in the case of the 1990 - 1991 study, postcard and survey returns were sent directly to the field work office, where they were stamped on date of receipt. A log of respondents was kept, based on the postcards. The cover letter asked for the return of surveys before June 22, 1992, but all returns were accepted and logged.

Non-respondents were contacted, beginning in July 1992, and continuing through summer 1992. The researcher telephoned the field instructor and in the case that they were available, discussed the survey and requested that the field instructor respond. At that time, an offer was made to send a new survey packet if necessary. It was not possible to pre-stamp these duplicate packets, but they were the same as the earlier ones in every other way. As in the previous year, messages and return calls were made.

Reactions to the survey.

As in the past, the beginning field instructors surveyed were offered the opportunity to comment on the survey process. Only two of the 37 respondents specifically commented on the survey in a narrative comment. Both respondents attended one of the two training sessions. One could be considered a critique of the overall form and

intent of the survey:

This questionnaire appears to be directed to persons who are/are supposed to be group work majors - students. . . I am not a group work instructor. The questionnaire is inappropriate, inaccurate, not applicable. Sorry.

A possible explanation for the vehemence and conversational tone is that the respondent had met the researcher/trainer during the training sessions, and knew that she would be reading the material on return. It appeared that respondents who attended the training realized that the trainer was also the researcher. Thus, many respondents utilized a conversational tone in their statements written in the survey.

The other comment addressed the choices for answers in the survey, and suggested that:

many of the questions were rather too specific and categories did not adequately reflect this agency's practice and programs.

This comment is similar to those voiced by a few respondents in the previous year. It does suggest that the field instructor read and thought about the questions. The small number of similar comments are insufficient in themselves to warrant rewriting of the categories in future administrations of the survey.

Analysis of respondent sample.

It is assumed that 92 field instructors received the survey packets mailed to them. The researcher had anticipated a high response rate among those field instructors who participated in the training intervention, since they might connect the survey with the training effort. The overall response rate for beginning field instructors was 34%. The response rate of those field instructors who attended one or both training sessions was two percentage points higher, at 36% (28 of the 78 training attendees responded). This response rate was seven percentage points greater than the 28% response rate for all field instructors in the previous year's study. As reported in Chapter Four, the sub-group of beginning field instructors in the 1990 - 1991 study responded at a 36% rate, identical to that of the 1991 - 1992 training participants.

Of the 37 field instructors responding to the 1991 - 1992 survey, 27 did so without prompting. After the deadline for responding had passed, ten field instructors responded after a prompt by the researcher. The 1990 - 1991 survey found a correlation between the response circumstances of the field instructor (no prompt/prompt) with the group work assignments of students. Therefore,

similar tables are presented for the 1991 - 1992 beginning field instructors as follows:

Table Twelve

Existence of Group Work Assignments
by Response of Beginning Field Instructors
1991 - 1992
All Field Instructor Respondents N=37

	Student has a Group Work Assignment	Student does not have a Group Work Assignment	Total
Response Without Prompt	15 (55.6%)	12 (44.4%)	27 (100%)
Response After Prompt	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10 (100%)
Total	20 (54%)	17 (46%)	37 (100%)

Table Thirteen

Existence of Group Work Assignments
by Response of Beginning Field Instructor
1991 - 1992
All Respondents, Except Supervisors of Group Work Majors N=32

	Student has a Group Work Assignment	Student does not have a Group Work Assignment	Total
Response Without Prompt	10 (45.5%)	12 (54.5%)	22 (100%)
Response After Prompt	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10 (100%)
Total	15 (47%)	17 (53%)	32 (100%)

It must be noted that although a relationship of significance was found when considering the mode of response (without and with prompting) and group work assignments (none or one/more), in a sample combining respondents from both years of study, no relationship of significance was found when cross tabulations were computed for the 1991 - 1992 respondents alone.

Among the respondents described in table twelve, field instructors who responded without prompting supervised a greater percentage of students with group work assignments (55.6%), than those who answered only after prompting (50% of students with group work assignments). These findings echo those in the previous year's study. However, when one eliminates supervisors of group work students from the sample (table thirteen), a different picture exists. In this case, there was a lower percentage of students with one or more group assignments (45.5% of 22) among students supervised by field instructors who responded without prompting, than among students whose supervisors responded with prompting (50% of 10).

Additional description of the sample comes from a breakdown of major method of students of respondents, provided in the following table:

Table Fourteen
Distribution by Major Method of Students
1991 - 1992
All Students of Beginning Field Instructors

Major	General Student Population N=106	Students of Respondents N=36	Percentage of Responses*
Case	78	22	28%
Work	74%	61%	
Group	7	5	71%
Work	7%	14%	
Community	10	4	40%
Organization	9%	11%	
Adminis-	11	5	45%
tration	10%	14%	
Total	106	36	Total Response Rate = 34%
	100%	100%	

* The final column on the right, "Percentage of Responses" represents the response rate for students within each major method.

As in the case with the previous year, these distributions indicate that the sample deviates from the overall population of beginning field instructors in a variety of ways. After dividing students of respondents by their major method, a disparity between the general student population and students of respondents is evident. Although the overall response rate was 34%, supervisors of group work majors responded at a 71% rate. The lowest rate of response (28%) was among case work majors, who represent 74% of the general population, but 61% of the sample. Considering that all group work majors have group work assignments, it is possible that the generalizability of this sample to the

general population is limited.

These findings also point out disparities between the sub-group of beginning field instructors in the 1990 - 1991 sample and those of 1991 - 1992. In particular, there was a marked difference between the response rate of supervisors of group work majors in the 1990 - 1991 (30%) survey, and the rate in the 1991 - 1992 (71%) survey. Group work majors comprise a small segment of the school's population (16% in 1990), and their responses are outnumbered by other methods. The difference in the two response rates may be caused by a variety of factors, perhaps including the impact of participation in training.

Assessment of Methodology.

This study represents the second stage of a design already implemented. As such, it suffers from the same problems as reported in Chapter Four, but also yielded data useful in accomplishing the purpose of the overall project. In summary, this samples utility is limited on two levels. First, its generalizability to the general population of beginning field instructors is open to question, based on its distribution of major method. Second, it has marked differences from the sample of beginning field instructors in the previous year's survey. Relationships between response (without and with prompting) and student group work

assignments should be explored further. Since the respondent samples from the two years differ on this basis, comparability is questionable.

Without findings of significance, the replication of the survey over a two year period did provide a limited opportunity to compare beginning field instructors of 1990 - 1991 with beginning field instructors of 1991-1992. In addition, it allowed the comparison of assignments of students of respondents who attended one or both training sessions with the larger respondent sample population. This study's design can be classified between a quasi-analytic design, with a non-equivalent control group, and a non-experimental design, with its "after-only" study of participants. (Weiss, 1972). Although a base-line of training participants' knowledge and interests would make it possible to attribute findings to the effects of training, qualitative questions provided opportunities for the respondents to address these effects directly.

As noted in Chapter Four, alternate strategies such as the review of student records and field placement forms would provide direct data on group work assignments and would overcome the sampling concerns; the survey of students directly in the classroom would also provide a high response rate and assignment data. However, this design provides an

imperfect opportunity to compare the responses of beginning field instructors. At minimum, the responses of the 1991 - 1992 group can be considered in the on-going needs assessment and overall evaluative effort. Beyond these concerns, the implementation of this study's design yielded unanticipated consequences that are critical to answering the two framing questions mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and to understanding the state of group work education in the field.

Findings

Aggregate characteristics of respondent sample.

It is possible to identify the extent of group work assignments of 36 students of respondents in field work during 1991 - 1992. The tables on the following pages illustrate these findings. The data presented in table fifteen and table sixteen was obtained from different questions on the survey. As such, there are slight variations in the number of respondents who answered particular questions. In addition, it must be noted that cross tabulations for the variables presented in this chart were calculated, and that no relationships of significance were found. Thus, these values are presented in summary form as aggregate findings, without suggestion of causality.

Table Fifteen
Existence of Group Work Assignments for
Students of Respondents, 1991 - 1992

Category of Students	One or More Group Assignments	No Group Assignments	Total
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation	20 (55.6%)	16 (44.4%)	36 (100%)
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation without Group Work Majors	15 (48%)	16 (52%)	31 (100%)
Students of Field Instructors who Attended One or Two Training Sessions	16 (57%)	12 (43%)	28 (100%)
Students of Field Instructors who Attended One or Two Training Sessions Without Group Work Majors	13 (52%)	12 (48%)	25 (100%)

Earlier portions of this study report have noted the difficulties inherent in comparing this sample population with the sub-group of beginning field instructors in the 1990 - 1991 sample. In fact, this sample differed from the one in the previous year. In 1990 - 1991, 62% of students with beginning supervisors had at least one group work assignment. In 1991 - 1992, 55.6% of students worked with one or more groups. Comparison of these two samples is cautioned, since the first year's sample showed significance based on presence or absence of prompting for responses, and this relationship was not present in the 1991 - 1992 sample. As discussed, an amended study design would be helpful in

opening the possibility of drawing further inferences from this analysis.

Although not statistically significant, this table presents some apparent differences in these students' group work assignments within this study year, as linked with their supervisor's participation in training. Among the 28 students whose field instructor attended training, 57% had one or more group work assignment, as compared to 55.6% for all students of respondents. A greater difference is seen if one eliminates all supervisors of group work majors from the sample, since all group work majors were reported as working with at least one group. With the elimination of group work majors, the over-representation of group work majors in the sample is overcome. In that case, the percentage of all students with one or more groups was 48%, while 52% of students whose field instructor attended one or both training sessions had at least one group assignment.

As in the previous study, a distribution of the number of group assignments for the same categories of students is presented:

Table Sixteen

Number of Group Work Assignments for
Students of Respondents, 1991 - 1992

Category of Students 1991 - 1992	Number of Group Work Assignments						Total
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five+	
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation	16 44%	11 31%	7 19%	2 6%			36 100%
Students of Field Instructors in First Year of Affiliation Without Group Work Majors	16 52%	9 29%	6 19%				31 100%
Students of Field Instructors who Attended One or Two Training Sessions	12 43%	8 29%	6 21%	2 7%			28 100%
Students of Field Instructors who Attended One or Two Training Sessions without Group Work Majors	12 48%	7 28%	6 24%				25 100%

This table reinforces the differences between this group of respondents and the previous years'. In all categories, students with at least one assignment worked with fewer groups in the 1991 - 1992 sample than in the 1990 - 1991 sample. Again, all group work majors worked with at

least one group, but in the 1991 - 1992 sample, even group work majors appeared to have a lower number of group work assignments. Reflecting the findings of the previous table, there was a greater number of groups assigned to students whose supervisors attended one or both training sessions. The finding remained when supervisors of group work majors who attended training were eliminated from the sample. Although not statistically significant, the students of field instructors in the sample who attended the training had a greater frequency of group work assignments than students of field instructors who did not attend the training.

Narrative comments by respondents.

Out of 37 respondents to the survey, 19 beginning field instructors made narrative comments. These statements supported those made by the previous year's respondents in the areas of unmet needs, agency context, school curriculum, and training content. A change from the previous year were the field instructors who had attended training, who seemed to speak directly to the researcher in their written comments.

The findings described in the following pages highlight the comments made by 28 respondents (76% of all respondents) who participated in one or both training sessions. Since

their attitudes and activities in regard to group work assignments were not tested before training, it is unfair to say that they are results of the training unless explicitly stated by the field instructor. However, as post-training comments, they represent their opinions and behaviors after the training, a commonly held experience of a diverse group of social work professionals. The findings will be reported in three basic areas: agency context, feedback on training, and additional needs.

First, in regard to the agency as an arena for group work education and practice, the comments of four field instructors were directly related to the critical examination of the agency context, as suggested in the training. Two field instructors shared similar areas for work in the future: "How to more actively engage the institution to utilize social workers in student services programs and counseling", and how to develop "agency support of a group when no groups are held". These comments go right to the heart of establishing an atmosphere conducive to groups, and indicate the emergence of an advocate stance by the respondents. As the following statement indicates, group work assignments for students can not exist in a vacuum, and must ultimately serve the needs of clients first:

Overall, I believe our agency needs to concentrate more on supervision of groups. We need to improve on how we form groups, identify group needs and how to enhance ongoing group work. We need to have groups with a specific need. Not groups for the purpose of just having a group -- these turn out to actually be destructive - quite unproductive.

This respondent's student, a case work major, did not have any group assignments during the year, yet it would be inaccurate to label her utilization of the training as a failure.

Direct feedback about the training was given by five of the 28 respondents. As pointed to earlier, these comments represent a decision by the field instructor to respond directly to the researcher/trainer. One field instructor, when asked areas of interest for training, noted: "We do very little group work at our agencies - so what was provided was sufficient." The remaining four respondents' comments were more pointed, and easier to interpret. A field instructor responded that the two sessions were too basic, and much "like a course", continuing that it didn't address the topic of "supervising supervisors with students running groups".

One field instructor took an opportunity to identify what she saw as the most helpful aspects of the training:

- a. Most effective way student records/reports group sessions
- b. Encouraging student to begin groups (lack of enthusiasm, nerves)
- c. Attitudes of staff on unit (lack of enthusiasm)
- d. Realistic goals of groups (helping student with expectations)

Utilizing Kirkpatrick's scheme (1976) of training evaluation, these items are categorized as "learning". A pre-test and post-test design would help in identifying whether the two group assignments of her case work student could also be seen as changes in "behavior" (attempts to arrange assignments) and "results" (arranging and supervising assignments).

Two final comments reported in the area of feedback relate to the timing and impact of the training sessions:

1. Having just completed the Seminar for Field Instructors, I found the sessions regarding group work extremely helpful. However, they would have been more helpful if provided earlier in the year. I recognize that not everything can be covered early on, however, literature and data provided over the summer or early in the semester would have facilitated the process.

2. Our setting didn't lend itself for obvious group work experiences and the students were out in the field so much of the time that we didn't start early enough thinking of ways that they could get a group work experience. The SIFI classes on group should have come earlier in the year so the creative spark would have been lit with enough time for the students to develop and follow through with a project within the year. We know better for next year!

In the first case the supervisor's student had a group assignment, and in the second, the student did not.

However, both comments recall the process of acculturation discussed in Chapter Three. These respondents were not preparing for group work assignments before training. In the second comment is another example of a "failure" to provide group assignments this year, but with promise in the future built on a strong commitment and new sense of expectation.

Ten of the 28 respondents who attended one or more sessions, identified areas of additional needs. In general, these fell into similar categories as reported in Chapter Four. Although touched on in the training, examples under the heading of advanced group work skills (beyond the scope of the training intervention) include: "beginning group sessions", "group endings", "effective co-leadership in groups", "contracting, opening up issues and exploring", "group work vs. individual work in a group", "leader power and control issues", "use of program and activity in group work", and "stages and theory of group development". Among comments that could be categorized as focused on a field of practice, include these related to mental health settings: "how to help the student deal with flashbacks, suicidal intent, and dissociation as it occurs during group", "use of self/countertransference", and "cultural norms and implications for group therapy". Additional comments

reflected other fields of practice as in the case of the following examples: "implications of group work in school settings with latency aged children", and "group work with the elderly".

Analysis and Recommendations

Because of methodological concerns, the findings of this study should be considered independently, rather than as an quasi-experimental group linked to the beginning field instructors of 1990 - 1991. Thus, it can be noted that there was some evidence that more students of training participants worked with groups than those students of non-participants. The researcher must stop short of identifying this phenomenon as a result of training. Causality will have to be left to future studies that include either pre and post tests, or clearly equivalent samples for comparison.

However, the qualitative findings provide greater opportunities for drawing conclusions, since the respondents directly attributed changes to the training experience. This data indicates that definitions of success and failure of the training intervention should not be limited to the existence and/or number of student assignments during the year of training. Although testing would be helpful to confirm the implementation of field instructors' plans, it

appears that some trainees have altered their vision of student assignments, projecting changes in next year's field experience. Further, the comments of training participants demonstrated particular changes in learning, as well in present and future behavior. These changes included the ways in which some supervisors viewed the context of their agency, expectations of the school, and plans for future work with students. Numerous comments of trainees indicate further areas of interest that could be addressed in other forums and activities. As evaluative data, these comments may represent expanded thinking on the part of training participants. If group work is contagious, it is possible that some field instructors have been infected.

CHAPTER SEVEN:**Conclusions and Recommendations for Enhancing
Social Group Work Opportunities in Field Work Education**

Fulfilling the dual purpose of this project, this report has presented and discussed findings related to the expectations and experience of group work assignments in field work education at the Hunter College School of Social Work, as well as findings related to enhancing these experiences through the training of new field instructors. The strategic framework for the project provided the opportunity to organize multiple areas of inquiry and methodology.

Suggestions for adjustment of the project's research methodology have been proposed in this text, and should be considered before proceeding with further study. However, it appears that the value of the collective findings is greater than the sum of the parts. As noted, although some original expectations were not met, the project yielded the data necessary to understand and evaluate the system of the School and the training intervention. Appropriately, the project has provided some answers, raised new questions, and suggested additional areas for study and action.

It appears that successful efforts to enhance field instruction are grounded in the partnership between school, field instructor, agency, and student. The remaining pages of this chapter will consider these relationships as explored in this project and propose areas for continued action.

Expectations and Experience within the School of Social Work

As evidenced from the sponsorship of this project, as well as study findings, the Hunter College School of Social Work has demonstrated a strong interest in the expansion of multi-method practice assignments for students, particularly in the area of social group work. However, as in the case of well-intentioned field instructors, students, and agencies, interest is necessary, but insufficient by itself.

In effect, the researcher acted as a "policy entrepreneur" (Kingdon, 1984), investing a great deal of time and resources to identify and raise the issue of group work assignments in the School community. Through the effective framing of the problem (field instructors' differential interests and abilities to supervise group work assignments), and the provision of a solution (training of new field instructors), the School was willing to act.

The researcher offered a "free" resource, and was not paid by the school for the research or training. However,

there is a "cost" to all activities. In this case, the School agreed to support the effort within agreed upon guidelines. The School ran the risk of angering constituencies interested in advancing other methods of practice, and/or maintaining the status quo. Albeit reasonable, the School agreed to accept the consequences of the research and training, and to open its activities to examination.

This project was developed within a political context that supported its implementation. By engaging the three key constituencies of: field education, group work faculty, and administration, the possibility for action was enhanced. A "window of opportunity" appears to have existed in which the interests of multiple constituencies coincided, paving the way for the researcher's proposal. With the centerpiece of the training component, the researcher was able to engage in a holistic evaluation of the orientation, expectations, and implementation of group work assignments for students.

This route to program development and advancement is certainly not unusual, but without the continued work of the "entrepreneur" to "capitalize" on the opportunities for further work, other supports will be necessary. Practicum Coordinators' reports, corroborated by the statements of field instructors, indicate a need for further elaboration

and integration of field work expectations on both a vertical and horizontal level. At this point, group work assignments (or any second method assignments) are encouraged and desired, but not mandated. Thus, the "hope" for assignments is subject to constant prioritization and negotiation. It appears that at minimum, a mandate for at least one field work assignment in an area of second-method practice is feasible, given the political and practice climate. Group work assignments, as the most common second-method assignments would benefit from this incremental approach. To be effective, this mandate would need the support of the school hierarchy, agency administration, as well as support of all levels of school and agency staff. Such a mandate further legitimizes the need for training of field instructors as well as the need for accountability for providing the expected learning experience.

The descriptive aspect of this project identified the key position of Practicum Coordinators in the acculturation of new field work agencies through their roles of envoy, evaluator, gatekeeper, and matchmaker. A role that is not fully implemented is that of administrator of the student's learning experience. The Coordinators appeared most active in the beginning and ending stages of the field work experience. With a clearer expectation, they could monitor

the fulfillment, or middle phase, of the field instruction contract, coordinating the work of faculty advisors, students, agency coordinators, and field instructors. Such a commitment would require the redeployment and/or expansion of field education staff.

The requirement of second method assignments for field practicum students would necessitate the further mobilization of resources to support the orientation, training, and monitoring of group work assignments. Responsibility for enhancing group work assignments must be distributed beyond the Department of Field Education.

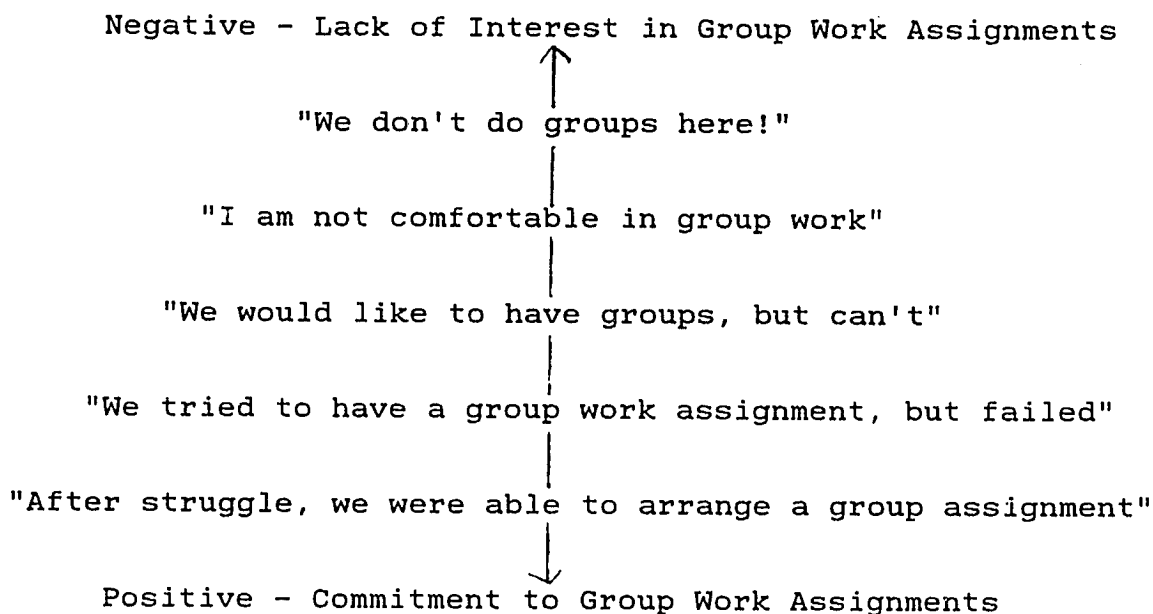
If it is true that one can not teach what one doesn't know, then concentrated intervention is needed. As the resident group work experts, this task would fall to already extended group work faculty, unless alternative arrangements were made. As reported in the literature review, innovation in group work field instruction is eminently possible (Somers & Gitlin, 1966); it takes mandates and money.

Needs and Training of Field Instructors

With increased pressure to provide group work assignments for their students, the needs of field instructors (old and new) need to be addressed. Field instructors identified a range of issues for training, falling into the general categories of basic group work

practice, field practicum supervision of groups, group work with special populations and fields of practice, and advanced skills and practice. The field instructor population appears to be rather heterogeneous, united by the social work profession and field practicum supervision.

Among those surveyed, field instructor attitudes ranged from negative/lack of interest in group work assignments, to positive/commitment to group work assignments. This continuum is graphically depicted as follows:



As discovered through this project, many students do work with groups in the field. On the other hand, the reports of field instructors indicate that students'

opportunities are limited by the interests and skills of field instructors, as well as by the agency context of the field experience. Supported by the findings of the literature reviews, it appears that the pool of supervisors with group work skills is diminishing.

As field instructors begin their affiliation with the school, they are uniquely open to learning. Their common identity as beginning field instructors provides them with the opportunity to question assumptions and "look at the old as if new" (Middleman & Wood, 1990B). In fact, for some field instructors, participation in the training intervention was their first exposure to expectations regarding group work assignments. As mentioned earlier, coordinated efforts are critical to insure that this exposure will not be their last.

This project provided further evidence that a small amount of training in group work can instill a desire to learn more. It was not the intention of the training to create group work experts in four hours. Rather, it engaged the trainees in exploring the planning and supervision of group work assignments through recognition of their existing skills as well as identification of gaps in knowledge. Participants moved from the "known" to the "new"; they were credited as masters in their profession, and were encouraged

to apply their own frames of reference to the training content.

The training design limited the scope of the discussion to the extent necessary to accommodate the broadest range of interests as well as provide "something for everyone". It focused on the planning and basic supervision of group work assignments. Activities were designed to draw different skills and interests from participants both simultaneously, and sequentially.

There is evidence that the training intervention positively affected participants' reactions, learning, and anticipated behavior regarding group work assignments. Participants reported a range of effects, including: relieved anxiety among those with negligible previous experience with groups; reawakened interest among those not currently working with groups, but with experience and/or training in the past; application of training content to other aspects of practice, such as planning for assignments with individuals and communities; a plan of action to share ideas and encourage others to look at opportunities for groups; direct use of training tools with agency staff, in addition to use with field practicum students; and lastly, reexamination of the agency context as an environment for group work assignments.

Supportive and effective field instructors are those that can tolerate complexity (Bogo & Vayda, 1987) and see the potential for personal growth in work with students. As such, activities to enhance group work assignments should incorporate a view of field instructors as adult "life-long" learners, who have much to contribute to the school, students, and each other.

Opportunities for Outreach and Advocacy

The training implemented as part of this project is only one strategy to enhance group work assignments in the field. Other school-sponsored interventions could alternately address very specific concerns, through more homogeneous training groups. Additional workshops could be offered and/or required for experienced field instructors who need second-method orientation. The School could encourage other institutions to examine their own activities in group work education, and could advocate for a large-scale study of schools of social work. The School could provide and expand agency-based consultation to develop group work assignments and supervisory expertise. Professional recognition and rewards could be offered as incentives for expanding field practicum opportunities. Rather simple follow-up activities with study participants, such as advising them of the study's findings, might provide

a sense of commitment to expanding group work assignments.

The School could expand its impact on group work education through linkages and advocacy with larger organizations. For example, linkages could be made with group work resources, such as the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups's annual symposium and other advocacy activities. The School's sponsorship of the 15th annual symposium in October 1993 provides an opportunity to energize the entire School community, focusing attention on group work practice and education.

Since the training intervention was part of the Seminar for Field Instructors, the Greater New York Metropolitan Area Directors of Field Work could be brought further into efforts to enhance the planning and supervision of group work assignments. The presentation of this study's activities and findings to this organization and its special committee on Seminars for New Field Instructors could have multiple effects. First, as representatives of the 11 schools of social work in the New York region, members could bring elements of this project into their own institutions. Second, as the coordinator of the Seminar programs, this regional organization could sharpen curriculum guidelines for inclusion of group work and multi-method content.

Third, as an advocate body, the field work directors' group could lobby for increasing group work activities in the field, with both national and regional social work accrediting bodies and consortiums. Fourth, the group could disseminate information regarding group work education in the field to its member schools and constituencies, including a large pool of agency placements. Finally, the group could sponsor training itself, or in partnership with schools or organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups (AASWG).

The School's close relationship with the National Association of Social Workers could facilitate increased attention to group work in field education and agency practice. For example, their collaboration in the area of social work in the public schools provides an opportunity to expand group work services.

This report has discussed the profound impact of the Council on Social Work Education on educational and professional practices. The Council adopted its most recent curriculum statement during August, 1992. This statement, to become effective in 1995, continues the emphasis on generic practice. It notes the importance of education for practice with client systems of various sizes, but does not specifically mention social work practice with groups in

either the classroom or the field practicum.

At this stage, the Council on Social Work Education is establishing committees to insure that the policy statement is interpreted and implemented as intended. It appears that this stage of curriculum policy development presents another "window of opportunity". According to a delegation of prominent social work educators with strong interests in group work education, who have met with the Council on behalf of the AASWG (Gitterman, 1993), the Council appears favorably disposed to clarifying the curriculum policy statement to explicitly include classroom and field education in social work practice with groups. The Hunter College School of Social Work can lend its voice to these efforts to strengthen the curriculum statement in regard to field and classroom content in group work on a national level.

Agency Context as the Arena of Field Practicum Assignments

As part of the training intervention, considerable time was allocated to the process of examining the agency context, as the first step in planning group assignments. The purpose of this emphasis was to help field instructors to identify and then change "business as usual" ideas about groups. Directly following the January, 1992 training, participants demonstrated positive reactions to the

experience, and identified ways in which they would implement their learning. Some field instructors returned refreshed after training to a supportive agency environment for groups; others returned excited, to face philosophical, political, and practical obstacles.

The training clearly conveyed the Schools' hopes and expectations. As previously discussed, the influence of the School on field instructors appears to peak in the first year of affiliation. This effect has been maximized in this project. However, it appears that without a greater degree of direct intervention with agencies, the School's impact will be diminished over time, as in the following:

When norms meet head on, the old norm supported by the culture, is bound to win out. Training programs, so called, are valuable and successful only to the extent that they are skillfully used to seed new norms or to reinforce existing norms within the organization. (Allen, 1976, 17-3)

In identifying the influence of group norms on training outcomes, Allen discusses key elements needed for successful change to occur. These elements were incorporated into the training, but must also be fostered in the School and agency environment. Elements include: administrative commitment of resources; modeling behavior by school and agency leadership; information feedback to enhance the sharing of relevant information; recognition and reward for desired

behaviors; knowledge and skill development for informed group work practice and supervision; peer-group support; and supervisory follow-through to insure continued emphasis on group work assignments. In order to maintain and advance the gains reported by the training participants, it appears that the School must enhance the school-field partnership, with a pro-active, consistent policy of reinforcement.

A final note is needed to reflect on the ultimate concern of this project. This project focuses on field education as one point of entry into the realm of group work practice. It takes the position that group work practice has a distinct identity, and must be expanded through aggressive efforts in professional and educational institutions. At times, the focus on students and field instructors in this report may overshadow the true beneficiaries of this work: clients. This project could be labeled parochial and valueless, were it not for the fact that social group work practice offers a singular opportunity to engage clients in effective and empowering efforts to build better lives for themselves and others.

INTERVIEW GUIDE - FIELD OF PRACTICE PRACTICUM COORDINATORS

Open ended interview areas:

1) Introduction:

Explain study purpose, sponsorship, methodology

2) Orientation:

What is the general process of orienting new field instructors and agencies? What do you look for in an agency, a site, a field instructor, assignments??

3) Assignments, General:

At what point do you discuss field assignments and their supervision? How are they discussed? What do you base your approach on? (school, concentration mandate, personal interest, etc.?)

4) Assignments, Expectations:

What are your expectations about assignments? What makes a good assignment load? mixture? supervision? How do you convey your expectations?

What are the variety of ways that you discuss and monitor agencies to see if expectations are being met?

5) Group Assignments, Specific Majors:

What is your concept of a good assignment load for a group work major? For casework major? For administration major? For community organization major? How do you see the place of group work assignments for non-group work majors? Do you see competition between assignments?

HUNTER COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
City University of New York

Exploration Form For Field Instruction Center

(Please type or Print in Black Ink)

Date _____

AGENCY _____ PHONE _____

AGENCY ADDRESS _____

AGENCY EXECUTIVE _____

COORDINATOR OF
STUDENT TRAINING _____

Division of Program for Field Placement _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Sources of Agency Funding _____

Agency Hours (note if evenings or weekends, and hours for students)

TRANSPORTATION TO AGENCY (Give directions, best method of transportation, travel time, fare. Will Agency meet any of the special costs of transportation if out of usual one-fare zone?)

WILL AGENCY PAY COST OF TRAVEL FOR HOME VISITS AND OTHER AGENCY-RELATED SERVICES FOR THE STUDENT(S) ASSIGNED?

WOULD STUDENT(S) NEED CAR? _____

DATA ABOUT AGENCY

1. Major Functions and Services

2. Demographic Characteristics of Clientele Served (i.e. age, sex, ethnicity, social class):

AGENCY'S STUDENT PROGRAM

1. Do you currently provide placements for M.S.W. Students from other schools?
If so, please give name of school and number of students.

Name of School(s)	Number of Students

2. What student placements do you plan for next year?

Name of School(s)	Number of Students

3. What placements are available for students from Hunter? (Please indicate numbers by primary practice method)

	Primary Practice Method			
	CASEWORK	GROUP WORK	COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION	ADMINISTRATION
First Year				
Second Year				
O.Y.R.				

AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

1. Number of Awards _____ Amount of each award _____

2. What are the Eligibility Requirements? _____

Is tuition included in the scholarship? Yes _____ No _____

Is tuition paid directly to student? Yes _____ No _____

Directly to the School? Yes _____ No _____

3. Is Agency Eligible for Urban Corps Funding? Yes _____ No _____
If so, please enter code of funding sources Code _____

INSURANCE

1. Does your agency carry liability/malpractice Insurance for students? _____
2. If so, please name the Insurance carrier and type of coverage. _____

LEARNING EXPERIENCES AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS**1. Types of Assignments**

2. Methods of Practice (casework, group work, community organization and/or administration):

primary assignment(s):

secondary assignment(s):

Will task or secondary supervisor(s) be used?

3. Other learning experiences (e.g., seminars, research activities, etc.)

PERSON (S) PROPOSED AS FIELD INSTRUCTORS

		Experiences as Field Instructor, if any:		
Name(s)	MSW Program attended & Date of Degree	School	Dates	Was Seminar Taken?

HUNTER COLLEGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
129 79th East Street • New York • New York 10021

FIELD INSTRUCTOR'S EXPERIENCE OUTLINE

Date _____

I. Name _____ **Home Address** _____

Agency Name _____ **Home Telephone** _____

Agency Address _____ **Agency Phone** _____ **Title in Agency** _____

II. Graduate School Education:

a. Name of MSW Program _____ Degree _____ Date Conferred _____

b. List Post-MSW Education in Social Work

III. Professional Social Work Experience:

a. Current Dates _____ Organization _____ Title _____

b. Prior (list chronologically):

Date _____ Organization _____ Title _____

IV. a. Seminar for new Field Instructors (required during the first year as a Field Instructor)

Academic Year _____ School _____ Instructor _____

b. Field Education Experience:

1. Experience as a Field Instructor:

No. of Students Supervised

Acad. Yr.	Agency	School	BSW	MSW 2 Yr.	MSW OTR

2. Experience as Secondary or Task Supervisor:

Academic	Agency	School	BSW	MSW 2 Yr.	MSW OTR

FOR HCSSW OFFICE USE ONLY

Academic Year _____ Student Name _____ Program _____

Boston University

School of Social Work
264 Bay State Road
Boston, Massachusetts 02215



November 30, 1990

Ms. Carol Cohen
475 Warren St.
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Dear Carol,

Jim Garland and I are happy about your interest in our research efforts on group work field education, and about the work you will be doing. Be sure to let us know of your reactions to, or questions about, the instrument we used. Sorry for the delay in getting it to you.

We look forward to hearing from you as your work progresses.
Good luck!

Sincerely,

Julianne Wayne *by sej*
Julianne Wayne, MSW, Ed.D.
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

JW/sej



of The City University of New York

School of Social Work • 129 East 79th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 452-7085

April 11, 1991

Dear Field Instructor:

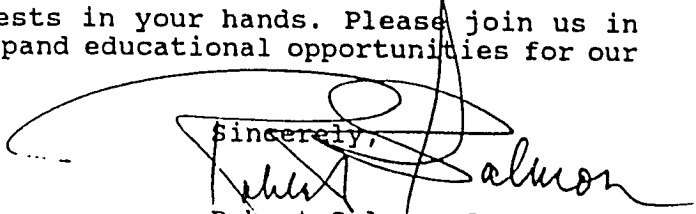
We are asking for your participation in a vital research project of the School of Social Work. This study, "Group Work Education in the Field," will gather information on the group assignments of field work students, the role of group work in agency practice, and the experience of field instructors. The School will be utilizing this information to better understand and enhance the professional education of our students.

We anticipate that it will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey, with some additional time if you supervise more than one student. A stamped, addressed envelope is provided for the completed survey. In addition, the postcard provided should be mailed separately when the survey is returned. In this manner, both confidentiality and accountability can be maintained.

Your prompt response will be very helpful. We ask that you return the completed survey as soon as possible, no later than May 9, 1991. Feel free to contact the Field Education Department (212) 452-7060 if you have any questions about this effort.

The success of this study rests in your hands. Please join us in this effort to explore and expand educational opportunities for our community.

Sincerely,



Robert Salmon, D.S.W.
Acting Dean



Elaine Marshack, D.S.W.
Director/Field Education

er

Hunter College School of Social Work _____ Spring 1991

GROUP WORK EDUCATION IN THE FIELD — SURVEY OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Section A: The following questions are designed to provide information about field work students and their assignments and activities at your agency this past school year, with particular attention to group work assignments. If you worked with more than one Hunter College School of Social Work student, please read note at bottom of page immediately.

- 1a. When did you first become a field instructor? _____ month, _____ year.
 1b. Where did you attend the Seminar for Field Instructors? _____ (school)
 1c. In what year did you attend the Seminar? _____ (academic year)
 2a. Is the student in ____ (1) 1st year ____ (2) 2nd year ____ (3) OYR
 2b. How many groups has the student worked with during this academic year? ____
 3a. What is the student's major method?
 ____ (1) casework ____ (2) group work ____ (3) comm. organization ____ (4) administration
 3b. What is the student's concentration?
 ____ (1) family, youth, & adult ____ (2) education & comm. development ____ (3) social health
 ____ (4) world of work ____ (5) protection & social justice

For questions 4 through 10, if the student worked with more than one group answer the following questions for each of the student's groups. If the student did not work with any groups, skip questions 4 through 13, and resume with question 14.

4a. Population Served (check all that apply):

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<u>Age:</u>			
pre-schoolers	_____	_____	_____
latency	_____	_____	_____
adolescents	_____	_____	_____
young adults	_____	_____	_____
adult:	_____	_____	_____
elders	_____	_____	_____
<u>Gender:</u>			
female	_____	_____	_____
male	_____	_____	_____
<u>Ethnicity:</u>			
White	_____	_____	_____
African-American	_____	_____	_____
Latino	_____	_____	_____
Asian	_____	_____	_____
Native American	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify)	_____	_____	_____

NOTE: If you supervise more than one Hunter student PLEASE CHECK HERE _____. You will be receiving additional copies of questions 2-14. Please fill out a separate set of questions 2-14 for each Hunter student, and enclose them with the completed survey.

4b. Setting of group experience (check all that apply for each group)

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
family service	_____	_____	_____
mental health:			
day treatment	_____	_____	_____
in-patient	_____	_____	_____
out-patient	_____	_____	_____
social/recreation center	_____	_____	_____
school:			
residential	_____	_____	_____
day	_____	_____	_____
medical setting:			
in-patient	_____	_____	_____
out-patient	_____	_____	_____
public social services department	_____	_____	_____
employee assistance	_____	_____	_____
corrections	_____	_____	_____
multi-service center	_____	_____	_____
other (identify)	_____	_____	_____

4c. Type of Group (check one for each group):

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
(1) TASK/ACTION, e.g. board, committee, social action, work project	_____	_____	_____
(2) GROWTH/EDUCATION, e.g. life stage issues, family life education, consciousness raising	_____	_____	_____
(3) SUPPORT/STABILIZATION, e.g. life crisis, divorce, medical problems, rehabilitation, environmental stress, social skills	_____	_____	_____
(4) RECAPITULATION/RESTITUTION, e.g. basic personality change via insight and reflection, play therapy	_____	_____	_____

4d. Indicate the total number of times each of the student's groups met:

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
_____	_____	_____

5. Beginning and ending dates of the student's involvement with the group:

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
beginning:	_____	_____	_____
ending:	_____	_____	_____

6. Length of meeting (minutes)

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
_____	_____	_____

7. Number of group members

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
_____	_____	_____

8. Membership pattern

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
changing/open	_____	_____	_____
stable/closed	_____	_____	_____

9. Duration of group

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
time limited	_____	_____	_____
open ended	_____	_____	_____

10. Which of the following most accurately describes the student's experience(s) related to: (check appropriate answer)

10a. Group formation

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
student formed the group	_____	_____	_____
group was formed for the student	_____	_____	_____
student entered an ongoing group	_____	_____	_____

10b. Type of leadership

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
single leadership	_____	_____	_____
co-leadership	_____	_____	_____
other (specify)	_____	_____	_____

10c. If co-led, indicate co-leaders

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
social work student	_____	_____	_____
field instructor	_____	_____	_____
another student	_____	_____	_____
another staff member	_____	_____	_____
other (identify)	_____	_____	_____

10d. If co-led, indicate discipline of co-leaders

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
social work	_____	_____	_____
psychology	_____	_____	_____
psychiatry	_____	_____	_____
nursing	_____	_____	_____
other (identify)	_____	_____	_____

10e. Format

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
exclusively verbal	_____	_____	_____
primarily verbal	_____	_____	_____
mixed verbal & activity	_____	_____	_____
primarily activity	_____	_____	_____
exclusively activity	_____	_____	_____

11. How are the student's group work assignments supervised?
 ____ (1) individually ____ (2) in a group ____ (3) both

12a. By whom? (check all that are appropriate)

____ myself
 ____ another staff member
 ____ outside consultant
 ____ peer supervision
 ____ other (please explain)

12b. If by a person other than yourself, what are the disciplines of the other supervisor(s) of group work assignments?

____ social work
 ____ psychology
 ____ psychiatry
 ____ nursing
 ____ other (identify) _____

13. Average amount of time per week spent in supervision of group work practice:
(in minutes): _____

14. What is the basis of feedback to the supervisor about each of the practice methods in which the student has been engaged? (check all that are applicable)

	Casework	Groupwork	Community Organization	Administration
a. verbal reports	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. summary notes	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. process recording	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. audio tapes	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. video tapes	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. live observation	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. other (specify)	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Section B: The following questions are designed to provide information about your agency as a context for groupwork education.

15. Check the categories that most accurately describe your setting:

____ family service	____ in-patient medical
____ day treatment mental health	____ out-patient medical
____ in-patient mental health	____ public social services
____ out-patient mental health	____ employee assistance
____ social/recreation center	____ corrections
____ residential school	____ multi-service center
____ day school	____ other (identify)

16. What percentage of your agency's client population receives social work group services? _____%

17. What percentage of groups run by your agency in the course of a year fit into each of the following categories?

_____% time limited groups _____% on-going groups

18. What percentage of your agency's professional staff provides group services? _____%

19. Indicate the percentage of groups that your agency provides that fall into each of the following categories.
- | | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| (1) TASK/ACTION, e.g. board, committee, social action, work project | _____ % |
| (2) GROWTH/EDUCATION, e.g. life stage issues, family life education, consciousness raising | _____ % |
| (3) SUPPORT/STABILIZATION, e.g. life crisis, divorce, medical problems, rehabilitation, environmental stress, social skills | _____ % |
| (4) RECAPITULATION/RESTITUTION, e.g. basic personality change via insight and reflection, play therapy | _____ % |
20. Which of the following supervision/educational opportunities related to group work does your agency make available to staff? (check all that apply)
- ☐ individual supervision
☐ supervision in a group
☐ outside consultant on an ongoing basis
☐ outside consultant as needed
☐ formal continuing education (e.g. workshops, certification programs)
21. How are group services organized at your agency? (check all that apply)
- ☐ on the initiative of individual workers
☐ on the initiative of person(s) designated as group program organizer(s)
☐ as a result of agency policy and planning
☐ the intake and assessment process is designed to specifically identify appropriateness of group service
22. Does your agency make use of groups for any of the following purposes? (check accordingly)
- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. intake | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| b. assessment | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| c. waiting list | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
23. Is there a systematic agency-wide process to assigning individuals to available groups?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No

24. Which of the following facilities and resources are available for groups? (check all that apply)
- ☐ rooms specifically designated for group meetings
 - ☐ activity space, e.g. playground, gymnasium
 - ☐ supplies and equipment budget, e.g. arts and crafts materials, tools, athletic equipment
 - ☐ food budget
 - ☐ special event budget
 - ☐ agency vehicle for transporting group members
25. Which of the following do you believe is the best way for a beginning student to learn about group work? (check one answer)
- ☐ observing (and recording) a group
 - ☐ co-leading with an experienced worker
 - ☐ co-leading with another student (or novice)
 - ☐ solo leadership
 - ☐ other (identify) _____
26. What is the most common basis for deciding to involve the student in one or the other of the above alternatives? (check one answer)
- ☐ logistical expediency, i.e. number of groups available
 - ☐ individual students level of expertise
 - ☐ needs of group members
 - ☐ standard agency practice, e.g. all groups are run by co-workers
 - ☐ other (identify) _____

Section C: The following questions are designed to help the Hunter College School of Social Work learn ways to provide effective educational supports to field instructors and agencies.

- 27a. List the issues regarding group work practice and group work assignments that are important in your field supervision, and/or you would like to explore further. (list as many as you want)

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____
- g. _____

- 27b. Rate the following items by their potential benefit to you as a field instructor. Take into account the likelihood of you and/or your agency being able to take advantage of them, e.g. the time to attend a seminar, and receptivity of the agency
- | | Great benefit | Moderate benefit | Little benefit | No benefit |
|--|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------|
|--|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------|

a. written material on how to organize students group experience and learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. seminar on theory and practice of group work (tuition free)	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. seminar on program development in group work (tuition free)	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. ongoing group work consultation at agency (at agency's expense)	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. one-time consultation on agency group services and training (free)	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. access to library resources	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. other (explain)	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Section D: The following questions are designed to provide information about your social work and group work education and expertise.

28. Indicate the academic graduate degrees you hold, the years you received them and the schools from which you graduated.

<u>DEGREE</u>	<u>UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE</u>	<u>YEAR OF DEGREE</u>
____ M.S.W. _____	_____	_____
____ Other Master's Degree (Identify) _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
____ D.S.W. _____	_____	_____
____ Ph.D. _____	_____	_____
____ Ed.D. _____	_____	_____
____ Other Doctorate (Identify) _____	_____	_____

29. Check your major method while an M.S.W. student

(1) ☐ casework	(6) ☐ planning
(2) ☐ group work	(7) ☐ combined macro (indirect) practice
(3) ☐ combined micro (direct) practice	(8) ☐ generic program (no specialized methods)
(4) ☐ community organization	(9) ☐ other (identify) _____
(5) ☐ administration (management)	

30. How many courses did you take as an M.S.W. student that either included group work combined with other methods or that focused exclusively on group work?

_____ group work combined with other methods

_____ exclusive focus on group work

31. Indicate the number of graduate M.S.W. courses you took having group work content which were taught in the following formats.

_____ primarily didactic

_____ primarily experiential

_____ combined didactic/experiential

32. List the most significant formal group work education/training experiences (maximum 5) in which you have participated, since receiving your M.S.W.

EXPERIENCE	YEAR	TOTAL HOURS
(1) _____	_____	_____
(2) _____	_____	_____
(3) _____	_____	_____
(4) _____	_____	_____
(5) _____	_____	_____

33. List your membership(s) in professional organizations (or sections of organizations)

34a. In rank order, identify those authors, if any, who made a significant impact on your group work education.

Most significant: _____ (1)

_____ (2)

_____ (3)

34b. In rank order, identify those authors, if any, who made a significant impact on your overall social work education.

Most significant: _____ (1)
 _____ (2)
 _____ (3)

35. Have you ever practiced group work since receiving your M.S.W.?

_____ Yes _____ No

36. Since that time, indicate the approximate number of groups (if any) with which you have worked.

_____ # of groups

37. Indicate approximately how many of your group work responsibilities have been:

_____ solo leadership _____ co-leadership _____ other (specify) _____

38. With which populations have you practice group work? (check all that are appropriate)

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>
_____ pre-schoolers	_____ female	_____ White
_____ latency	_____ male	_____ African-American
_____ adolescents		_____ Latino
_____ young adults		_____ Asian
_____ adults		_____ Native American
_____ elders		_____ Other (specify) _____

39. In what kinds of settings did you ever practice group work since receiving your M.S.W.? (include present experience) (check all that apply)

_____ family service	_____ in-patient medical
_____ day treatment mental health	_____ out-patient medical
_____ in-patient mental health	_____ public social services
_____ out-patient mental health	_____ employee assistance
_____ social/recreation center	_____ corrections
_____ residential school	_____ multi-service center
_____ day school	_____ other (identify) _____

40. Rate (circle number) your practice-expertise in work with:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience
a. individuals	5	4	3	2	1	0
b. families	5	4	3	2	1	0
c. groups	5	4	3	2	1	0
d. communities	5	4	3	2	1	0
e. organizations	5	4	3	2	1	0

41. Rate (circle number) your practice-expertise in work with the following kinds of groups:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience
(1)TASK/ACTION,e.g. board, committee, social action, work project	5	4	3	2	1	0
(2)GROWTH/EDUCATION, e.g. life stage issues, family life education, consciousness raising	5	4	3	2	1	0
(3)SUPPORT/STABILIZATION, e.g. life crisis, divorce, medical problems, rehabilitation, environmental stress, social skills	5	4	3	2	1	0
(4)RECAPITULATION/RESTITUTION, e.g. basic personality change via insight and reflection, play therapy	5	4	3	2	1	0

42. Rate (circle number) your performance in supervising your students in work with the following kinds of groups:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	No Experience
(1)TASK/ACTION,e.g. board, committee, social action, work project	5	4	3	2	1	0
(2)GROWTH/EDUCATION, e.g. life stage issues, family life education, consciousness raising	5	4	3	2	1	0
(3)SUPPORT/STABILIZATION, e.g. life crisis, divorce, medical problems, rehabilitation, environmental stress, social skills	5	4	3	2	1	0
(4)RECAPITULATION/RESTITUTION, e.g. basic personality change via insight and reflection, play therapy	5	4	3	2	1	0

43. Which of the following most accurately describes the focus of your group work experience? (check one)

- ☐ exclusively verbal
☐ primarily verbal
☐ mixed verbal and activity
☐ primarily activity
☐ other (specify) _____

44. Additional comments (elaboration and/or reflections on survey form and content)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP (Please remember to mail back your postcard)

Hunter College School of Social Work _____ Spring 1991

GROUP WORK EDUCATION IN THE FIELD — SURVEY OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Additional Copies of questions 2 - 14 FOR SUPERVISORS OF MORE THAN ONE HUNTER STUDENT

Since assignments vary from one student to another, please complete the following questions for each Hunter student that you supervise.

How many Hunter College School of Social Work students do you supervise? _____ #

2a. Is the student in ____ (1) 1st year ____ (2) 2nd year ____ (3) OYR

2b. How many groups has the student worked with during this academic year? _____

3a. What is the student's major method?

____ (1) casework ____ (2) group work ____ (3) comm. organization ____ (4) administration

3b. What is the student's concentration?

____ (1) family, youth, & adult ____ (2) education & comm. development ____ (3) social health
____ (4) world of work ____ (5) protection & social justice

For questions 4 through 10, if the student worked with more than one group answer the following questions for each of the student's groups. If the student did not work with any groups, skip questions 4 through 13, and resume with question 14.

4a. Population Served (check all that apply):

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<u>Age:</u>			
pre-schoolers	_____	_____	_____
latency	_____	_____	_____
adolescents	_____	_____	_____
young adults	_____	_____	_____
adults	_____	_____	_____
elders	_____	_____	_____
<u>Gender:</u>			
female	_____	_____	_____
male	_____	_____	_____
<u>Ethnicity:</u>			
White	_____	_____	_____
African-American	_____	_____	_____
Latino	_____	_____	_____
Asian	_____	_____	_____
Native American	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify)	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____



of The City University of New York

School of Social Work • 129 East 79th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021 • (212) 452-7085

Office of the Dean

May 25, 1992

Dear Field Instructor:

We are asking for your participation in a vital research project of the School of Social Work. This study, "**Group Work Education in the Field**," will gather information on the group assignments of field work students, the role of group work in agency practice, and the experience of field instructors. The School will be utilizing this information to better understand and enhance the professional education of our students.

We anticipate that it will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey, with some additional time if you supervise more than one student. A stamped, addressed envelope is provided for the completed survey. In addition, the postcard provided should be mailed separately when the survey is returned. In this manner, both confidentiality and accountability can be maintained.

Your prompt response will be very helpful. We ask that you return the completed survey as soon as possible, no later than June 22, 1992. Feel free to contact the Field Education Department (212) 452-7060 if you have any questions about this effort.

The success of this study rests in your hands. Please join us in this effort to explore and expand educational opportunities for our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bogart Leashore".

Bogart Leashore
Dean

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine Marshack".

Elaine Marshack, D.S.W.
Director/Field Education

er

Hunter College School of Social Work _____ Spring 1992

GROUP WORK EDUCATION IN THE FIELD — SURVEY OF FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Section A: The following questions are designed to provide information about field work students and their assignments and activities at your agency this past school year, with particular attention to group work assignments. If you worked with more than one Hunter College School of Social Work student, please read note at bottom of page immediately.

- 1a. When did you first become a field instructor? _____ month, _____ year.
- 1b. In what year did you attend the Seminar for Field Instructors? ____-____ (academic year)
- 1c. Where did you attend the Seminar for Field Instructors? _____ (school)
- 1d. If you attended the Seminar at Hunter College during the 91-92 school year, did you attend the session(s) on planning and supervising group assignments?
 ____yes, both sessions ____yes, one session, ____no, did not attend either session.
- 2a. Is the student* in ____ (1) 1st year ____ (2) 2nd year ____ (3) OVR
- 2b. How many groups has the student worked with during this academic year? ____
- 3a. What is the student's major method?
 ____ (1) casework ____ (2) group work ____ (3) comm. organization ____ (4) administration
- 3b. What is the student's concentration?
 ____ (1) family, youth, & adult ____ (2) education & comm. development ____ (3) social health
 ____ (4) world of work ____ (5) protection & social justice

For questions 4 through 10, if the student worked with more than one group answer the following questions for each of the student's groups. If the student did not work with any groups, skip questions 4 through 13, and resume with question 14.

4a. Population Served (check all that apply):

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<u>Age:</u>			
pre-schoolers	_____	_____	_____
latency	_____	_____	_____
adolescents	_____	_____	_____
young adults	_____	_____	_____
adults	_____	_____	_____
elders	_____	_____	_____
<u>Gender:</u>			
female	_____	_____	_____
male	_____	_____	_____
<u>Ethnicity:</u>			
White	_____	_____	_____
African-American	_____	_____	_____
Latino	_____	_____	_____
Asian	_____	_____	_____
Native American	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify)	_____	_____	_____

*NOTE: If you supervise more than one Hunter student PLEASE CHECK HERE _____. You will be receiving additional copies of questions 2-14. Please fill out a separate set of questions 2-14 for each Hunter student, and enclose them with the completed survey.

TEACHING GROUP PRACTICE TO NON-GROUP WORK MAJORS (March 15,22,29, 1990)
Seminar Outline

(Note: This outline was developed after the seminar; it is intended for use by the participants as a summary review of content areas. It is not meant as session minutes or as a training tool without seminar participation. Copywrited material. --- Thanks, Carol Cohen)

Session One, March 15, 1990

I. Introduction and Presentation of format/ suggested purpose for seminar; discussion of agenda for first session.

A. Seminar to have intellectual, but primarily heuristic value to work with field students - Not summary of all group work, but useful framework for application to supervision of student's second method assignments. (All other uses for learning welcome)

B. Group work to be treated as something familiar AND different:

1. Familiar: part of social work practice - can draw on field instructor's background in education, practice, supervision, etc.

2. Different: group work (at least the way we explore it) has a distinct core - a uniqueness. Propose that distinction related to commonality of purpose and collective action.

3. Strategy in seminar to look at unique character first to give seminar participants common grounding in vocabulary and concepts. Participants to apply to own situation/practice base & share with seminar group. Agreement that although seminar is not a social work group, we will use this experience for some modeling and illustrations.

II. Responsibility/Effectiveness/Vitality Paradigm - as aspects of the group goal achieving process. (draws from work of Emanuel Tropp, "Social Group Work: The Developmental Approach", from Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1971, pp. 1246-1252)

A. Propositions:

1. All groups (individual sessions and/or whole experience) can be evaluated on these three levels.

2. all three are necessary in successful group functioning and accomplishment of group purpose(s). -- there are different balances in each group experience.

3. evaluators (members, leaders, supervisors) can use these terms to discuss groups, identify problem areas, refocus activity, etc.

B. Responsibility: the ethics, morality of the WAY in which the group goes about accomplishing its purpose.

1. Includes: HOW decisions are made (as opposed to just WHAT the decision is); treatment of each member by members and leaders, etc.; accountability for actions . .

2. Examples from session one: we all introduced ourselves, gave summary of work, field supervision experience, goals for attending seminar; Seminar (hopefully) incorporated individual experience, settings, and individual goals woven into collective purposes for seminar; we discussed implications of decisions regarding starting time, breaks, ending time, etc.

3. Leader activities to enhance group's responsibility include:

- a. confronting group with purpose, attitudes, and behavior
- b. recognizing group functioning
- c. using legitimate agency limits and authority

C. Effectiveness: the RESULT (even within one group meeting)

1. OUTCOME of group experience; the decision made or the final achievement of a goal.

2. Examples from session one: we agreed (to the extent possible) on purpose of seminar and first session; since we agreed to incorporate individual experiences into seminar we can evaluate the effectiveness of efforts; decisions on starts, breaks, and ends.

-- Did seminar accomplish purpose to enhance field supervision of non-group work majors?

3. Leader activities to enhance group's effectiveness include:

- a. eliciting and presenting proposals
- b. maintaining focus of discussion
- c. encouraging freedom and relatedness of expression
- d. helping group to anticipate consequences of alternatives
- e. helping group to resolve conflicts
- f. helping group to come to decisions
- g. helping group to engage in action

D. Vitality: The EMOTIONAL QUALITY of the group

1. Excitement, Pleasure, Conflict, -- the Quality of group life-Positive group development of responsiveness, openness, cohesiveness.

2. Examples from session one: participants shared reasons for coming to group freely and with humor; activity to encourage expression and interaction was suggested and done (throwing troubles keeping you from coming to the seminar in a garbage bag).

3. Leaders' activities to enhance group's vitality include:

a. stimulation	e. excitement
b. motivation	f. challenge
c. conviction	g. approval
d. humor	h. recognition

III. Purpose/Structure/Content Paradigm

A. Purpose: The REASON for the group, goals and aspirations.

1. WHY the group exists - shared by all participants (model of three intersecting circles, p. 4) Purpose is the defining factor for all work of the group (or at least should be).

2. Example from session one: agreed purposes:

- a. explore key social group work concepts for use in field instruction of non-group work majors.
- b. identify areas of interest and experience among participants - to address individual concerns.

B. Structure: HOW group is formed and operates.

1. Boundaries, leadership, membership, rules, organizing principles (i.e. "no hitting" etc). The actual regulations of the group and the way these are determined (i.e. "who is a member" and "how the group, leader, and/or agency made the decision about who should be considered a member").

2. Examples from session one:

- a. three sessions, room 315
- b. break and ending time, determined by group consensus
- c. participants contribute freely - no waiting to speak
- d. leadership fixed.

C. Content: WHAT the group does (over time and in one session)

1. PROGRAM of group - must serve purpose - can vary from (and within) session, or be fixed for life of group. Can be TALKING, ranging from discussion of group experience or other contemporary issues and feelings to discussion of past (reminiscence) and/or fantasy (storytelling). Can be DOING, including movement, art, theater, and/or writing, etc. regarding contemporary or non-contemporary concerns.

Sometimes used as a definition of a type of group:

- a. Counseling/Discussion Group (talking about common concerns - directly related to group purpose)
- b. Activity Group (art, music, recreation, etc. where the members engage in a common pursuit to achieve the group purpose)
- c. Social Action Group (cooperative effort to achieve an agreed upon objective such as new street light or building governance board, related to achievement of group purpose)

2. Examples from session one:

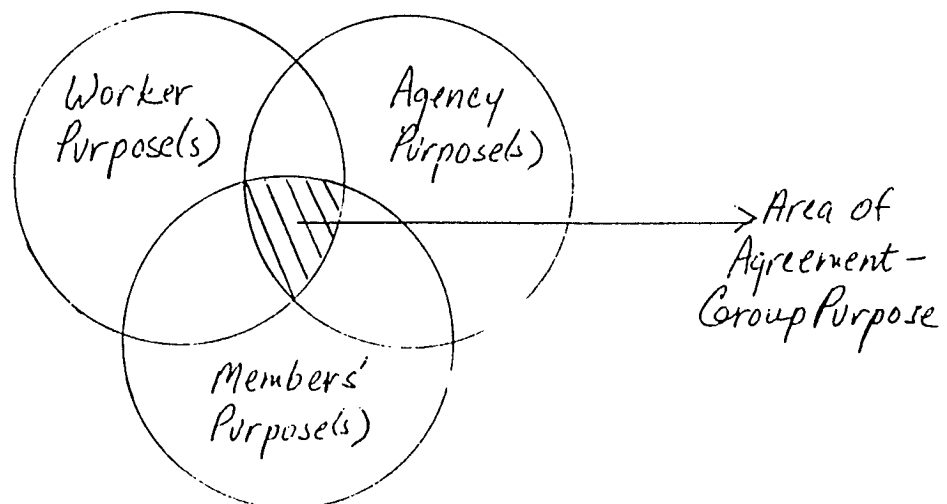
- a. sharing experiences and goals
- b. imaginary activity of bagging problems

IV. Miscellaneous:

A. Definition of a Group: "complex of moving interdependent human beings each acting out his changing relationship to society in his present interaction with others engaged in a similar enterprise" (William Schwarz, 1961)

- 1. Group is an enterprise in mutual aid
- 2. Group is a microcosm of society
- 3. Group is an organic whole
- 4. Group based on collective purpose and collective action

B. Intersecting circle model of group purpose:



C: John Dewey (1927) on what individuals bring to the group:
 "Every participant in group discussions that have anything more than an academic import is aware how prejudices, fixed ideas, reminiscences of interesting personal experiences, sore spots, and hypersensitiveness to anything that is interpreted as criticism, balk and deflect the course of thought. Fears, jealousies, personal ambitions, sense of prestige, past loyalties and past defeats, defense reactions, are nonetheless present because they operate delicately and covertly."

1. Conflicts are inevitable - avoiding them diminishes accomplishment of purpose - leader attempts to help the group resolve them responsibly and effectively.

2. Difference of opinion and diversity leads to group works synergistic effect - the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

3. Key is the commonality of purpose to unite members in common enterprise.

Session Two, March 22, 1990

I. Recap and Introduction of Agenda

A. Discussion of return to field after first session - expanded view of student's experiences and ideas for planning assignments.

B. Review (brief - group consensus)

C. Development of further issues of interest (inc: co-leadership, recording styles, etc.)

D. Note HCSSW bibliography to be distributed.

E. Fears, Fantasies, Facts about group work - resistances to groups in the field -

1. Brainstorming re some ways groups are viewed:

a. fun	d. frill
b. add-on	e. social action
c. therapy	f. non-traditional

2. Discussion of sources of resistance, including agency administration, supervisors, workers, students, etc. - Important factor is lack of knowledge/experience/comfort with social group work:

a. Researchers (Birnbaum, Middleman, & Huber, 1989) suggest that when a worker gets training and/or leads a group they want to do it more - is group work contagious?

b. Less emphasis on group work in graduate education = less social workers skilled and interested in groups (unless learn from other sources).

c. Group work needs advocates

II. Model of Planning for Social Work with Groups: (distribute and use handout by Roselle Kurland, Hunter College School of Social Work).

A. "Listing Challenge" - Three teams compile lists of items/aspects of a group that one needs to consider in planning. Teams share one item in turn until they run out (teams can brainstorm after lists first prepared). Last team with item wins --- (We did not follow these rules religiously - or seriously. Game is based on "sing down" where teams brainstorm songs that fit a theme - i.e. "summertime" - and then sing them in turn until only one team has a song)

B. Categorization of items: Tentative assignment of items to basic categories of Purpose, Structure, and Content. Subsequent refinement of categories into Planning Model sections.

C. Our List: (By no means definitive- with tentative categorizations)

a. Purpose:

Contract	Goals
Group Purpose	Recruitment
Carfare/Stipend	Previous experiences of members
	Diagnosis

b. Structure:

Rules	Co-leadership decision
Size	How decisions are made
Age	Length of time (# of meetings)
Time of Day	Duration of meeting (length of session)
Open Ended/Closed	Voluntary/Involuntary
	Mixed Group (Male & Female)

c. Content:

Task	Modality
Atmosphere	Food

D. Discussion of Planning Model:

1. Fullest description in handout.
2. Highlights of discussion:
 - a. emphasis on agency context as external boundaries
 - b. differences in planning when group composition is pre-determined and when it is open
 - c. implications of having any component pre-determined
 - d. relationship of need and purpose - how needs are transformed into group collective purpose. -- Suggest identifying needs and purpose for a group in planning or operation.
(Ex.: Homebound Elderly - Needs: social contact, combat isolation, transportation, health concerns, etc. - Purpose of a Group: Enhance quality of life through communication with others in similar situations)
 - e. reinforcement of interrelationship of purpose, structure, and content through the assignment of aspects of the group - Discussion of evaluation of choices in group formulation, leadership, etc., based on relationship to group purpose.

E. Planning for final session:

1. Discussion and agreement of issues of interest
2. Introduction of issues of power in group work
3. Participants to share field supervision tips

Session Three, March 29, 1990

I. Recap, setting agenda, and reports from field

A. Collective Purpose and Collective Action implies Power to the Group.

1. Concepts of Group Decision Making and Problem Solving - exercising of group's power.
2. "Throwing it to the Group" - Key turning point for students when they stop trying to solve problems themselves as the first step, and acknowledge group's ownership, responsibility, and reward for working on issues.
3. Leader has have a lot of power - empowering the group doesn't change this, but leader to enable members to "own" purpose and attendant responsibilities - otherwise they don't share as fully in group successes and vitality.

B. Co-leadership: seen in context of a structural decision about the group - Instructor and student(s) ask questions: "What is group purpose?" and "How does leadership decision (co or single leader) serve the purpose of the group?" -

C. Group Work and Group therapy: Gisela Konopka says psychiatric group work is group work in a psychiatric setting. Group therapy can be seen as form of group work when it meets basic criteria. (collective purpose, etc.)

D. Recording for field instruction:

1. Process recordings are old standby - way to get full picture - a wide angle so supervisor can choose areas for attention.
2. Summary recordings: can be based on variety of models; one idea is to focus on summary of WHAT happened, HOW it happened, and student's evaluation.
3. Group prospectus approach for planning groups (as in Kurland model of Planning in Group Work)
4. Diagrams of communication patterns.
5. Other - Glassman and Kates article has more ideas.

II. Analysis of group recording:

A. Process recording demonstrates some good social work practice.

B. Through charting the flow of communication and further discussion, it appears to illustrate "casework in a group setting" (i.e. leader maintains power of decisions, flow of discussion, focus on individual rather than collective concerns, etc.).

C. Exploration of group purpose gives clues to how leader can enhance group experience for accomplishing members' goals.

III. Seminar Participant's Tips in Field Instruction (useful in other contexts as well)

- A. Sense of humor
- B. Ask a question
- C. Be direct when asking
- D. Have (get in touch with) a knowledge base
- E. Create an atmosphere of comfort and relaxation
- F. Give choices
- G. Confidentiality in supervision
- H. Facilitating students to take the lead
- I. Emphasize students' strengths
- J. Positive feedback first
- H. Have students bring in issues
- I. Draw up a contract
- J. Inclusion

IV. Evaluation (brief) and Next Steps

A. Outline, Evaluation forms, and Articles (Alex Gitterman, "Teaching Students to Connect Theory and Practice" and Urania Glassman & Len Kates, "Strategies for Group Work Field Instruction") to follow.

B. Follow-up discussion/informal consultation available with instructor (telephone: 718/596-5500 ext.116) after seminar.

Planning and Supervising Social Group Work Assignments - January 1992

Instructor: Carol Cohen

Hunter College School of Social Work

SUMMARY OF CONTENT

Each of the four (A,B,C,D) sections of the Seminar had different qualities due to their composition, number of participants, and sequence. However, unless specifically noted, all sessions included the basic content areas. All sections met twice as planned, and attendance was taken.

	A	B	C	D
Session One:	1/7/92 (9-11);	1/8 (9-11);	1/8 (2:30-4:30);	1/16 (9-11)

1. Instructor's Introduction:

- a. Welcome, intro of leader
- b. How these two sessions fit into the Seminar
- c. How they came about, how they fit into the School's vision of field work - purpose of the two sessions.
- d. Purpose: Bridge to the rest of the Seminar and introduce leader.

2. Participant's Introduction:

- a. All field instructors introduce themselves with name, agency, and one "fear" or "fantasy" about their student or themselves working with a group.
- b. Discussion of fears and fantasy contributions. (these range from "no one will show up", "no one will talk" to "they will eat her alive" -- they generally correlated with the participants level of group experience and/or the particular agency setting.)
- c. Purpose: Contributions to introduce participants to each other in a new way, focus attention on the content of sessions, help participants and instructor see the range of experience and the acceptance of the variety.

3. Listing Challenge:

- a. All participants divided into teams of 3-5 and asked to quickly (5 minutes) list items/aspects of a group that one needs to consider either in planning or analysis, and to be prepared to share them with the whole group.
- b. Following brainstorming, teams share one item in turn until they run out (teams can brainstorm while sharing items). Last team able to share an unduplicated item wins - (ties in 2 sections).
- c. Items written on board by instructor - beginning grouping of common elements - emphasis on fun and participation, with participants encouraged to arbitrate game issues and applaud, etc.
- d. Purpose: Identify existing knowledge of participants (all able to contribute something), identify the breadth of items, provide an opportunity for a small group experience.

4. Model of Planning for Social Work with Groups:

- a. Discussion and categorization of listed items to components of groups as elaborated in handout by Roselle Kurland. (handout of their categorized list distributed in session two.)
- b. Discussion of issues in planning - suggestions about planning groups WITH students, importance of looking at agency context, interrelationship of needs and purpose, structuring and planning groups to support purposes, etc. Discussion of participants experiences and instructor's practice examples.
- c. Identification and discussion of generic qualities of items listed and categorized - Assessment of each item (i.e. age, fees, frequency) for its applicability in practice with individuals and/or community organization. Discovery that few items are exclusive to group work
- d. Purpose: Identify and discuss common framework for examining groups and apply to planning group assignments with their students. Identify and discuss common pitfalls (relates to fears discussion) and encourage assignments to begin with thorough analysis of agency and planning of group.

5. Diversity and Common Elements of Social Group Work Assignments:

- a. Discussion of expanding common ways of choosing groups for students and exploration of creative possibilities, including standing and ad hoc committees, advisory boards, staff groups, time-limited task groups, and single session groups.
- b. Suggestion of 4 critical elements that distinguish social group work groups from other types of groups. Field Instructors can evaluate if group assignments meet these criteria as a way of planning both traditional and non-traditional group assignments.
- c. Elements:
Members agree on common goals
Atmosphere of group acceptance and freedom
Responsibility paired with participation
Group flexible and adaptable
- d. Purpose: Provide suggestions and a framework for innovation in assigning groups and to expand the field instructors ideas about what makes an acceptable group assignment.

6. Responsibility/Effectiveness/Vitality Paradigm:

- a. Discussion of framework to use with students for evaluating and examining groups on a single session through entire group process basis, as elaborated in handout based on work of Emanuel Tropp. (Note: Handed out, but not discussed in Section D)
- b. Purpose: Using generic concepts, provide a simple framework for looking at groups. Provide information that can be immediately utilized with student assignments and/or their own group practice.

7. Discussion of Next Session:

- a. Handout of Group Planning Worksheet - suggestion to test utility with student of colleagues and opportunity to discuss it next session
- b. Brief discussion of content, date, and structure of next session.
- c. Purpose: Build continuity to next session - clarify arrangements.

A B C D

Session Two: 1/22/92 (9-11); 1/23 (9-11); 1/23 (2:30-4:30); 1/30 (9-11)

1. Introduction:

- a. Re-cap of first session - introductions of participants who missed last session.
- b. Overview of session and comments
- c. View of group work assignments as "not often impossible"
- d. Purpose: re-focus and integrate new participants

2. Multi-method Practice:

- a. School encouragement of second and multi-method practice. Rationale for these two sessions - how they fit in with this organizational direction.
- b. Research related to the training - Large survey last spring, design and implementation of training - Survey to follow training.
- c. Purpose: Link these sessions with overall direction of School. Identify importance and encourage participants to use sessions and set up group assignments. Encourage participants to complete survey regardless of student assignments.

3. Listing Challenge Handout:

- a. Review of list developed at last session. Discussion and reaction to their items, clarification of categories, additions to list.
- b. Purpose: Continuity to last session, information and chance to participate for those absent last session. Review of basic ideas in planning and components of practice.

4. Agency Analysis:

- a. Review of agency/environmental context for group assignments.
- b. Focus on specific questions to help in analyzing agency context for groups; discussion of each answer and ways to work with systems to set up successful group assignments. (Drawn from material of Maxine Lynn, originated at New York University School of Social Work).
- c. Questions:
Is there an agency ideology on group methods?
Are there other groups used?
What has been the agency experience with groups?
If no other agency staff work with groups, what can be the real reason?
Do certain groups of staff have a monopoly on working with groups?
In what ways will agency policies, procedures, and informal organization complicate or enhance the student's work with a group?
Are there unmet needs in this agency which can be appropriately met through use of group methods?
- d. Purpose: Focus attention on the reality of agency practice, participants biases & views, and the challenges & support to overcome obstacles.

5. Group Planning:

- a. Discussion of planning worksheet of last session in relation to new ideas for student assignments or own practice. Request for volunteers to offer their ideas as basis for a small group to plan a group. (Note: arranged somewhat differently in each session - small groups not done in Section A).

b. Small groups (3-5 participants) created to brainstorm around planning elements and discuss idea of a participant. Additional planning worksheets handed out. After 10 - 15 minutes, shared ideas with whole group.

c. Discussion of small group experience - content of discussion regarding planning of actual groups and the process of deliberations. Discussion of elements raised in the process, including single-session groups, co-leadership, etc.

d. Purpose: Give most motivated participants (volunteers) a chance to develop ideas to increase chance of happening. Provide opportunity to grapple with concepts and engage in planning - prepare participants to work with students around this process.

6. Co-Leadership:

a. Discussion of unequal co-leadership as an apprenticeship model rather than as an independent learner model generally utilized in other method practice, particularly case work. (Drawn from Wayne & Garland, 1990).

b. Discussion of equal co-leadership (example: 2 students as leaders) as complex and rewarding learning opportunity.

c. Purpose: Provide a framework for planning and evaluating group leadership structure.

7. Learning Tools for Supervision:

a. Discussion of recording styles, including process recordings, summary recording based on "who", "what", and "how" (handout utilized by Catholic Charities), and other ideas from participants.

b. Review of group planning worksheet as a supervisory tool.

c. Ideas for re-capturing the group experiences of students (Drawn from Glassman & Kates, 1988), including having supervisory conference in group's room, arranging chairs as in group meeting, role-playing, etc.

d. Purpose: Encourage process recording of group assignments, and as alternatives, some form of summary recordings. Identify similarities between individual supervision and individual practice, and encourage innovation in supervision of group assignments.

8. Discussion of Student Recording:

a. Handout of Student Recording - Participants read and are asked to focus on specific questions for discussion purposes.

b. Questions:

Does the recording appear authentic?

What could be one theme for supervision based on this record?

What might be your opening question to the student?

What could be one area of the record for focusing on in relation to this theme?

(Note: done in small group discussions in Section A).

b. Discussion of themes, questions, etc. with focus on identifying a diversity of themes, both generic and group-work specific themes, and acceptance multiple paths for discussing the record with the student.

c. Purpose: Reinforce participants strengths and encourage them to bring them to bear on supervising group assignments. Review themes in group work practice.

9. Wrap-up and Evaluation

HUNTER COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

R. Kurland

A MODEL OF PLANNING FOR SOCIAL WORK WITH GROUPS

Planning for social work with groups--i.e., the thinking and preparation done by the social worker prior to the first group meeting--is an important and often neglected area of practice. Thorough and thoughtful pre-group planning is essential to the success of social work with groups.

The following model of planning for social work with groups is meant to direct and guide the thinking of the social work practitioner planning to serve clients in a group.

The model contains seven components of planning that a worker needs to consider: Agency Context, Need, Purpose, Composition, Structure, Content, and Pre-Group Contact. The definition of each component and the factors to be considered under it are explained in the pages that follow. The interrelationships among the components of the model are presented in the diagrams that follow. Two diagrammatic representations of the model are presented, one for groups in which membership is not pre-determined, the other for groups in which membership is pre-determined.

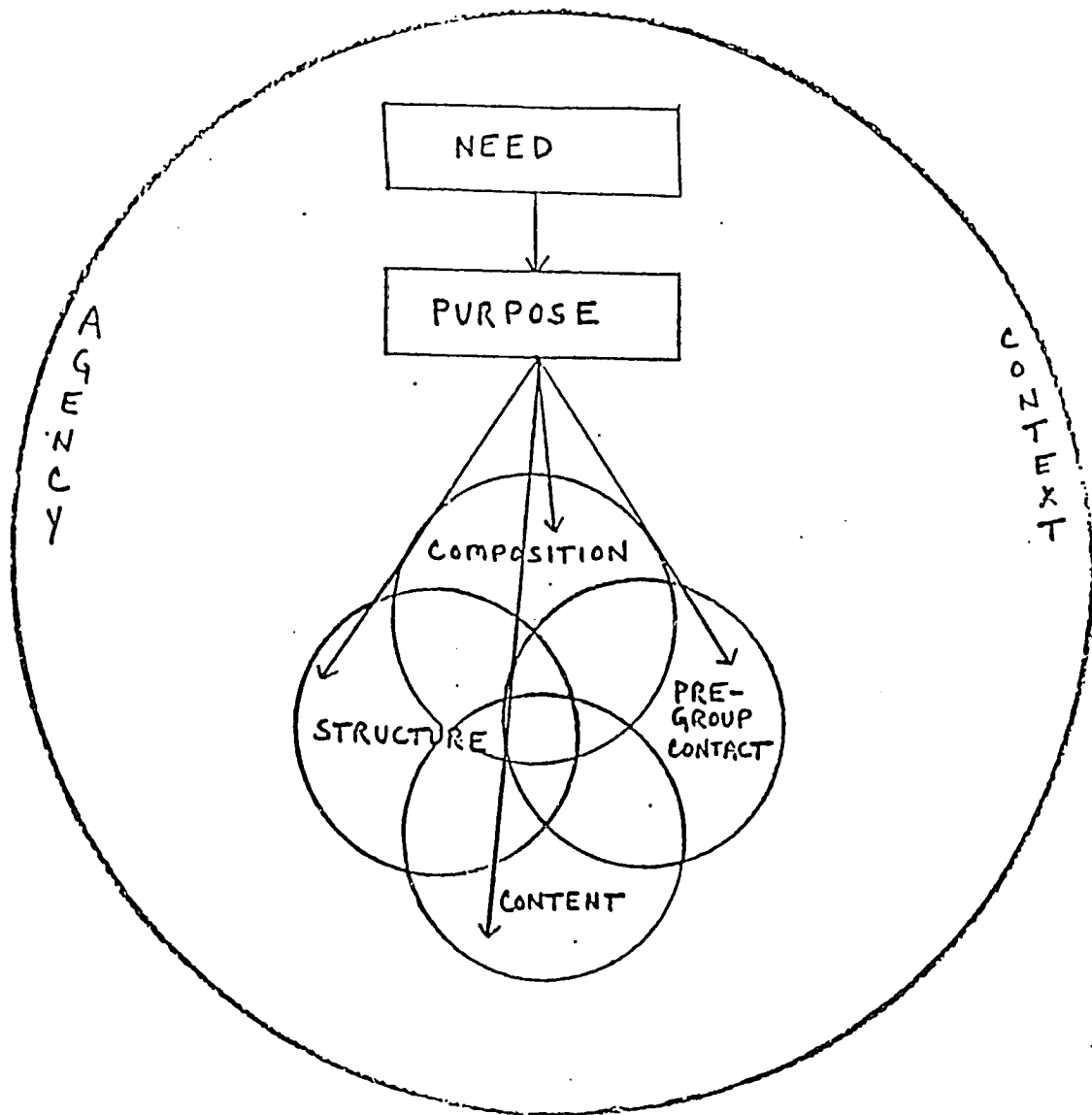
In using the model, it is important that the worker keep in mind four key points.

First, a worker needs to think concurrently about the seven components as planning for a group proceeds. The seven components of the model are interdependent and overlapping. Decisions made in regard to one component will affect decisions about the others.

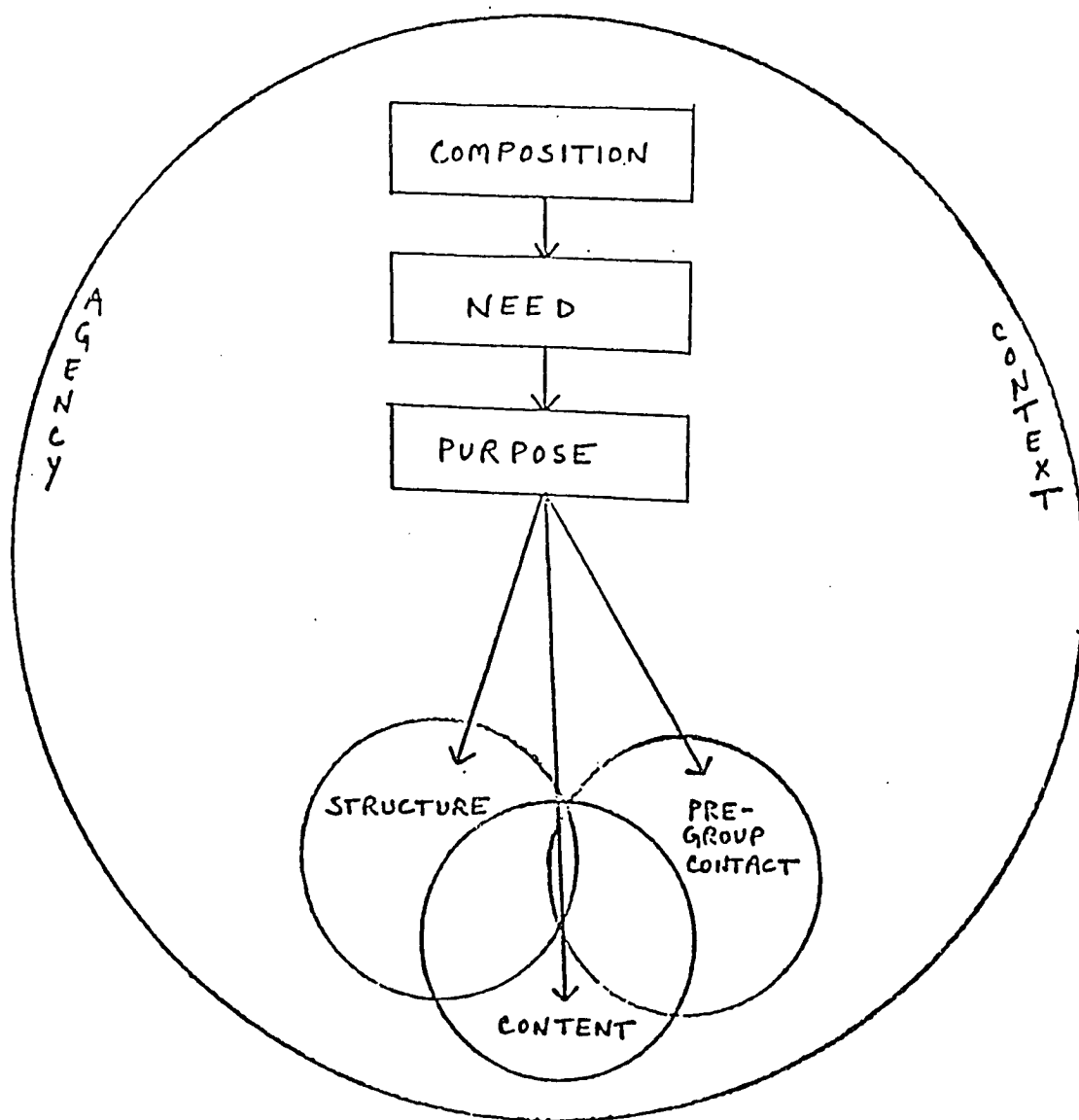
Second, the model is meant to serve as a guide to the thinking of the worker in planning for a group. It presents areas for worker consideration, decision-making, and action as plans for a group are made. It is not meant as a check-list. In fact, it is unlikely that the worker will ever be able to resolve completely the many decisions to be made around each component of the model.

Third, the model presents areas for worker consideration. It does not attempt to present material to justify the making of one decision or another in regard to the factors included. It is hoped that use of the model will help the worker to see which areas are ones around which there is uncertainty in planning for a particular group. If, for instance, use of the model is highlighted the fact that group size was a key factor in planning for a particular

PRE-GROUP PLANNING MODEL
(for use when group composition is not pre-determined)



PRE-GROUP PLANNING MODEL
(for use when group composition is pre-determined)



AGENCY CONTEXT:

Agency Context refers to the conditions existing in the agency or host setting that may have an impact on worker action and on the group that is being formed.

Purpose of agency/host setting
 Agency's/host setting's philosophy and attitudes toward work with groups
 History of agency's/host setting's experiences in work with groups
 General needs, problems, or conditions of target population as perceived by agency/host setting
 Specific needs, problems, or conditions of potential group members as perceived by agency/host setting
 Tentative conception of group purpose as perceived by agency/host setting
 Goals, aims, objectives of potential group members as perceived by agency/host setting
 Potential supports and restraints for the group that exist in the agency/host setting
 Arrangements and preparation for intra-agency coordination and collaboration (both horizontal and vertical)
 Resources that agency/host setting will commit to the group (e.g., staff, time, funds, space, program aids)
 Relationship of agency/host setting to community.

NEED:

Need refers to individual and social wants, drives, problems, issues, and/or areas of concern that can be expected to exist universally for people in the target population as they function socially and, more specifically, that exist among persons in the particular target population the worker has in mind as potential members of the group he is planning.

General needs, problems, or conditions as perceived by clients/potential group members, workers
 Specific needs as perceived by potential members, workers, other relevant persons
 Social and cultural factors (values, economic conditions, attitudes) in the environment of potential group members
 Developmental needs of potential group members
 Ability to meet needs, problems, or conditions through the group modality
 Commonalities and differences regarding the perception of need by members, workers, agency/host setting, other relevant persons.

PURPOSE:

Purpose refers to the ends toward which the group is formed. It encompasses both the ends and objectives that the group will pursue collectively (i.e., the group purpose) and the hopes, expectations, and objectives that each group member holds for what he will gain from participating in the group (i.e., individual goals).

Goals, aims, objectives of potential group members as perceived by themselves, by workers
 Goals, aims, objectives of workers as perceived by themselves, by potential group members
 Tentative conception of group purpose as perceived by potential members, by workers
 Function of the group as perceived by the worker (e.g., counseling, development, activity, social action)
 Commonalities and differences regarding the perceptions of purpose and goals by members, workers, agency/host setting
 Evaluation--method by which ongoing feedback from members will be encouraged and achievement of purpose will be appraised.

COMPOSITION:

Composition refers to the number and characteristics of both members and workers who will participate in the group.

Number of group members
 Open or closed group; if open, process by which new members will be added
 Number of workers and their characteristics (e.g., sex, ethnicity, theoretical approach to work with groups, level of skill, personal style, values, and beliefs)
 Descriptive characteristics of members: degree of homogeneity/heterogeneity regarding age, grade in school, sex, racial/ethnic background, language, educational background, occupational background, religious background, cultural background, socioeconomic level, intelligence level, previous group experience
 Behavioral characteristics of members: degree of homogeneity/heterogeneity regarding interactional style, stage of psychosocial development, needs, interests, capacity to use the group experience/relate to and communicate with others, motivation and capacity to achieve the purpose of the group and their own goals and objectives
 Significant commonalities and differences among members in regard to descriptive and behavioral characteristics.

STRUCTURE:

Structure refers to the concrete arrangements the worker makes to facilitate the actual conduct of the group.

Temporal arrangements: duration of each meeting, duration of the total work, frequency of meetings, time of meetings

Physical arrangements: meeting place, size of meeting room, physical arrangements in the meeting room, how members will get to meetings

Nature of fees

Arrangements regarding confidentiality

Arrangements regarding inter-agency coordination and collaboration.

CONTENT:

Content refers to the means that will be used to achieve the purpose for which the group is formed. It encompasses what is done in the group, how it is done, and why it is done.

Tentative conception of content of group meetings (e.g., use of discussion, didactic material, other program media)

Ability of content to facilitate interaction among group members

Method of planning group content

Supplies and/or equipment needed

Content of and preparation for the first group meeting.

PRE-GROUP CONTACT:

Pre-Group Contact refers to the securing of appropriate members for the group that is being planned and to the preparation of them for their participation in the group.

Recruitment of and outreach to potential group members

Intake

Screening (determination of the client's suitability for the group)

Assessment/diagnosis of individual and environment of members' strengths, problems, concerns, common life situations

Orientation to the group and preparation of the member for the first group meeting

Person who will make pre-group contact

Timing of pre-group contact in relation to first group meeting

Place of pre-group contact

Contact with referral sources, relevant others.

**GROUP PLANNING WORKSHEET - Planning and Supervising
Social Group Work Assignments - January 1992**

GROUP NAME: _____ SITE: _____

1. ENVIRONMENT/AGENCY CONTEXT: _____

2. NEED: _____

3. PURPOSE: _____

4. COMPOSITION (PROJECTED OR ACTUAL): _____

5. PRE-GROUP FORMATION: _____

6. STRUCTURE: _____

7. CONTENT: _____

RESPONSIBILITY/EFFECTIVENESS/VITALITY PARADIGM: EVALUATING GROUPS

(draws from work of Emanuel Tropp, "Social Group Work: The Developmental Approach", from Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1971, pp. 1246-1252)

Propositions:

1. All groups (individual sessions and/or whole experience) can be evaluated on these three levels.
2. all three are necessary in successful group functioning and accomplishment of group purpose(s). -- there are different balances in each group experience.
3. evaluators (members, leaders, supervisors) can use these terms to discuss groups, identify problem areas, refocus activity, etc.

Responsibility: The ethics, morality of the WAY in which the group goes about accomplishing its purpose.

1. Includes: HOW decisions are made (as opposed to just WHAT the decision is); treatment of each member by members and leaders, etc.; accountability for actions . .
 2. Leader activities to enhance group's responsibility include:
 - a. confronting group with purpose, attitudes, and behavior
 - b. recognizing group functioning
 - c. using legitimate agency limits and authority
 3. Examples: _____
-
-

Effectiveness: The RESULT (even within one group meeting)

1. Includes: OUTCOME of group experience; the decision made or the final achievement of a goal.
 2. Leader activities to enhance group's effectiveness include:
 - a. eliciting and presenting proposals
 - b. maintaining focus of discussion
 - c. encouraging freedom and relatedness of expression
 - d. helping group to anticipate consequences of alternatives
 - e. helping group to resolve conflicts
 - f. helping group to come to decisions
 - g. helping group to engage in action
 3. Examples: _____
-
-

Vitality: The EMOTIONAL QUALITY of the group

1. Includes: Excitement, Pleasure, Conflict, -- the Quality of group life - Positive group development of responsiveness, openness, cohesiveness.
 2. Leaders' activities to enhance group's vitality include:

a. stimulation	e. excitement
b. motivation	f. challenge
c. conviction	g. approval
d. humor	h. recognition
 3. Examples: _____
-
-

Planning and Supervising Social Group Work Assignments - January 1992

Group Work Elements in Developing Student Assignments
 "Listing Challenge" Report ** January 7, 1992 - 9:00-11:00

The following represents the results of a brainstorming exercise to identify issues of concern in planning students' group assignments. The categorization utilizes the framework in: "A Model of Planning for Social Work with Groups". Some issues appear under more than one heading; clearly, multiple interpretations are possible. Although not comprehensive, the listed issues represent a range of generic (all social work practice) and specific (social group work) concerns in planning assignments.

AGENCY CONTEXT:

Homogeneous/heterogeneous grouping	Open ended/Time limited
Concurrent services/treatment	Releases
Location of meetings	Barriers to participation
Fees	Open/Closed membership
Meeting frequency and duration	Voluntary/Mandatory participation
Transportation	Refreshments
Outreach and publicity	Money and resources
Supervision and Agency support	Level of confidentiality
Sources of referral	Positive reinforcements
Clients' level of functioning/diagnosis	
Clients known to eachother/previously known to agency	

NEED:

Level of functioning/Diagnosis
 Barriers

PURPOSE:

Purpose
 Goals
 Values

COMPOSITION:

Geography	Number of leaders
Race; Sex	Cultural values
Concurrent services/treatment	Homogeneous/Heterogeneous
Level of functioning/diagnosis	Language(s)
Clients known to eachother/previously known to agency	

PRE-GROUP FORMATION:

Sources of referral
 Group history
 Outreach/Publicity

STRUCTURE:

Positive reinforcement	Location of meetings
Barriers to participation	Number of leaders
Values	Open ended/Time limited
Open/Closed membership	Language(s)
Meeting frequency/duration	Time of day
Voluntary/Mandatory	Issue focus/Open focus
Rules for group	Supportive/Task/Insight
Level of confidentiality	
Clients known to eachother/previously known to agency	

CONTENT:

Refreshments	Type of treatment/modality
Issue focus/Open focus	Supportive/Task/Insight
Materials and supplies	

Planning and Supervising Social Group Work Assignments - January 1992

Group Work Elements in Developing Student Assignments
 "Listing Challenge" Report ** January 8, 1992 - 9:00-11:00

The following represents the results of a brainstorming exercise to identify issues of concern in planning students' group assignments. The categorization utilizes the framework in: "A Model of Planning for Social Work with Groups". Some issues appear under more than one heading; clearly, multiple interpretations are possible. Although not comprehensive, the listed issues represent a range of generic (all social work practice) and specific (social group work) concerns in planning assignments.

AGENCY CONTEXT:

Outreach	Socioeconomic status of clients
Pre-requisites (diagnosis, history)	Clients' levels of functioning
Competing events	Transportation to meeting
Prior experiences of clients	Identification of group
Closed or open membership	On-going or time limited
Fees	Leadership
Location of meetings	Frequency/Duration of meetings
Refreshments	Confidentiality
Voluntary or involuntary	Homogeneous or heterogeneous
Ceremonial events	Evaluation

NEED:

(none in this category)

PURPOSE:

Purpose
 Clients' level of functioning
 Function

COMPOSITION:

Pre-requisites (diagnosis, history)	Age
Sex of members	Sex of facilitator
Socioeconomic status of clients	Ethnicity
Clients' levels of functioning	Health
Prior experience of clients	Size of group
Leadership	Homogeneous or heterogeneous

PRE-GROUP FORMATION:

Outreach
 Prior experiences of clients
 Screening of members

STRUCTURE:

Health	Competing events
Transportation to meeting	Identification
Closed or open membership	On-going or time-limited meetings
Fees	Location of meetings
Group rules	Frequency/duration of meetings
Confidentiality	Voluntary or involuntary

CONTENT:

Name of group	Refreshments
Function	Task/Social activity
Ceremonial events	Certificates
Evaluation	Presenters and literature

Planning and Supervising Social Group Work Assignments - January 1992

Group Work Elements in Developing Student Assignments
 "Listing Challenge" Report ** January 8, 1992 - 2:30-4:30

The following represents the results of a brainstorming exercise to identify issues of concern in planning students' group assignments. The categorization utilizes the framework in: "A Model of Planning for Social Work with Groups". Some issues appear under more than one heading; clearly, multiple interpretations are possible. Although not comprehensive, the listed issues represent a range of generic (all social work practice) and specific (social group work) concerns in planning assignments.

AGENCY CONTEXT:

Incentives for leaders
 Refreshments
 Level of functioning
 Duration (group life)
 Open or closed membership
 Time/Duration of meetings
 Fees
 Who is the leader
 Quality assurance/evaluation
 Group approach

Transportation
 Voluntary/Involuntary
 Frequency of meetings
 Criteria for membership
 When and where to meet
 Expulsion method
 Recruitment strategy
 Agency support and approval
 Supervision
 Recording/reporting method

NEED:

Commonality
 Needs of members

PURPOSE:

Why should they come
 Purpose
 Level of functioning

COMPOSITION:

Voluntary/Involuntary
 Commonality

Level of functioning
 Who is the leader

PRE-GROUP FORMATION:

Criteria for membership
 Recruitment strategy

STRUCTURE:

Incentives for leaders
 Frequency of meetings
 Duration (group life)
 When and where to meet
 Expulsion method
 Group rules
 Recording and reporting

Transportation
 Size
 Open or closed membership
 Time/Duration of meetings
 Fees
 Seating
 Supervision

Quality assurance/evaluation

CONTENT:

Refreshments
 Supplies needed
 Group Approach (i.e. ego/self-psychology)

Planning and Supervising Social Group Work Assignments - January 1992

Group Work Elements in Developing Student Assignments
 "Listing Challenge" Report ** January 16, 1992 - 9:00-11:00

The following represents the results of a brainstorming exercise to identify issues of concern in planning students' group assignments. The categorization utilizes the framework in: "A Model of Planning for Social Work with Groups". Some issues appear under more than one heading; clearly, multiple interpretations are possible. Although not comprehensive, the listed issues represent a range of generic (all social work practice) and specific (social group work) concerns in planning assignments.

AGENCY CONTEXT:

Fees	Agency Support
Supervision	Degree of Structure of Contract
How & Who Composes Group	Co-leadership
Agency vs. Group Goals	Language of Participants & Group Mtng.
Budget	Transportation
Limits/Rules	Open vs. Closed-ended
Confidentiality	(duration of group life)
Open or Closed Membership	Extra-Group Relations
Type of Group	Modality
How to Handle Termination	Meaning of Endings
Mandated/Voluntary	Refreshments
Grading/Evaluation	Marketing the Group

NEED:

PURPOSE:

Purpose
 Goals
 Agency vs. Group Goals

COMPOSITION:

Co-Leadership	Composition
Language of Participants	Language of Group Meeting
Balance/Difference	Leaderless

PRE-GROUP FORMATION:

Recruitment/Pre-Screening	Pre-group Planning
Marketing the Group	How and Who Composes Group

STRUCTURE:

Fees	Leaderless
How many members	Logistics
Time	Place
Transportation	Limits/Rules
Conflict Management	Open/Closed (Duration of Group Life)
Confidentiality	Open or Closed Membership
Extra-Group Relations	Leader Interventions
How to Handle Termination	Meaning of Endings
Mandated/Voluntary	Grading/Evaluation

CONTENT:

Type of Group	Modality
Leader Interventions	How to Handle Termination
Meaning of Endings	Refreshments
Conflict Management	

SUMMARY GROUP RECORDING

WORKER: _____ SITE : _____
ASSOC: _____ MEETING DATE: _____
GROUP NAME: _____ TIME FROM: _____ TO: _____
NO. OF GROUP: _____ NO. PRESENT: _____

MEMBERS PRESENT:

*MEMBERS ABSENT:

*(Note only when important)

VISITORS:

(Non-group members)

1. Preparation (Worker's plans) Attach Preparation Papers if Appropriate.

2. Group Agenda, Topics Dealt With, & Group Action (what they did).....

3. Group Interaction..... (how the members participated)

4. Worker's Impressions and Future Plans.....

GROUP PROCESS - FOR DISCUSSIONBackground

The following is a portion of a process recording of a second group meeting with 4 women, ages 24-70. Three women have children through a kinship custody program and one has children through foster care. According to the group worker, the group's purpose is to "provide an exchange of information and support to enable primary caregivers (non-birth mothers) to cope with parenting concerns associated with toddler-aged children.

At the previous meeting (the first), Beatrice, age 65, spoke of disciplining her grandson, Charlie, age 2, by spanking his hands because he wouldn't behave on the bus. This incident had occurred the day before and Beatrice seemed upset while discussing it, after which she sat silently. Arlene, age 70, said that Charlie got what he deserved. Judith, age 42, said that she has tried other methods than spanking that worked. Ann, age 24, spoke of running away from home many times because she was hit so much by her mother for "things I didn't even do". She was held responsible for the behavior of her siblings as she was the oldest girl.

Group Process Excerpt:

Worker: Last week we had some discussion about disciplining children. There was some disagreement among you as to the most effective way to go about it. Since we would like to have less stress around discipline time, let's discuss this issue further.

Arlene: Well, I think it's a shame you can be dragged into court today for trying to correct your own child.

Beatrice: I thought that's what those people on the bus were going to do to me when I spanked Charlie's hands on the bus last week.

Worker: What did they do to make you feel that way?

Beatrice: It was the way they looked at me, like I had committed a crime or something . . . he was running up and down the bus, I told him to sit back down several times. He would sit, but wiggle away from me and start running again. I couldn't take it anymore and grabbed him and spanked his hands. At first he looked at me like he was shocked or something and then he started crying for blocks and blocks.

Judith: How many blocks did he travel with you?

Beatrice: let's see, we were going to visit my sister, who was sick. She lives on 179th St. I live on 121st St.

Ann: That's over 50 blocks! Charlie was probably tired of sitting. Has he ever acted that way before?

Beatrice: I don't usually go to my sister's, she usually visits me. the few times we travelled there Charlie was an infant and I took a cab.

Judith: I don't believe in hitting children. I have a 9 year old girl and a 12 year old boy. I have a curfew system worked out for my son who is only allowed out on weekend nights, no school nights. I won't say that I never hit these kids, but it's very seldom and I never the baby.

Ann: Hitting kids doesn't solve anything. It only makes them mean and want to get away from you and hang out in the streets.

Arlene: Then, why does it say in the bible, "Spare the rod and spoil the child"? ²

Ann: My mother believed in that same crap . . . excuse me. What good did it do? I ran away from home as soon as I was able to my aunt's house.

Worker: It seems parenting children is rarely easy for anyone. But, lets get back to the incident on the bus with Charlie, as today we're trying to explore disciplining methods.

Beatrice: I'm trying to forget it.

Worker: You seem quite upset when telling us about the look on Charlie's face.

Beatrice: I guess I was upset. He looked so hurt and all, like he couldn't believe what I had done to him.

Arlene: Better he look sad than fall down and hit his head on one of those metal poles or plastic bus seats. I would have spanked his little hands too.

Worker: How do the rest of you feel the situation could have been taken care of?

Judith: I would have talked to Joey about going on the big bus. If he got restless, I might get up and change seats, if one was available. If he got too wild, I think I would take him off the bus and wait for another one.

Ann: I would have held Michael or JP real tight or maybe rocked one on my knee. I don't think I would take both on the bus until Michael walks better. I don't have any children and my crack-head sister shouldn't have any either. Some people don't deserve to have any kids.

Beatrice: I'm not so young anymore, when you get older and have raised one family, it's hard raising a grandchild.

Worker: (after some silence) Ann and Judith, those sound like really great ideas to help ease travel on the bus by a young child. Let's see, talking a little about the trip fist, changing seats rocking child on the knee or getting off the bus. Other options might be to have the child bring a favorite small toy. Anyone else have something to add?

Judith: I try to promise Joey something for being good, like ice cream if he tries to sit in his seat.

Beatrice: That's just bribery plain and simple.

Ann: Well, it's better than hearing him scream for hours or hitting him and see him get meaner as he grows up.

Worker: It seems that members who are grandparents seem to agree on spanking and the members who are not disagree. Anyway, you're all concerned about parenting the children you take care of you wouldn't be here. Next week, we can focus on some memories of how you were disciplined. At least we had a lively discussion this week. Your expressions of feelings and opinions was great today.

Planning and Supervising Social Group Work Assignments - January 1992

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Planning and Supervising Social Group Work Assignments - January 1992Section One: Evaluation Checklist

Organization of Activities:

	<u>Please circle your response</u>			
	poor	fair	good	excellent

1. Development of the basic concepts in terms of clarity and comprehensiveness	1	2	3	4
2. Solicitation and incorporation of participants interest	1	2	3	4
3. Organization of seminar content	1	2	3	4
4. Adaptability of seminar to my level of experience	1	2	3	4
5. Pacing of the material	1	2	3	4
6. Encouragement of discussion	1	2	3	4
7. Use of experiential activities	1	2	3	4
8. Integration of assignments and practice-based examples	1	2	3	4
9. Helpfulness of handouts	1	2	3	4

Instructor:

10. Knowledge of the subject	1	2	3	4
11. Clarity of expression of ideas	1	2	3	4
12. Ability to respond to seminar participants' concerns	1	2	3	4
13. Tolerance of differences of opinion	1	2	3	4
14. Ability to relate content to seminar purpose	1	2	3	4

Overall Rating:

15. Evaluation of the 2 sessions as a whole	1	2	3	4

16. What other (if any) questions and ranking could be used to help in this evaluation effort? Please write any suggestions and comments:

Section Two: Evaluation Narrative

A. Please give specific examples of how you have used, or plan to use, the material from these sessions in your work with field students.

B. Please give specific examples of how you have used, or plan to use, the material from these sessions in your work in addition to field instruction.

C. What specific areas did you find particularly applicable to your work, even if you can not put them to use at this time.

D. Please give specific suggestions for improving any aspects of these sessions which you have not mentioned earlier.

ENHANCING SOCIAL GROUP WORK OPPORTUNITIES IN FIELD WORK EDUCATION

Carol Cohen, Fordham University School of Social Service
Elaine Marshack, Hunter College School of Social Work
Sharon Goldberg, Saint Joseph Services for Children and Families

14TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM - OCTOBER 31, 1992 - ATLANTA, GEORGIA
ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SOCIAL WORK WITH GROUPS

WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

This workshop focuses on a training program to enhance field instructors' abilities to plan and supervise group work assignments. Spearheaded by an experienced field instructor as trainer/researcher, the program brought together group work faculty, field instruction department, and administration of a Graduate School of Social Work in its development, implementation, and evaluation. This work represents a dramatic attempt to reverse decades of decreased emphasis on group work education in the social work profession.

The three authors provide a diversity of perspectives on the program. They include the program designer/trainer, the director of field education, and a field instructor who participated in the training program. Reporting on their direct experiences and responsibilities, they will engage workshop participants in examining the role of organizational mandates, experiences with collaboration, implications for curriculum development, and the impact of training on student assignments and supervision.

Beginning field instructors were targeted for the training innovation, incorporated into the school's mandatory Seminar for Field Instructors. Following extensive assessment and planning, a series of sessions were held in January, 1992. The training consisted of two sessions, and was conducted in the four sections of the Seminar. The curriculum for the four hours focused on planning diverse field experiences, assessing opportunities for group assignments for all students, and supervising group work assignments from a variety of perspectives.

Integral to the training, over 70 participating field instructors were engaged in the evaluation of content, format, and utility of the program. In addition, a study compared the group assignments of students whose supervisors participated in the specialized training, with those who did not participate. Illustrating the program's impact is the following comment by a trainee: "I will not continue the passive role I've taken as a field instructor, but will ask students to brainstorm a group opportunity".

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