Developing the Learning Contract

CSU, CHICO
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Purpose of the Contract

- Establishes objectives for the student
  - Feasible
  - Attainable
- Serves as a tool to identify
  - What the student will learn
  - What activities will be a part of the placement experience

Purpose……

- Collaborative effort between the student, field instructor and faculty liaison
- To be considered a working document and guide for supervision throughout the year
- Made up of three components –
  - Learning goals: where they are going
  - Learning tasks: how they will get there
  - Timeframe for accomplishing the tasks – set a date by which you want the student to complete the task

How to Begin

- Planning should begin during first two weeks of placement
- Things to consider :

  students' goals

  student's experience level (employment, volunteering)

  student's learning style

  student's strengths, limitations

  motivation and interests

Learning Contract Process

- Student drafts the initial contract, consideration should be given to trying to tie class assignments in to learning tasks as appropriate (for example research a specific service delivery model , legislation that has impacted service delivery, etc.)
- Agency field instructor (AFI) reviews the draft, makes changes, additions
- Student presents final contract to AFI, provides copy to Field Liaison Due week: 5 (BSW)/7 (MSW)

Preparing the Learning Contract

- Each student is expected to formulate specific goals in ten competency areas: (within each area consider learning tasks that address three areas)
  - Agency Services
  - Personal Development
  - Professional Development
- Within each competency area the student is expected to list specific goals and ways to achieve them, and, then describe how learning in each area will be evaluated

Agency Learning Goals

- This area pertains to the nature of the fieldwork agency in which the student is based
- Consideration should be given to tasks that help the student learn the following:
  - Services and programs the agency provides
  - Agency history, philosophy, structure and funding
  - Nature of the client population
  - Agency policies and procedures
  - Application of the generalist method to specific cases/assignments (micro, mezzo, macro)
  - Agency decision-making processes

Personal Learning Goals

- Pertains to the student's uniqueness as an individual and changes he/she would like to make to help them in the role of a practicing social worker
- Considerations should given to tasks that will help students identify the following:
  - The differences between personal and professional boundaries
  - Personal blocks to effective social work practice
  - Self-awareness in relation to human diversity (cultural and lifestyle differences, disadvantaged groups, women's issues, etc.)
  - Personal values that help or may hinder effective practice

Professional Learning Goals

- Pertain to theory, methods, and skills common to the work of a professional social worker that may be learned in the current placement but applicable in other social work agencies as well
- Considerations should be given to the following:
  - Development of skills and knowledge bases necessary to perform the role of a social worker in your agency
  - Accountability to client systems (maintaining confidentiality, keeping appointments, following through on plans, etc.)
  - Learning to work as part of a Team with agency staff
  - Identification of client concerns/problems

Professional Learning Goals (cont' d)

- Communication and interviewing skills
- Problem-solving process
- Diversity
- Community resources and making referrals
- Social work practice methods (establishing relationships, collecting data, making assessments, intervention, evaluation and termination)
- Integrating and applying academic knowledge and theory to actual social work situations

Client Systems – Micro, Mezzo and Macro

- It is acknowledged that each agency varies in its ability to provide the student with equal experiences with all client systems.
- Example of each:
  - Micro
    - Case Management
    - Individual Counseling
    - Advocacy/brokering

Client Systems – Micro, Mezzo and Macro

- Example of each
  - Mezzo
    - Attend team or multidisciplinary meetings
    - Attend support, educational or recreational/socialization group
    - Make home visit and participate in family interviews
  - Macro
    - Identify specific techniques of agency' s administrative decision making
    - Write a letter to the editor regarding an issue
    - Attend a board meeting

Learning Goals

- Please note – it may be appropriate for certain strategies and evidence of accomplishments to fit in more than one goal
- The final form signed by the student, field instructor, and faculty liaison is retained by the faculty liaison.
- Copies should be kept by the student and field instructor/supervisor

Learning Goals

- The Learning Contract form is found on the

CSU, Chico Website:
http://www.csuchico.edu/swrk/programs/field/fieldforms.shtml

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