ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION

The elements of effective field supervision can be divided into four categories:
- The agency
- Tasks and assignments
- Supervisory skills
- Supervision meetings

Elements related to the Agency
- Making the student feel desired by the agency
- Including the student in agency functions and activities
- Treating the student like a professional
- Helping the student learn about the agency

Elements related to tasks and assignments
- Clarifying the purpose of assignments
- Providing detailed directions and instructions
- Working with the student to complete tasks
- Regularly reviewing the student’s workload
- Providing a variety of learning activities
- Clarifying expectations for the student’s performance
- Providing early opportunities for client contact

Elements related to supervisory skills
- Explaining your role and the role of the student
- Encouraging discussion of the student’s concerns
- Encouraging discussion of taboo subjects
- Helping the student link theory to practice
- Providing clear and consistent feedback
- Validating the student’s feelings
- Reassuring students that they can succeed
- Demonstrating that the student is valued as a person and a colleague

Elements related to supervision meetings
- Holding regularly scheduled supervision meetings
- Being available outside of regular supervision times
- Providing a through discussion of the student’s learning needs
- Reviewing and analyzing the student’s cases
- Providing consistent supervision throughout the placement
The Supervisory Conference

What do students want to discuss during supervision meetings?

- Practice skills used by students
- Cases and clients
- Ongoing performance issues
- Personal strengths and limitations

What topics are not associated with student satisfaction with supervision sessions?

- Community issues
- Career plans
- Administrative issues
- Classroom assignments
- Agency gossip

What can we learn from this?

- Students want direct and practical information that is going to help them become ethical and effective social workers
- Students wanted dedicated time with their supervisor to focus on their practice issues, and areas that need improvement

Ineffective Supervisory Behaviors

- Supervision that is too directive – students are not given opportunities to practice skills on their own or learning opportunities are limited.
- Lack of monitoring – failure to monitor the student’s workload or failure to make arrangements for supervision during the field instructor’s absence.
- Inappropriate use of the student – assigning tasks that do not meet the learning needs of the student or assigning tasks that are too difficult or easy.
- Inadequate supervisory contact – meeting infrequently or allowing too little time to meet.
- Lack of information – failure to provide students with necessary information or instructions; failure to provide adequate feedback concerning their performance.