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The Integration of Theory and Practice:  
The ITP Loop Model

### **The Integration of Theory and Social Work Practice**

Practitioner and educators in social work have always characterized the business of the practicum as the place where theory is integrated with practice. All too frequently this statement stands without further definition. Integration of theory and practice (ITP), without examination, may be a kind of magical incantation through which educators, like alchemists, hope to transform a social work student into a professional social worker. Recognizing the limits of magic, even for social workers, this chapter will engage field instructors in the work of demystifying ITP and giving it operational meaning.

Practitioners, to become educators, must be able to examine their own practice and articulate the thoughts, attitudes, values, and feelings that affect the actions they take. Practitioners feel that many of these actions have become 'second nature,' so that plans and behaviours may appear to the observer, to evolve naturally. In fact, professional behaviour is based on implicit ideas and beliefs that social workers have developed through their own educational and practice experiences. This 'integrated knowledge' has to be identified so that the field educator can communicate it to the student (Bogo na Vayda 1987,1991). In order to illustrate how to unravel 'integrated knowledge' we will follow two case examples, one a practice situation with an individual and one involving community practice and service planning.

The worker in both examples might imagine a looping process. Since social work activity is both cumulative and ongoing, looping is a useful image. Each practice encounter must incorporate past experience, new knowledge, and future speculation and planning. This is demonstrated in figure 1.

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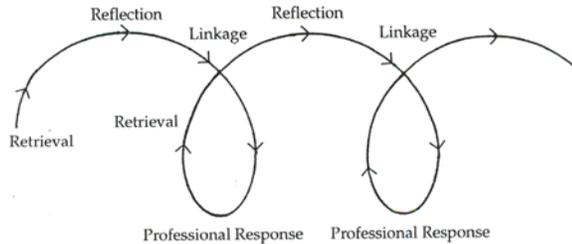


Figure 1

## Retrieval

The starting point of the loop is information gathering, which we call retrieval. Retrieval is the recall of information about a specific practice situation and would include preparatory thinking as well as the contact itself. To put it another way, we mean the facts that distinguish and define any situation at the beginning of involvement.

Retrieved information from any social work situation can be divided into psycho-social, interactive, contextual, and organizational factors (Vayda and Bogo 1991). The worker and client focus on the most pressing factors, which may change with time. As new information is retrieved, the worker moves through the loop again and again until the situation is resolved.

Psycho-social factors are familiar concepts to social workers and refer to specific information about individuals, families, groups, and communities. Included are observations about formal and informal support systems. Psycho-social factors direct attention to the client system. Interactive factors refer to the creation of a new system composed of social worker and client exchanges. The quality of the interaction plays a key role in the disclosure of information and facilitates elaboration. In demonstrating the loop, we have been deliberately selective and reductive. We will focus on psycho-social and interactive factors first, and add contextual and organizational factors later.

### Retrieval: Individual Practice: Example 1

*The social worker is employed in a shelter for battered women. The client, a woman, aged thirty-four years, has three children, ages six, eight, and ten years, and is physically abused repeatedly by her husband. Although the police have been involved, no charges have been laid. The woman has sought refuge in the shelter times in the past, but has always made a decision to return to her husband. She has never held a paying job and has a grade 10 education.*

## **Retrieval: Community Practice: Example 2**

*In a larger metropolitan city, a South Asian feminist women's group approaches the local planning council for help in establishing a service for battered women in their community. Increasing awareness has developed that wife abuse is considered a criminal offense in the wider society but is tolerated in the community. Males and elders in the community are feeling threatened by the militancy of some of the younger women in the community who have publicized, in the mainstream media, the fact of wife abuse in their community.*

This information is illustrative of retrieval. In actual practice, more information would have been retrieved and reflected upon at this point.

## **Reflection**

Social workers are trained to subject the information they have gathered to a reflective process, which we have identified as the next step in the loop. Reflection contains elements of the rubric of 'self awareness,' which has been a standard principle of social work practice. Reflection, as it is used in the loop, is an exploration of the social worker's personal associations with respect to the practice situation. Personal associations may arise from personality style, idiosyncratic reactions to similar life experiences, or internalized cultural values. The purpose of reflection is to gain self-knowledge of each of these processes.

Personal subjective reactions can be recalled through reflection and examined regarding their potential effect on the work to be done. It is equally important to examine assumptions and beliefs that may be perceived as truth but are cultural constructs belonging to a personal world-view shaped by one's ethnicity, race, culture, and gender. By acknowledging the validity of other assumptions and beliefs, an open dialogue can begin between worker and client. Personal experience must also be acknowledged when it is relevant to the situation of the client. While similar experiences can aid joining and understanding, it is important to acknowledge that each individual has a unique response to the same life event.

In addition, as the situation progresses and the loop repeats itself, the worker reflects on the effectiveness of interventions undertaken to bring about change. In this way, reflection begins to build an ongoing evaluation of the work accomplished.

## **Reflection: Individual Practice: Example 1**

*The worker is a strong feminist who herself had left an abusive relationship and subsequently earned a graduate degree while supporting herself through part-time employment. Through reflection she confronts her impatience with the client's pattern of returning to her abusive husband. She becomes aware that she must separate her experience from that of the client. She recalls her immediate labeling of the client as helpless and dependent, unable or unwilling to make decisions and act upon them. The*

*worker knows that she can be judgmental and that this attitude could undermine her capacity for empathy and joining.*

### **Reflection: Community Practice: Example 2**

*The worker is a middle-aged Hispanic male with a strong sense of the importance of family preservation and the value of shared beliefs and cultural solidarity. Upon reflection, he becomes aware that he has a tendency to identify with the males and elders in the community. He becomes aware that he must find a way to join with the needs of the younger women, without losing his sense of the value the community places on family stability.*

### **Linkage**

Less familiar to social workers is the conscious application of theory to practice. This step is what we have labeled as linkage. Linkage is that part of the loop that uses cognitive associations to retrieved information and to the associations elicited through reflection, and links them with knowledge learned from reading, research studies, lectures, and general experience. The purpose is to identify and label knowledge that will help explain the practice data and the subjective reactions that have been evoked, and ultimately to use that knowledge in planning professional response. Linkage requires that facts and attitudes about the situation be abstracted or generalized to identify common elements that relate to a knowledge base. A social worker's practice is likely to be based on a well-integrated knowledge and value base consisting of practice wisdom, concepts from various theories, and empirically validated findings. Additionally, approaches or therapies that may be characteristic of a specific setting provide the theoretical linkage. These 'pieces' of knowledge become part of the practitioner's art and are used in a seemingly intuitive fashion in interacting with a practice situation (Schon 1987, 1995). Specialized practice models such as task-centered, family systems, group, and community development approaches interpret human behaviour and interpersonal adaptation, and provide social workers with specific techniques to involve clients in intervention approaches to bring about desired change.

### **Linkage: Individual Practice: Example 1**

*Psycho-social knowledge may involve recognizing the impact of the client's cultural expectations about traditional female behaviour in a marriage on her self-identity, self-esteem, and her fears about permanently leaving the relationship. Knowledge of family dynamics is also relevant, such as the emotional impact on the children and the reactivation of the woman's experience of violence in her family of origin. Formal support networks might include financial maintenance, subsidized housing, vocational training and education, and provisions for day care.*

### **Linkage: Community practice: Example 2**

*Linking to 'pieces of knowledge' about immigration and relocation, such as an understanding of cultural beliefs brought from the country of origin, and the effect of a different set of societal expectations in the new country on identity, may inform the worker's approach to this situation. The worker asks himself, 'What do I need to think about to better understand this situation, and what do I need to know to intervene effectively?' The worker uses the practice to acknowledge the group's concerns and enlists them in developing a strategy to identify and engage key persons in the community who play formal and informal roles.*

### **Professional Response**

To practice social work means to take some action. This step is what we have labeled as professional response to a given set of facts at a particular point in time. Each situation requires the worker and client to select the issues of highest priority for immediate focus. Using this part of the loop, the social worker grounds the ideas, knowledge, and insights just uncovered to develop specific plans and behaviours for dealing with the situation. Professional response is the selection and implementation of a plan that will inform the next encounter. Consideration of all parts of the loop conveys the dynamic interrelationship between concepts and action.

#### **Professional Response: Individual Practice: Example 1**

*The worker might choose to open a discussion with the client about what choices the client feels are immediately necessary and possible for her at the time, specifically encouraging her to plan for the safety of herself and her children, through contacts with appropriate informal and formal systems, such as neighbours, extended family, and police. Later, the worker might discuss with the client her family's attitudes, experiences, expectations.*

#### **Professional Response: Community Practice: Example 2**

*The social worker begins to work with the women's group to help them identify all the stakeholders in the community who need to be involved from the beginning in planning a response to this continuity issue. The next step is to work out a detailed plan of how to involve these various potential participants and to begin implementation of the plan.*

We have thus far focussed on retrieval of psycho-social and interactive factors in going through the loop. However, two other important factors, contextual and organizational, influence all social work situations and need to be acknowledged. Contextual factors refer to the economic and political structures embedded in society that affect individuals and disempower certain groups through discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, and disability. In addition, societal attitudes may erect boundaries that exclude specific groups; for example, a suburban community may seem a hostile environment to visible minority persons. A particular community group may have fixed beliefs about homosexuals or lesbians, homeless persons, persons who have committed criminal offences, or persons who are either mentally or physically disabled. Social workers are

committed to connect these issues to their ongoing practice responses and work toward shifts in empowerment for their clients.

### **Contextual factors: Individual Practice: Example 1**

*In a period of budgetary constraints, the community is less sympathetic to providing adequate resources for battered women. The re-emergence of beliefs in the sanctity and primacy of the family have created a hostile climate for women who may need protection from their partners. The attitudes of the police and the justice system toward family violence often keep women at risk. In addition, there are negative economic consequences for single women living alone with children.*

Integrating this perspective expands the worker's previous professional response to include advocacy. The worker might join with others to plan a strategy for presenting the needs of battered women to the media and to various levels of government.

### **Contextual Factors: Community Practice: Example 2**

*In a period of financial constraint, the government is unlikely to fund services aimed at a specific ethnic group. Many people in the community have experienced discrimination which they believe is based on racial difference.*

Taking this into account, the worker's professional response might be to help the woman identify funding sources in their own community as well as publicizing the information from the needs assessment in the wider community.

Organizational factors refer to bureaucratic systems and to how their ideology and assumptions, rules, and procedures, affect program delivery and service provision. These factors include an organization's mandate, its climate, roles, and procedures, including decision-making procedures, its structure and funding, board composition, and its relationships with a network of other community agencies. Social workers use knowledge of organizational dynamics to develop interventions to make organizations more effective.

### **Organizational Factors: Individual Practice: Example 1**

*The shelter's board of directors has placed a three-week limit on the length of time any woman may remain in the shelter. The worker feels this is insufficient time for adequate planning to take place and may be a reason why some clients return home to a dangerous situation before an alternative plan is in place.*

The worker may seek the support of other workers, clients, and the director in making a request to meet with the board to present her concerns.

### **Organizational Factors: Community Practice: Example 2**

*The planning council has just published a study that some local community leaders have branded as unfair because they feel it focuses on racial divisions and criminal activity in their community. The director of the council is very sensitive to this criticism and has asked the staff to avoid any activity which could jeopardize the council.*

The worker knows that survival of the council is dependent on public funding. However, he recognizes an ethical dilemma between responsibility to protect and responsibility to respond to community needs. The worker may inform the director that he understands the director’s concern, but that he cannot let it interfere with his responsibility to provide assistance to community groups. He may agree to keep the director informed about any action which would be potentially significant to the council.

These case examples and discussion provide an introduction to how the ITP Loop Model as a process can be applied to the content of social work practice. It is a model that is generic and comprehensive, and provides a unifying structure for both practice and field instruction. Figure 2 illustrates how this framework unifies content and process.

THE ITP LOOP MODEL APPLIED TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: PROCESS AND CONTENT				
PROCESS	Retrieval	Reflection	Linkage	Professional Response
CONTENT	Psycho-social Factors			
	Interactive Factors			
	Contextual Factors			
	Organizational Factors			

Figure 2

## Content

We have diagrammed the looping process, and we will return to a discussion of each step in this process. More complicated and complex are the factors we have labeled as content. These factors coincide with an ecological metaphor which has been widely adopted in social work practice theory to capture the profession’s commitment to the transactional bonds between the person and his or her social and physical context (Hartman 1994). We have described all social work situations as involving psycho-social, interactive, societal or contextual, and organizational factors. In actual practice, however, instructors and students must consciously choose to consider only those factors which are meaningful to the specific practice situation at any point in time. This requires scanning the whole to focus attention on the most relevant factors, which, in turn, may change with time, thus requiring the selection of still other factors. Through this process sounds complex, scanning to facilitate focus is a common mental activity.

## Understanding the ITP Loop Model of Field Instruction

Implicit in preparing students for service in the field is a process whereby the information, knowledge, and critical analytic base acquired by students in the academic part of professional education is translated into an ability to relate to persons seeking help and to arrive at professional decisions in a service context. Each social work school or program has developed a unique philosophy of education, specific curriculum objectives, and specific practicum regulations and procedures. However, field instruction is more than a structural arrangement between academy and agency in which actors follow a set of procedures; and field instruction requires more than providing an example for a student to observe and emulate, as a master teacher would do for an apprentice, or establishing a facilitative relationship between student and field instructor. The ITP Loop Model should assist field instructors in examining their own practice and that of their students, as well as the interaction between student and field instructor. The organizing principle is the belief that field instruction is a branch of social work practice that possesses a distinctive blend of knowledge, values, and skills that can be articulated and learned. The ITP Loop Model is applicable to all levels of practice, whether with individuals, families, groups, or communities, or in administration, policy development, or planning. It can be used in well-established or developing settings, urban or rural settings, and with undergraduate and graduate students.

To review, we use the image of a looping process to depict the cumulative and ongoing nature of both practice and field instruction. For purposes of presentation, we will discuss each phase of the ITP Loop Model sequentially. However, practice and field instruction are fluid, dynamic, and integrated, and cannot be so neatly organized. In using the loop at a given time, any part will be joined with other parts as the process of retrieval, reflection, linkage, and professional response occurs. Having described a model that integrates social work theory and practice, we are ready to focus on how the practitioner, now functioning as a field educator, can use the model with students in practicum settings.

## **Retrieval**

Since the distinctive feature of the practicum is the primacy of practice, field instruction starts with and always returns to a practice event. The entry point in the loop for the process of field instruction is the retrieval or recall of information, namely, the facts describing the given practice experience. It involves use of the observing ego, a 'mind's eye' phenomenon wherein the field instructor or student recalls a professional situation as both an observer and a participant. We have already said that social work situations include psycho-social, interactive, organizational, and contextual factors. These are reviewed as the field instructor and the student move through the loop again and again until the situation is resolved. Retrieval may involve consideration of the known facts of a situation in order to prepare for the first contact, or it may involve reactions flowing from a professional response that evolved from the preceding practice activity. Practice activities in which students are involved include individual, family, or group interviews, team or committee meetings, presentations, and reading and writing reports. Field instructors may retrieve student practice data through such methods as verbal reports,

process and summary recordings, audio or video tapes, live supervision , or co-working experiences.

Students new to social work are likely to retrieve and report practice observations that are personally meaningful to them but that may not be focussed. The bridge between the familiar role of social persona and purposeful intervenor is difficult to negotiate. Workers know that it is the context of the encounter or the agency's service mandate that empowers the worker to investigate any situation. Students, wanting to be accepted and liked by the person they are seeing, find it difficult to ask for information which they feel might insult, embarrass, alienate, or anger the other person. For example, the student at a child protection agency sent to investigate a complaint of potential child abuse talks with the mother for nearly an hour. She reports to her field instructor that the mother was friendly, seemed very nice, and denied ever hitting or spanking her child. In response to a question from the field instructor, she said she did not ask how the mother might discipline the child or if the child ever made her angry. Rather, they mainly discussed the mother's concerns about the recent decrease in her welfare support.

The task of the field instructor is to present a structure which will frame student's random observations and affect their selection and definition of what constitutes relevant data. In the above case, the field instructor and student talked about the agency's charge to ensure that children are protected and what the student, as the instrument of that charge, needs to ask the mother, who may be ambivalent about her parenting role. The field instructor also acknowledged that governmental changes in the level of support available to single mothers were affecting many of the clients of the agency. In this example, the field instructor and the student have identified relevant psycho-social, interactive, organizational, and contextual content.

## **Reflection**

Reflection is a familiar concept in social work education. It refers to the worker's thoughtful consideration of the practice activity and, as it is used in the loop, focuses on two elements: subjective meanings and objective effects. Reflection on subjective meanings entails an exploration the personal associations that the student or the field instructor might have with respect to the practice situation. It involves the identification of the values, beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes that we attach to observed facts in order to make them understandable within a personal context and in accordance with our internalized notions of what is 'right.'

Social work practice has long recognized that the 'self' of the practitioner exerts a powerful influence on interpretations of and reactions to professional situations. Approaches to field instruction have given more or less attention to the student's personality dynamics, and to past or current issues in the student's life which affect his or her ability to offer effective service (George 1982). Models that used a therapeutic approach tended to interpret students' subjective reactions negatively, seeing them as interfering and hence in need of being controlled. Too often this resulted in a quasi-therapeutic supervisory model which blurred the boundaries between education and

personal growth (Sisporin 1981), with the result that this approach became problematic and fell into disfavour. We recognize that in their practice social workers are often confronted with extremely challenging situations, such as those of people who have been victimized in violent intimate relationships, refugees who have been victimized in violent intimate relationships, refugees who have suffered trauma and torture, people who are dying of AIDS, and children who have been sexually abused. It is normal that these situations will elicit strong personal reactions from social workers and students. As Grossman, Levine-Jordano, and Shearer (1990) have observed, social work education has often abdicated its role of helping students learn to deal with their emotional reactions to practice. Through the phase of reflection in the loop model, the field instructor can include this focus and work with the student to identify subjective responses. These can be used to advance both self-understanding and understanding of the client, and to formulate professional responses that will be helpful.

In some instances, the student will have had personal experiences similar to those of the practice situation. While these experiences can aid joining and understanding, it is important to acknowledge different reactions and unique responses to the same life event. The intent of identification of similar experiences is not to intrude into the personal life of the student; rather, when students and educators feel that their own experiences are relevant to the practice situation, the aim is to acknowledge and consciously use them. It is the practice situation that stimulates and guides the search for personal experience that will promote or retard students' ability to empathize.

Reflection is the process that has taken on a new urgency as people from many different races and cultures are struggling to find an identity and to survive in North America. Trying to meet the needs of such a diverse population is straining established practice repertoires and traditional attitudes. In addition, gender roles are shifting, conventional attitudes toward sexual preferences are being challenged, and cherished concepts of family and social support are in great need of redefinition (Hartman 1990a). Through reflection, social workers can gain self-knowledge and become aware of the influence of assumptions and beliefs that may be perceived as truth but are actually cultural constructs belonging to a personal world-view.

In summary, reflection aims to help the student gain access to personal subjective reactions to practice phenomena with which the student is engaged. These reactions can reflect internalized cultural values, idiosyncratic reactions to similar life experiences, or personality styles. Through reflection, the student's feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptions are made explicit and subjected to critical thinking about their impact on interactions with the clients or participants in the practice situation, on assessments and judgements being made, and on the effectiveness of plans and interventions. Students are helped to recognize the challenges and changes that are occurring, or that need to occur, as long-held beliefs and reactions are confronted by new knowledge and experience.

In reflecting on personal associations to practice, four sets of factors must be considered: psycho-social, interactive, contextual, and organizational. Psycho-social factors might include subjective reactions to characteristics of people in the situation; to certain social problems (e.g., substance abuse or the homeless populations); and to systematic or structural factors (e.g., race, unemployment, or incarceration). Interactive factors might include reactions based on transference or counter-transference phenomena;

and idiosyncratic reactions to specific areas of comfort and enthusiasm or discomfort and anxiety.

Contextual factors may also direct student and field instructor to recall life experiences relevant to the practice situation that have produced their belief systems, social class assumptions, and cultural, ethnic, and gender-based assumptions. For example, life transition experiences such as adolescence, marriage, parenthood, aging, separation and loss, crisis reactions, and the effects of isolation all form the basis for empathy. These universal experiences, however, are filtered by poverty, social class, culture, race, gender. The commonalities and the differences need to be reviewed and applied to the practice situation.

Organizational factors might include reactions to specific agency policies and procedures, to a climate of openness or rigidity, or to an institutionalized approach to problems based on regulations. Large bureaucratic structures may be hierarchical and authoritarian, or they may permit democratic participation; and small services may be egalitarian, or they may be charged with factionalism and tension. These factors influence the interactions between social worker and client, and between student and teacher.

Table 1 outlines the factors that can be scanned by the field instructor and student in order to select those elements that may be personally relevant to the practice situation.

**Table 1**

Reflection: personal associations to the encounter

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Psycho-social factors:

Reaction to characteristics of people in the situation.

Reaction to social problems

Interactive factors:

Awareness of areas of comfort and enthusiasm, and of discomfort and anxiety, in contact situations.

Awareness of the effects of transferring subjective meanings, feelings, and reactions on the part of both workers and other persons.

Contextual factors:

Relevant life experiences.

Relevant belief systems; social class assumptions; culture, ethnicity, and race; and gender-based assumptions.

Awareness of the influence of specific systemic and structural factors.

Organizational factors:

Reaction to the agency's approach to clients and social problems.

Reaction to the agency's approach to suggestions for innovation.

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The following example illustrates how the process and content of reflection inform the work of the field instructor. The student is placed at a community neighbourhood centre in a working-class area that provides various drop-in programs, a legal clinic, and advocacy assistance and planning for groups responding to changing community needs and concerns. The municipality has purchased a large old home and, after making extensive renovations, announced publicly its plans for an AIDS hospice and a counselling centre for gays and lesbians. The neighbourhood is already the site of

various group homes and shelters and a large mental health hospital. Many residents feel stressed and angry that this facility is being foisted upon them. They have circulated petitions demanding that it is be located somewhere else. The placement agency's board and the executive director believe that the proposed facility will meet a long-standing need, but they also anticipated a negative reaction in the community.

A public meeting is organized and publicized by the centre to discuss the issue, and the student and another worker are assigned to be facilitators. Following the first meeting, the student reports to the field instructors that he lost control when people began talking and shouting at once and he was unable to impose order. He said that he lost his temper and called them a bunch of bigots. He apologized quickly, but he feels he seriously damaged his chances to work with this group in a constructive way.

The field instructor said she could appreciate the student's pain and embarrassment at what happened, but all was probably not lost. The student then said that he might have handled the shouting, but what he felt was the homophobia he felt she faced as he faced the group. He said his brother was gay, and he knew the prejudice his brother faced even from his own family. He just felt overwhelmed by the belief that nothing would ever change, even though the city was now ready to offer services and support.

Using reflection, the field instructor and student talked about attitudinal change as a long and often difficult process. Reflective field instruction begins with a discussion of the student's own reaction based on his experience and then has to move from this interior space to connect to the professional situation by helping him to reflect on the experience and beliefs of those persons in the community who were so opposed to the hospice and the centre. Together, the field instructor and the student speculated about what made these persons fearful and angry. Homophobia was a factor, but social class also played a role in their belief that more powerful people did not want social services for troubled and troublesome people located in their own communities but always seemed to choose this community. The field instructor pointed out that the centre had worked hard to be seen as one that was willing to hear out the thoughts of persons living in that community and to consider their needs and wishes. They planned how the student could use these insights to try to begin a real dialogue at the next planned meeting. This example suggests how all factors, psycho-social, interactive, contextual, and organizational, were useful and necessary to expand the student's reflective process.

Reflection must also provide for the opportunity to consider the effectiveness of an interaction or professional response that is retrieved as the situation reloops back to retrieval and reflection. For example, the student in the child protection agency, working with the potential abuse situation already described, had begun to work with the mother, seeing her twice a week. After six weeks, both the student and field instructor felt that the mother was ready to be referred to a group of other young single mothers who met weekly for companionship, relaxation, and general discussion of topics of their choice. Regular contacts with the student were discontinued. All went well for several months, and then the group facilitator reported that the mother had not attended for three weeks. The agency also received a phone call from a neighbour saying that she heard the child crying for hours at a time. The student called on the mother and reported that she found her withdrawn and depressed.

On reflection, the student and field instructor agreed that the student's contact with the mother might have ended too abruptly and prematurely. Possibly the mother found the group support insufficient for her to gain the strength needed to cope more competently.

For the purpose of demonstrating how the ITP Loop Model looks when uncoiled, we can see that each of the content components is operant, although in teaching from this model, each component does not always have to be specifically labeled by field instructor and student. We can see, however, that psycho-social and interactive factors reviewed reflectively were linked with the knowledge that the relationship between client and worker cannot be too quickly or lightly dismissed even when the organizational demand on the agency for service creates pressure for very short-term service. Contextual factors influencing the current crisis in the mother's situation, such as the recent decrease in welfare support, need consideration by the student at this point as well. In addition, there is a possibility that news events have occurred, such as the loss of a significant person or the threat of eviction, which might explain her current depression. The loop begins again as the student and field instructor retrieve the information necessary to understand this new development, reflect, link, and move to a new professional response.

Thus far we have focussed our discussion of reflection on helping the student identify personal associations to a professional encounter. Obviously the field instructor will also have subjective reaction which reflect personality style, life experiences, or cultural values. Reflection poses a dilemma for the interactive process between field instructor and student. To what extent is it useful to share personal feelings, associations, and experiences with the student? The test is the relevance of the experience either to the practice situation or to the field instructor-student dyad.

When the field instructor feels that the student is unable to empathize with or understand a practice situation either because of lack of personal experience or unwillingness to relate to personal experience, it may be necessary for the field instructor to use her or his own experience to help the student make a connection. Whenever personal disclosure is sought or given in field instruction, it is the discloser who must always remain in control by selecting what and how much it feels comfortable to reveal. For example, disclosing personal feelings and behaviour in reaction to a loss or separation may stimulate the student to think empathetically and respond in a productive way. Students may have a range of reactions to hearing about their field instructors' subjective experiences related to a practice situation. The student might feel flattered or special that the field instructor has chosen to share personal experiences, and this might further solidify the field instructor- student dyad. On the other hand, some students may feel burdened by hearing the 'story' of the field instructor, uncertain about what reaction is expected, and uncomfortable with personal disclosure. Obviously students' reactions to field instructors' subjective experiences vary according to personality and level of development. The field instructor should be sensitive to how disclosure might be received.

### **Linkage**

This step moves to a search for the professional knowledge base that makes it possible to choose a specific response to a situation from among a variety of competing responses. Linkage is that part of the loop that uses cognitive data and the associations of both

student and field instructor to the retrieved data and the associations elicited through reflection. The purpose is to identify and label knowledge that will help, explain the practice data and the subjective reactions that have been evoked, and ultimately use that knowledge in planning professional responses. Linkage addresses the way in which a knowledge base finds expression in practice, and is reconstructed as a result of practice. It encourages the student to select, from competing concepts, what is needed to construct a cognitive system of understanding that fits what has been retrieved and subjected to reflection. It is the degree to which a working hypothesis fits the situation that both student and field instructor must agree upon.

Linkage requires that facts and attitudes about the situation be abstracted or generalized to identify common elements that relate to a knowledge base. It is a process of moving back and forth between the general and the specific. In this phase, field educators conceptualize practice so that it can be clearly communicated in terms of applicable generalizations (Kadushin 1991), and they link these generalizations to the understanding of and response to a specific situation. This process is analytical. It is a search for concepts, learned by the student or practiced by the field instructor, that derive from theoretical bases such as ecological systems, structural analysis, empowerment theory, feminist theory, psycho-dynamic theory, communication theory, or developmental theory. This list is not exhaustive.

The field instructor's task is not only to draw the student's attention to theoretical and empirical knowledge but also to help the student apply in relation to a specific practice situation. What is stated in general practice principles must be made situation specific. For example, how can 'start where the client is' be related to the specific student assignment? We are not suggesting that the field instructor must teach theory which may have already been taught by the school. Students carry an overload of theoretical content from the classroom that they have difficulty transferring to practice. It is the concrete situation which makes it possible for the field instructor to help the student link knowledge in order to understand the phenomena of practice.

In working with field instructors, we have found that linkage seems the most difficult component to comprehend and the most controversial. The field instructor's practice is likely to be based on a well integrated knowledge and value base consisting of Practice wisdom, concepts from various theories, and empirically validated findings. These 'pieces' of knowledge become part of the practitioner's art and are used in a seemingly intuitive fashion in interacting with a practice situation (Schon 1987,1995). In addition, the agency may structure service in accordance with a particular therapeutic or service model. As an educator, the practitioner must search for the underlying ideas that constitute his or her cognitive system of understanding, communicate that knowledge to the student, and assist the student in developing his or her own cognitive system.

In a book aptly titled *Social Work as Art*, England (1986) states that the integration of theory and practice is a unique and intuitive process, but the social worker must be articulate about the problems and about her or his own thinking, citing the specific and selecting from the general. He argues that the worker uses theoretical knowledge, not to apply formulae, but to construct coherence from immediate complexity.

For example, in identifying isolation as a concern for an individual who seems to have no supportive network, we are connecting to a knowledge and value base affirming

that human isolation is an unhealthy state. In identifying an individual's sense of powerlessness to alter noxious conditions of living, we link to a theoretical base that teaches that one can effect change through understanding the institutionalization of oppression as an external force that otherwise may be perceived as personal deficiency. This understanding might suggest empowering collective action to exert pressure for change on those institutions. In identifying a struggle between adolescent and parent, we link to a theoretical base that examines appropriate developmental stages and behaviours for individuals and family members and the effect of recurring dysfunctional transactions within the family that could maintain a paralyzing power struggle. Faced with a hospital team with an administrator who wants hospital beds immediately, even if it means sending a patient to an inappropriate facility, we link to the knowledge that client problem can be created by the very system charged with the resolution of problems. In working with family caregivers of the chronically ill, we link to the knowledge that counselling without some attention to the provision of concrete relief for the caregivers will be of little benefit. These are examples of practice wisdom, but they are at the same time example of applied theory.

In field education, the student and the field instructor review all knowledge relevant to a situation. This may mean exploring a variety of frames or theoretical stances to determine the best guide understanding and acting in the current situation. This provides an opportunity for the student to use knowledge from the classroom in examining practice data. Both faculty and field educators may long for a simpler time when there was a greater uniformity of thought between faculty and agency. The issue of fit between faculty and field has a long and tortured history in North American social work education. Each school of social work has the responsibility to communicate to the field instructors its philosophical and theoretical approaches and the content of courses, and decide the degree to which it hopes to achieve congruence between what is taught in the school and what philosophical and theoretical approaches inform the practice of social work in the field.

Controversy exists in social work regarding what theories and approaches contemporary practitioners need to know (Reamer 1994). There seems to be a belief that practice is either radical or traditional—and old social work battle-cry that refuses to be silenced. Currently some argue for teaching primarily empirically validated intervention approaches, while others champion postmodernism and the deconstruction of positivistic methodologies as a requisite for knowledge-building. We believe that linkage encourages students to bring to the practicum knowledge from the classroom, or a specific perspective for assessment of a situation. In some instances there will be a good fit between the philosophical, theoretical, and empirical approaches taught and the practice experience. In others, the lack of congruence will help the student learn that no single approach or formulation applies to a specific situation without considerable custom tailoring. The student can be encouraged to apply new ideas to the current experiences in the practicum.

Assessment, and therefore intervention, must consider not only the client's psycho-social issues, but the helping system itself, as well as societal and organizational biases and blockages. Strategies flow from a full consideration of explanatory theories and remain tentative and uncertain. The ability to tolerate uncertainty resulting from the tentative quality of current theories is a quality required of all social workers. Retrieval,

reflection, linkage, and a professional response which is then submitted to the relooping process help workers maintain a cautious skepticism. This can lead to rethinking and research that yields new knowledge.

Table 2 outlines the bodies of knowledge that can be scanned by the field instructor and student in order to select those concepts which may be relevant to the practice situation.

**Table 2**

Linkage: Cognitive associations of both student and field instructor to retrieved data and reflective awareness

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Psycho-social knowledge:

Explanatory knowledge, model, or theory for understanding affective, cognitive, and behavioural observations of clients and groups.

Interactive knowledge:

Explanatory knowledge, model, or theory for understanding transactions.

Contextual knowledge:

Explanatory knowledge, model, or theory for understanding structural and environmental factors.

Organizational knowledge:

Explanatory knowledge, model, or theory for understanding organizational behaviour and how to influence change.

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## **Professional Response**

Professional response is the selection of a plan that will inform the next encounter with the specific situation. This plan must derive from the preceding process. It is an exercise in ‘if this...then that.’ Each situation requires the worker and client to select the issues of highest priority for immediate focus. As the process of relooping occurs, there will be opportunity to respond to other aspects of the information retrieved initially, as well as to re-evaluated and emerging information.

The field instructor, using this part of the loop, grounds the ideas, knowledge, and insights just uncovered through reflection and linkage to develop specific plans and behaviours for dealing with the situation. The field instructor should not move too quickly to case management and response without moving through the previous phases. It may be that several possible theoretical frames have been identified through linkage, each having its unique appropriate intervention. Specialized practice models, such as task-centered, family systems, group, and community development approaches, interpret human behaviour and interpersonal adaptation, and provide social workers with specific techniques to use in professional response.

Through discussion of a variety of perspectives, the student has an opportunity to make comparisons and to anticipate the possible effects of a specific intervention. A response of action is selected, and its effect then becomes the focus of the same process. The use of the ITP Loop Model should facilitate the student’s conceptual understanding of the situation, and hence make possible a more informed response to the practice situation as the contact continues. If field instructors use the loop after each encounter, the student should feel a growing sense of control over the uncertain elements of practice.

Consideration of all factors inherent in any social work situation conveys to the student the dynamic interrelationship between concepts and action. Integration demands that professional actions be informed by selection of preferred outcomes based on understanding probable consequences on the systems and actors involved. This implies that the student is encouraged to examine possible responses at psycho-social, interactive, contextual, and organizational levels, and to consider the relative effects of actions directed at one, several, or all systems. No single theory or construct is likely to provide a sufficient frame of reference. Selection of knowledge is eclectic and based on developing a preferred outcome, which is then negotiated with the systems involved. Because the process is applied to complex human events, it remains tentative and is subject to revision, modification, or even abandonment on the basis of subsequent work. The looping process the returns to retrieval of the effect of the plan or action on the situation, new data are gathered, and the process begins again.

**Table 3**

Professional response: selection of a plan that will inform the next encounter the student has with this specific situation

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Psycho-social response:

A plan or action that will respond to the concerns or behaviours identified.

Interactive response:

A plan or action that will respond to interactive factors identified.

Contextual response:

A plan or action that will respond to the environmental or structural aspects of the situation. This plan may be for immediate action or part of a long-range strategy.

Organizational response:

A plan or action that will respond to the identified organizational issues. This plan may be for immediate action or part of a long-range strategy.

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Table 3 outlines the factors that can be scanned by the field instructor and student in order to select a plan which may be relevant to the practice situation.

It is probably practice wisdom that leads social workers to use the ITP loop intuitively, but in many cases with omissions. The steps of retrieval and professional action, for example, are undoubtedly always operative, but we believe that either reflection or linkage may be omitted as practice competence becomes more routine. Since students need to think through their practice responses, they must be encouraged to go through the entire cycle. Both field instructor and student need to take the time to engage in reflection and linkage.

Field instruction can teach an analytic process that begins with a practice act and moves through the loop. The ITP Loop Model provides structure for the integration of cognitive and affective processes that we believe form the core of social work practice. It permits these two processes to be unhooked and hooked again through a conscious, analytic process. In addition, it will succeed whether one chooses to focus widely on a

global problem or concern, or narrowly on a specific episode of student-client communication. For example, it can be used to focus on a single interchange in a family therapy interview; or the focus can be widened to examine a case management problem, or to consider a neighbourhood analysis of significant actors in order to develop an effective strategy for community development.

The loop can be used to teach social work practice at any level of intervention with a variety of populations, purposes, and settings. It can be microscopic or macroscopic, depending on what facts are retrieved. The choice of ends and the degree of magnification depend on the practice activity and the specific intent of the field instructor.

### **The ITP Loop Model and Your Practice**

As we stated earlier, when social workers assume the role of field instructor, they make a transition from practitioner to educator. Social workers ask themselves, ‘What do I do? Why do I practice this way? What do I know? What do I believe is important to teach?’ The beginning field instructor is a competent practitioner, so that understanding the basis of your own competency is essential to achieving the skill to guide the student through the necessary steps of analytical thinking and practice interventions. Practitioners in all professions recognize that ongoing education is a lifelong process. In fact, many social workers choose to become field instructors as a way to reconnect with the university and to learn new social work knowledge. As a field instructor, you may find it helpful to begin reflecting on your own comfort as a competent practitioner, recognizing areas where you feel uncomfortable and where you feel you have more to learn. The ITP Loop Model; can provide a tool help you identify the assumptions, values, thoughts, an beliefs that underpin the actions you take in professional situations.

Using the ITP loop, retrieve a recent practice experience of yours such as working with a client, supervising staff, or conducting a community activity or a policy and planning activity. Recall your thoughts, feelings, and responses, and subject these elements to critical self-analysis using the loop. Reflect on your subjective beliefs and attitudes that were operating in your actions. What aspects of your personality, life experiences, cultural values, and personal world-view were evident in the judgements you made and in your responses? You may find it helpful to scan table 1 and select those elements that are personally relevant to you in thinking about this particular situation. These elements may be universally present in your practice, or they may be stimulated by unique features in your retrieved example. This exercise may confirm what you already know about yourself and the link between your personal self and your professional self, or the exercise may provide new insights. Reflection also focuses on the effectiveness of an interaction and provides the opportunity for you to critically analyze the impact of your professional response.

The next step is linkage, in which you will identify and label the knowledge you use. Articulate for yourself what was done and why it was done. What informed your choice of approach, direction, or response? Did you think about using a specific approach and then reject it for another? What ideas were operating in this decision? In this way, you will begin to articulate the cognitive system of understanding which

underpins your practice. Again, scanning table 2 may help you to elucidate the concepts you use in your thinking.

The aim of linkage is not necessarily to discover global or large-scale theory. Rather, the purpose is to uncover the ideas that inform your interventions with the specific situation at hand. The use of knowledge is complex since, as practice situations unfold, social workers find themselves using multiple concepts for understanding and intervening. For example, a wife has requested help with a difficult marriage but says her husband refuses to accompany her for counselling. You have agreed to see her to focus on how she might engage with her husband about attending joint sessions. This is an initial limited goal based on research findings that individual counselling for marital distress is more likely to result in separation or divorce than is couple counselling from the outset. While this is a valid use of general empirically based knowledge, as the work progresses, you and your client realize that her husband will not participate. This is the point at which human complexity demands flexibility and openness in helping the wife set goals and work through the ambivalence that must accompany them. Theoretical knowledge about the dynamics of bonding and separation supports this later shift in intervention.

At this point, you might want to recall a specific intervention from your own work and try to relate it to knowledge that would support that intervention, using the example just presented as a guide. You may recall how your cognitive system changed over time and remember the influences on the development of your current views of social work. You may recollect the practice assignments, supervisors, workshops, lectures, and readings that you drew upon in the construction of your knowledge base for your practice.

Finally, think about your professional response and examine how systematic you were in integrating the insights uncovered in reflection and linkage. In retrospect, would you describe your actions as 'intuitive'? Through using the looping process, you may have arrived at new insights and ideas that you can use in planning your next encounter with this practice situation.

Reviewing your own practice experience using the loop gives you familiarity with its applicability and flexibility. As a field instructor, you will be better able to teach the loop to the student by engaging in the process of retrieval, reflection, linkage, and professional response with respect to the student's practice. Your new role of educator will involve you in helping the student build and reinforce a level of practice capability that will meet professional standards.

## **The Integration of Theory and Practice: Exercises for the ITP Loop Model**

### **Objective**

Field instructors will learn how to provide a conceptual bridge that will link classroom theory discussion and reading to actual practice application. This bridge will help students navigate between the class and the field.

### **Educational Activities**

#### ***1.The ITP Loop Model***

The essential differences between academic learning and practical application can be outlined and presented:

Classroom	Field
Presentation and integration of historical antecedents to a special theoretical approach	Complex human situations
Conceptual application taught through the use of case examples in which facts remain as presented	Each situation is ongoing, progressive, changing.
Limited classroom practice of theoretical principles	Analysis is tentative, needs constant checking for re-analysis
Rational, linear approach	Uncertainty is always present in All aspects of interaction between worker, And relevant systems.

The Integration of Theory and Practice (ITP) Loop Model is the bridge that can help students to transfer classroom knowledge to practice by separating and labelling the elements of practice as a constantly moving and cumulative process; that is, it moves forward slowly and tentatively with many returns, repetitions, and corrections, diagrammed as a looping process.

### **Suggestions for Teaching/Learning Activities**

- a. Present the ITP Loop Model; using the material in chapter 1. Figure 1 can be made into an overhead and distributed as a hand-out.
  - b. B. Provide an opportunity for group members to try to superimpose the ITP Loop Model on their practice using the guidelines below.
- 

#### *Exercise: The ITP Loop Model and Your Practice*

- Group members work individually and write out their thoughts as they progress through each stage of the loop.
  - In debriefing, participants can present this written material to each other.
  - An alternative approach is to divide the group into dyads. In turn, each member of the dyad will begin with retrieval and describe a situation from his or her practice to the partner. Both participants will then try to move through the loop, and the partner may probe, asking questions on specifics or for clarification to assist the individual who is using the loop to analyze her or his own practice.
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#### *Guidelines for Using the ITP Loop Model Independently or in Dyads*

Retrieval

- Recall the salient facts of a recent practice experience. Choose a situation that you felt went well or one that is troubling.
- Examples work with a client or group, supervision of a staff member, your role in a team meeting, chairing a committee meeting, writing a draft of a policy.

### **Reflection**

- Recall your thoughts and feelings about the situation.
- Focus on subjective beliefs and attitudes, personal life experiences, and cultural world –views that are relevant to the situation.
- Identify how these factors influenced your interaction.

### **Linkage**

- Identify the key actions you took.
- Explain how you chose these actions. Did you consider:
  - concepts from a model or models of practice;
  - principles learned through your career (practice wisdom)
  - techniques or skills learned from others (who and what has influenced these ideas);
  - internal contradictions in an ‘eclectic approach’?

### **Professional Response**

- Think about the example again.
- Consider whether your response was selected through deliberate or intuitive use of reflection and linkage?
- At the time of the next contact, did you feel your response was effective, appropriate, sufficient?

### *Debriefing Teaching Points*

#### Use of the ITP Loop Model

The ITP Model provides a process for social workers to deconstruct their practice and break it down into its component parts. Practice is an amalgam of listening, feeling, thinking, and acting in which all these processes occur simultaneously. What appears at first glance holistic and intuitive can be unraveled. Most social workers are likely to listen, think about what they are hearing, react to the situation and form impressions about it, link the current experience to pieces of knowledge, and take some action, usually without labeling each of these components. The articulation of these parts is necessary to prepare for the role of field educator because students need to experience this partialization of practice process. Group leaders can ask the participants whether these exercises and using the ITP Loop Model as a guide helped them unravel their intuitive practice.

### **Practitioner as Field Instructor**

To function as effective field instructors, social workers need to be able to unravel and articulate the underlying assumptions of their practice. This analysis and articulation of practice is one of the unique features of field instruction as a form of social work practice

and is common to field education in all settings and at all levels of intervention. It is the generic and universal base of field instruction and provides a shared purpose for working and learning, together as a group of social work field instructors.

- c. Present the examples below for group discussion of the application of the ITP Loop Model to student practice.
- d. Suggest that group members present examples of students' work.

#### *Debriefing Teaching Points*

- The loop model helps to identify the component processes of practice.
- The loop model is a generic critical reflective process that can be applied in all settings and at all levels of professional practice.

#### **Example of Student Practice: Interprofessional Practice**

##### *Retrieval*

The student's practicum is in a home for elderly persons, where he is involved in a plan to bring together elementary schoolchildren and some residents of the home in a grandparent-tutorial program. The student had asked the school principal and the director of nursing to meet with him to discuss the plan. At the meeting, the student stated that he would organize and manage the program for four months, until his practicum was completed. The nursing director said, 'I don't think we do our residents any service by getting them into something and then just dropping them.' Though the student and the school principal continued to talk with enthusiasm about the project, the nursing director's resistance resulted in no further action, and the meeting ended on an indecisive note.

##### *Reflection*

The field instructor recognized the student's confusion and disappointment that the program seemed to be at a dead end. The student admitted that he felt that the nursing director's comment seemed to be a 'putdown' of him as just a student. Since he felt belittled by her comment, he had difficulty taking leadership in the meeting. On further reflection, the student said that he really had assumed that the nursing director would approve of the plan, on the basis of a casual and informal interchange he had with her. He had set up the meeting with the school principal without a prior formal meeting with the nursing director to explore the possible program in depth.

##### *Linkage*

The student and field instructor reviewed what they each knew about organizational theory and program development, noting important aspects that the student had ignored in this practice situation. The field instructor reviewed with the student preliminary steps that should have occurred before the meeting he described took place. These steps might

have included recognition of the need to discuss his proposal more thoroughly with the nursing director, in order to draw out her concerns and gain her support. The field instructor also drew attention to the importance of program continuity and suggested that the student had to give some thought to who would be responsible for the program he left.

### *Professional Response*

The student decided that he would meet with the nursing director and ask if she thought the program had merit; he would also solicit her suggestions about how the program might be implemented and then how it might be continued after he had left.

### **Example of Student Practice: Child Protection**

#### *Retrieval*

The student's practicum is in a child protection agency, and the student has been assigned to investigate a complaint that children are being left unattended. Unable to reach the mother by telephone, the student went directly to the apartment. There was no response when the student knocked on the door. A neighbour opened her door in response to the noise and peered at the student. The student could hear a child crying in the apartment, but it took five minutes before the door was finally opened abruptly by a woman who appeared quite angry. The student said, 'I am Sara Brown from the Children's Aid Society. We have received a complaint that your children are being left unattended.' The woman looked as if she might explode and shouted, 'Lies!' The student asked if she could come in to talk about it, but the woman slammed the door in her face.

#### *Reflection*

The student was encouraged by the field instructor to reflect on the effect her unannounced arrival might have had on the client's reaction. The student also speculated on whether the neighbour had heard what she said about the children being neglected and what effect this might have had in the matter. She realized that as she had waited for the door to open, she had become more and more uncomfortable. The field instructor suggested that she try to reflect on that uncomfortable feeling and speculate on its source. The student was able to talk about her distaste at having to confront the mother, using the authority of the Children's Aid Society, when she really wanted to establish a trusting relationship.

#### *Linkage*

The student is struggling with the role of authority vested in the child protection mandate and worker role, and the apparent contradiction with social work relationship theory. The field instructor must identify the student's conflict in these terms and help the student to seek a way to reconcile the contradiction. This might be accomplished by looking for the positive aspects of authority, as a means to engage that part of the parent that desires to

protect and provide her child. This process is derived from linkage with concepts such as reframing and establishing a working alliance.

### *Professional Response*

The field instructor suggested that she and the student role-play the next encounter with the mother. This would provide the student an opportunity to try out alternative responses that incorporate her understanding of the conflict she feels between authority and helping.

### **Suggestions for Teaching/Learning Activities**

- a. Present the content framework of the ITP Loop Model using material in chapter 1. Figure 2 can be made into an overhead and distributed as a hand-out. Tables 1 to 3 can also be used.
    - Note that all social work practice situations contain elements of the following four factors: psycho-social, interactive, societal or contextual, and organizational.
    - Point out that while the framework and dimensions in the tables attempt to be comprehensive, the setting's mandate and the purpose of the intervention guide the choice of those factors that are relevant to the specific practice situation at a particular point in time. *Though a holistic overview is necessary, actual work can only be responsive to selected elements of any situation at given points in time.*
  - b. Provide an opportunity for group members to apply the content framework of the ITP Loop Model.
- 

### *Exercise: The Content Framework of the ITP Loop Model*

- Break the seminar group into small groups of three or four field instructors according to similarity of setting, practice approach, or level of intervention.
  - Instruct field instructors in each group to present a practice situation of their own that illustrates how retrieval can be accomplished in their setting.
  - Instruct the groups to analyse whether the data retrieved can be categorized according to psycho-social, interactive, contextual, and organizational factors.
- 

### *Debriefing Teaching Points*

- Examine how much similarity of opinion there was in each group regarding psycho-social, interactive, contextual, and organizational factors connected to the situation.
  - Examine how much similarity and difference there was between groups in the factors deemed important.
- c. Conduct the same exercise as above, but instead divide the seminar group into small groups with a mix of field instructors from a variety of settings, practising a range of interventions, and using a variety of models.

### *Debriefing Teaching Points*

- Identify the extent to which setting, methods, and models predominate in choosing relevant and priority content factors.
  - Consider whether generic social work values and principles emerged to the point where a shared overarching social work metaphor or framework is evident, though emphases differ.
- d. Present the following example for group discussion of the application of the content framework of the ITP Loop Model.
- e. Suggest that group members present examples of students' practice.

### **Example of Student Practice**

The student's practicum is at an agency that serves adolescents. Neighbourhood residents, angry about a proposed group home for 'street kids,' have invited the field instructor and the student to speak to them at a community meeting. It is expected that the following factors, and others, may emerge from the discussion:

#### *Psycho-social Factors*

- Fear of drugs and crime, especially sexual assault
- Fear of the effect on the safety of local institutions and facilities, such as schools and parks, because of street kids
- Effect on property values

#### *Interactive Factors*

- Effect on the student of the group's anger and the student's uncertainty and fear about how to present at the meeting

#### *Contextual Factors*

- Knowledge about the population, its issues and needs; racial and ethnic bias
- Failure of the educational and social service systems to provide for families and children
- Societal attitudes toward shared responsibility for children and families
- The power of group action to effect changes in zoning laws

#### *Organizational Factors*

- Degree of the agency's involvement with the community in needs identification and program planning
- Extent to which the agency's funding depends on community support

### ***3. The ITP Loop Model and Field Instruction***

#### **Suggestions for Teaching/ Learning Activities**

- a. Prepare field instructors to orient students to the ITP Loop Model.
    - Share the figures and tables in Chapter 1 with students
    - Remind field instructors that students will likely need time and repetition to understand and master the use of the loop model.
    - Review the following introductory exercise as a first step, noting the strength of using a shared practice experience as a basis for teaching students how to use the ITP Loop Model.
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#### *Exercise: Orienting the Student to Using The ITP Loop Model*

- Have the student observe the field instructor in a practice situation, with the expectation that the student will use the ITP Loop Model after the session to reflect on and analyse this shared experience.
  - Have the student submit a written analysis of the practice situation to the field instructor prior to the next field instruction conference, so that the conference can be used for discussion.
  - The written analysis will include:
    - retrieval of the relevant facts of the situation;
    - reflection about the student's subjective reactions to the situation and the student's impression of the effect of the field instructor's professional responses;
    - linkage of ideas the student uses to understand the practice situations well as concepts or theories the student is currently learning in academic courses which might be used to explain the practice situation;
    - professional responses which the student thinks would be useful in the next practice situation
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#### ***4. Using the ITP Loop Model with a Range of Retrieval Methods***

In chapter 5, 'Guiding the Learning Process,' approaches to using the ITP Loop Model in field instruction with a range of retrieval methods are discussed. Group seminar leaders may wish to include that section at this point and will find teaching approaches for field instructors in Module 5.