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STUDENT SUPERVISION AS EDUCATIONAL METHOD IN FACULTIES OF SOCIAL WORK. A STUDY IN SEVEN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

ABSTRACT

Student supervision as an educational method in faculties of social work. A study in seven European countries
Supervision Meets Education (Van Hees & Geiβler-Piltz, 2010) is the title of a comparative study on the use of supervision in training social workers as part of the Bachelor degree programmes at seven European universities and universities of applied sciences. It is the first research project to be carried out by the Supervision in Social Work Education in Europe (SSWEE) network.

Supervision is seen as an educational method and to indicate this specific form of supervision, the term "student supervision" has been used. The results of the study are based on seven case studies and a comparative analysis to answer the question: how is supervision integrated into the curriculum and why is it done in this way? The second part of the study concerns a comparative analysis of the case studies.

This article details the main results of the differences and similarities not only regarding the way that "supervision" is understood in various settings but also the variety of organizational approaches to supervision within the study programmes themselves.

In conclusion, we can say that this description of "the current state of play" provides common ground from which one go on to develop student supervision methodology in the context of European Higher Education and the challenges of a changing profession.

Keywords

SAMENVATTING

Opleidingssupervisie als didactische methode in opleidingen Sociaal Werk. Een zoektocht in zeven Europese landen

Dit artikel doet verslag van een vergelijkende studie naar de praktijk van supervisie in de Bachelor Social Work aan zeven verschillende Europese universiteiten en hogescholen, genaamd *Supervision Meets Education* (Van Hees & Geißler-Piltz, 2010). Het betreft een onderzoeksproject van het "Network Supervision in Social Work Education in Europe (SSWEE)". Supervisie wordt hier besproken als een didactische methode waarvoor in Nederland de term opleidingssupervisie wordt gebruikt en in de context van deze internationale studie de term *student supervision*.

Het onderzoek bestaat uit zeven casestudies en een vergelijkende analyse om een antwoord te geven op de vraag hoe supervisie als leermethode ingebed is in het curriculum en waarom dat zo gedaan is.

In dit artikel worden de resultaten van de studie besproken met betrekking tot verschillende opvattingen over supervisie en supervisiemodellen en komen overeenkomsten en verschillen in de uitvoering van de supervisiemethode aan bod. Een van de belangrijkste uitkomsten van het onderzoek is de algemene opvatting dat supervisie thuishoort bij de begeleiding van het leren in de praktijk.

De resultaten geven inzicht in de huidige supervisiepraktijken aan deze Europese social work opleidingen en leiden tot een basis voor verder onderzoek naar opleidingssupervisie in het perspectief van vernieuwend Europees hoger sociaal agogisch onderwijs.

Trefwoorden

Supervisie, opleidingssupervisie, social work opleidingen, bachelor social work, vergelijkend case studie onderzoek

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

INTRODUCTION

Institutions of higher education use supervision as a means of training future social workers. It provides a way to guide the students through their learning period in practical training. This article describes a study that focused on supervision in social work education – more specifically, Bachelor degree programmes in social work – as it is provided in seven faculties of social work across Europe. The idea for this study originated through the creation of an international network of experts in the field of supervision, all of which work at European faculties of social work.[2] The exchange of experiences relating to methods of supervision and the need for an expansion of our current knowledge base led to the establishment of this network, the most important goal of which is to research supervision in educational practice.

From the very first meeting it was clear that there was a significant lack of clarity concerning the terminology, frame of reference, underlying theory and the supervision models applied. The first priority became achieving clarity in these areas. The first research project was therefore an explorative study of supervision in the Bachelor programmes of social work in Europe, which examined questions related to concepts, supervision models, and the organization, as well as the experiences of the stakeholders: students and their supervisors. Seven faculties of social work[3] investigated their education programme, their supervision policies and experiences in case studies.

The results of these case studies were compared to identify the similarities and differences, and they provided a lively perspective on supervision practice as it currently exists in these study programmes in social work. The comparative analysis, as well as the entire case studies are published in the book *Supervision meets education* (Van Hees & Geißler-Piltz, 2010).

Since it refers exclusively to supervision in the academic setting and to distinguish from the educational function in practitioner supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002), the term *student supervision* was accepted by the researchers in this project (Van Hees, 2009a). Although student supervision is a well-known concept in the Anglo-American tradition (Ford & Jones, 1987; Hawkins & Shohet, 1989), that was not the case in all the supervision cultures researched.

The goal of this article is to inform those responsible for study programmes, as well as supervisors and trainers of supervisors, about current supervision practice as an important feature of the curriculum of Bachelor programmes in social work in Europe. It also aims to serve as a starting point for further research, development and dissemination of the supervision method. The article is structured as follows: first the research question is described, then the research method is discussed and thirdly the results are presented. Finally, the conclusion also includes new perspectives for discussion.

METHODOLOGY

Research question

The first expert meeting to be held with European supervisors involved in social work study programmes (Van Hees, 2007) led to the creation of the SSWEE network. That first meeting provided the starting points that were the basis for an international research project to investigate the nature of supervision practice in European study programmes for Social Work in Europe (Van Hees, 2008a). The main conclusion was that research into student supervision in the Bachelor programmes in social work in Europe was needed in order to clarify the various ways in which supervision is used as an educational method, to contribute to supervision research in general and to make the practice of supervision more accessible for student exchange. Another point of agreement was the need to place the research into student supervision within the context of the Bologna process (1999) in order to innovate and harmonize the Higher Education area in Europe (Tuning Sectoral Framework for Social Sciences, http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/).

The members of the network agreed on case study research as an appropriate method for conducting comparative research. These results led to the network's first research project with the main research question:

How is supervision embedded in the curriculum of the Bachelor in social work and why is it done in this way?

After exploring the primary question, secondary questions were developed concerning three specific aspects. The first was the general context of social work and social work study programmes in each country and at each faculty, the second aspect was the individual vision of supervision as found in each country and educational institute, and third came the supervision practices specific to each institute. The results were collected in a comparative analysis based on the questions examining similarities, differences and noteworthy findings.

The research method: Comparative cross-national case study research

Seven countries and universities are represented in this research project, creating a good balance across Europe, although these participants were assembled more by chance than design. The project includes the "new" countries of Croatia (HR) and Slovenia (SI), where social work is taught at universities. The same is true for the northern-most and southern-most countries in the study: Sweden (SE) and Spain (ES). Also represented are Belgium (BE), the Netherlands (NL) and Germany (DE), where social work is taught at the level of universities of applied sciences. However, glaringly absent from the list are representatives of the western-most part of Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland. There is a good reason for this: in these countries supervision is not offered during social work degree programmes and is thus not part of the curriculum. In those countries, supervision is the responsibility of the agency with which newly qualified social workers take up employment. We are aware that this project thus omits one special form of supervision: administrative supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). However, an additional advisory format would have been too much for the joint research process involved here. Further research is required into the use of this form of guidance in the field.

A case study method was used in this study (Swanborn, 2003; Baarda, De Goede & Theunissen, 2005). Case studies seek ways to investigate questions which begin with how and why (Yin, 2003). Since the research question concerns student supervision in the Bachelor degree study programmes *in Europe*, a multiple case study approach was an easy choice. This means that there would be two parts to this project: firstly the case study research for each faculty and secondly the comparison of the results of the seven cases. Each case study was carried out according to the guidelines developed for this research for the purposes of making comparisons (Van Hees, 2008b).

The partners in the project were researchers from the respective faculties and they were responsible for the research plan and the research method used for each faculty case study. They justified their method of working by describing the methods and sources used to collect data and analyse the findings, and how they composed the case report. The researchers were all experienced in supervision, had all performed supervision and most of them had conducted research on this subject. All of them had also been involved in the design and development of the social work curriculum at their faculty or in the development of Master's programmes and international supervision exchange projects.

A great variety of sources were used in this qualitative case study research. In addition to international supervision literature and national supervision sources, researchers were able to use relevant study programme documents describing educational visions and methods, and educational material, such as student modules and project books. In addition, all researchers held interviews with stakeholders such as students, supervisors, field instructors and educational developers. Researchers gathered and analysed their data according to their own chosen research method. The data from the separate case studies can be consulted via the website of the SSWEE network (http://cesrt.hszuyd.nl).

Method used in the comparison of cross-national case studies

A comparative study of the results of these separate case studies was conducted following Swanborn method (2003). The analysis of the findings of the separate case studies was performed as follows. The first step consisted of a general interpretation of the case studies, taking a wider perspective on it and assessing the insight it provided. The second step involved screening the research methods used in each case followed by a further screening to identify any hidden categories and sub-categories, i.e. any that were not explicitly required in the general guidelines. The categories were arranged in a matrix with anchor words.

Step 3 was a reliability check, which was carried out according to the analysis of the research method of each case and comparing methods between cases, as well as a strength-weakness analysis. Finally, all categories and sub-categories were analysed and arranged in a matrix for each case. The material was then ready to be compared so that common qualities, differences and ambiguities in the various cases could be identified (step 4).

The findings (step 5) of the comparative analysis were presented making extensive use of quotations. Using quotations was an effective way of making the text more vivid and providing apt illustrations of the abstract summaries and considerations which were part of the comparative text. In this study, the quotations were especially interesting since they allowed the parties

concerned to express their points of view. In this case, the supervisors and/or students described their experiences in different terms to those used by the programme designers and the educational chiefs. The last step of the comparative study (step 6) was to summarize the results, which led to the conclusions and some points of discussion. In *Supervision meets Education* (Van Hees & Geiβler-Piltz, 2010), the entire project is described and all the case studies were included.

RESULTS: STUDENT SUPERVISION IN THE BACHELORS OF SOCIAL WORK IN EUROPE

The case studies yielded a great deal of data on educating future social workers as well as on supervision as a tool for guiding learning processes. Moreover, they also provide an interesting perspective on the development of supervision in each country and the underlying concepts that have led to the development of a supervision model that fits for the education programme of that country. Most social work education programmes in Europe offer student supervision to support the students and guide their learning processes during their field education.[4] However, student supervision is subject to different interpretations. The differences mainly relate to the design, the organization and the way that supervision is embedded in the curriculum, but, significantly, there is consensus between all schools on the usefulness of supervision for students and on what the schools wish to achieve by using it.

So where do these differences come from? A number of issues seem to play a role. The education institutions base their opinions and visions of supervision on international supervision literature from the field of social professions, but for the design of their supervision policy they rely primarily on their country's national tradition of education and supervision. Furthermore, the history of social work in a particular country and the history of the education programme itself, as well as various political influences and the presence or lack of supervision expertise, all add their own flavour to the development of supervision models in the programmes. These – often lively – descriptions gave us answers to the "why" aspect of the research question.

Vision of supervision

First of all, student supervision is seen as an educational method that is geared towards allowing the students to develop into competent, newly qualified professionals. Student supervision is linked to learning in practice, more specifically to experience in the field, through which students learn to exercise their profession independently, to a greater or lesser extent. All cases emphasize that during the field practice period, the true confrontation takes place with the client, with the

professional domain and with oneself as a future professional. Students have learned social work theory and methods, but now the reality of the profession is presented and this often results in a real "practice shock". Academic training cannot prepare them for the real-life skills required to work in this field, since these can only be learned through practice, as this supervisor from Zagreb, Croatia, relates:

> In this process, students very often come and tell me: 'It is so easy to learn what initial contact is, but how to do it, what are the things that may happen, which processes can start?'
> (Van Hees & Geißler-Piltz, 2010, p. 46).

Objectives pertain to personal and professional development and to developing a learning attitude. The core activity is learning how to reflect on professional experiences in the field placement. All programmes agree that student supervision is not only a technical and rational approach to learning about one's future work, but must also involve reflection on personal actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts. For all programmes, this is a key point: the social worker is seen as an instrument in the relationship with the client. It follows, then, that reflection is used to reflect on one's own person, focusing on learning to deploy oneself to achieve the professional objectives. Supervision is not only described as a challenging process by the student, and one in which they often have revelatory moments or experiences. Supervision is also seen as a free and creative space for reflection and learning. "Free" means here: learning in a free and safe environment that is unaffected by power struggles with teachers, or assessment conflicts, while "creative" means that there is room to gain new insights on the basis of earlier experiences and to think of new options for action, as well as beautifully describing the common constructivist view of learning. Then there is the development of acquiring a learning attitude, which is the intended result of learning in supervision:

> Student supervision is a method which should accompany students throughout their professional life, to increase their sensitivity to their own and their clients' feelings and enable them to make use of supervision in the future. (Van Hees & Geißler-Piltz, 2010, p. 47)

Student supervision is about learning to act and learning to learn. In all programmes, the development of a learning attitude is one of the focuses of supervision. This is necessary because the profession of social work – which deals with complex, individual, relational and social questions – is very demanding. These include moral dilemmas and the ambiguity and paradoxes of professional interventions (Banks, 1995). What students can learn about supervision during

their study is that supervision can benefit their personal and professional development and provide support in their work.

The aims of student supervision can be derived from the vision of supervision. In the educational documents (e.g. supervision modules and supervision course material), the aims are specified. In all the case studies, it was possible to identify some common elements. To mention some of them: integrating theory and practice, learning to handle the relationship with the client, developing a professional identity, becoming a "reflective practitioner", personal and professional growth and last but not least support in confrontational experiences.

The visions of the various schools of social work on supervision are not so different then; they see supervision as a learning method which aims to enable professional learning, in which learning to reflect on personal and professional experiences has to led to raised awareness and the integration of knowledge, skills and a professional attitude. However, there is a parting of the ways with regard to the underlying concepts of supervision and these lead to differing choices in developing the educational model for supervision, regarding the way in which concepts are translated into the reality of the study programme.

Student supervision: concepts and models

All the research shows that student supervision has its origins in general supervision concepts such as those that have developed internationally over the years. Various theoretical frameworks, mainly drawn from different schools of psychology, psychotherapy, and pedagogy, are important sources. Social constructivism is mentioned the most often, which is based on the epistemological work of John Dewey (1916) and was further developed by Lewin (1942), Schön (1983) and Kolb (1984), and the core of the concept is learning by reflecting on the professional experiences.

The more counselling-oriented models of supervision are informed by the specific background of the supervisor: this determines the framework of the supervision, and usually builds on psycho-dynamic theories (Van Hees & Geißler-Piltz, 2010). As an instrument in the social aid process, the social worker needs to develop his personal understanding and unconscious processes (Ajdukovic & Cajvert, 2004). In most European countries, this emphasis on personal development leads to a conflict with the administrative function of the Anglo-American interpretation of supervision (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002), where control is still seen as a function of supervision. Reflecting on one's own experiences means scope for "learning in freedom" (Rogers, 1969) without control and assessment.

Next, in all cases, system theory, communication theory and group dynamics are named as frameworks used by the supervisors in supervising the group processes and learning processes.

The social work schools in this project base themselves on these sources, which leads to the following classification:

- The concept of "the reflective practitioner" (Schön, 1983) is mentioned by all as a theory to support the process of reflection. Reflection methods, based mainly on the learning circle of Kolb (1984), are used as working models in supervision meetings (Gould & Taylor, 2007).
- A second concept that is mentioned is the integrated supervision model, geared towards an integrative method of learning. The "Dutch model", also known as the "integrated supervision model" (Van Kessel & Haan, 1993; Siegers, 2002; Van Kessel, 2007) is discussed in the case study of Zuyd University (Van Hees & Geißler-Piltz, 2010) as the leading supervision model in the Netherlands. This concept focuses attention specifically on the personal aspect in the professional development. This model, incidentally, was referred to by several faculties in this study as a source of inspiration.
- A third school is represented by the concept of supportive counselling supervision. This concept is based mainly on the systemic approach and influenced by humanist traditions. The German case, Alice Salomon University, clearly describes the origin and current practice of this supervision concept (Van Hees & Geißler-Piltz, 2010).

These concepts of supervision lead to different models of student supervision. Although all programmes use influences from all of these concepts for their supervision models, historical roots and developments are, as mentioned previously, due to specific characteristics and accents in the models developed (Van Hees & Geißler-Piltz, 2010).

Supervision models incorporated into the field practice

All educational programmes in this study incorporate a longer fieldwork placement that usually takes place during the middle semesters of the programme. After a professional preparation stage and varying degrees of intensive preparation for the field placement, the students are ready for the real work: students learn to meet clients and in the course of their field training, they learn to work with a certain degree of independence. They receive support from the agency they are working for (the social worker in the role of field instructor) and from their school (the social work teacher as a practice teacher), with the agency being responsible for the work done in the workplace and the school coaching and assessing the learning process within the context of the study programme. But how are the supervision roles filled?

The triad model: In this supervision model the student, the field instructor and the social work teacher from the school form a triad. The common goal of this triad is to enhance the student's learning process. Under this model, seen mainly in Belgium, Croatia, Spain and sometimes in the Netherlands, the students go to school for supervision meetings. The social work teacher guides the field placement in a practical way and also provides supervision. The assessment of the learning process will be done by the field instructor together with the social work teacher/supervisor.

In *the model of the independent supervisor*, as described in the cases of Alice Salomon University in Berlin and in the Dutch situation, practical learning involves four parties: the student, the field instructor, the social work teacher and an independent supervisor. The supervisor has no contact with the field training location and meets with the student at school or at their own supervision practice, completely separate from the school thus creating free space for reflection. The supervisor is trained in the supervision method and only assesses the supervision process.

The Gothenburg case describes *the Swedish model* under which, following the Anglo-Saxon tradition, supervision is given by the field instructor at the field training location. This demonstrates the isomorphic or simultaneous character of the Swedish supervision model: you are supervised on the work that you do. The social work faculty of Gothenburg has close ties with its supervisors and offers training in supervision skills. The social worker/supervisor evaluates the learning process with the aid of the social work teacher from the university.

In Ljubljana, Slovenia, they have chosen to work with *peer-group supervision*. There, the field of social professions, the study programme for social work and the role of the supervisor have only started to develop since the civil war. In a country where there are relatively few supervisors and professionals are not yet fully equipped to supervise students, it is difficult to find qualified supervisors. The solution that has been devised by the curriculum developers is peer-group supervision in intervision groups. Students discuss their work experiences with each other in intervision groups, looking for solutions together and supporting each other in difficult situations. The students are prepared to function and learn in the intervision group by means of a supervision skills module. Their mentor follows them from a distance to monitor progress and evaluates these intervision groups. On balance, the mentors and the students remark that they have learnt a lot through this creative solution. However, one question that remains is: is this supervision?

The supervision method

Working methods in the supervision meetings depends on the model developed. The faculties describe the supervision courses and the working method in supervision modules, usually

subdivided into vision, conditions, aims, content, process, products and assessment. All programmes describe learning in supervision emphatically as: reflecting on experiences; developing the future professional in all aspects; and as a process. The learning process requires time and a fixed routine: a certain number of supervision meetings of a certain length of time, spaced at regular – but not too infrequent – intervals. Not all programmes have yet achieved this, and this is usually due to the organization of the field training, the availability of supervisors and the finances available for personnel.

The supervision process is characterized by a specific structure. In general, it can be said that there is an initial stage – during which the student becomes acquainted with the field training location, the supervisor and the supervision group – a main stage of in-depth learning and a final stage of completion. However, the structure of the supervision track depends to a large extent on the organization model and that can vary from one faculty to another. There are short supervision tracks linked to module methods, such as in the University of Zagreb, semester-bound programmes in the cases of Germany, Belgium and Spain, and a whole year course is offered to the students in the Netherlands and Sweden. The awarding of credits (EC) also differs between faculties. Most of the faculties work with written reflection reports, which motivate students to guide and manage their own learning process.

Finally, another important point of divergence is the size of the supervision group. Student supervision has developed from individual supervision to group supervision, and the group is seen as bringing added value: students learn a great deal from each other and can support each other. In the supervision models, the group sizes range from small (3–4 students) to medium (5–8 students) to large (15–25 students). Groups of 15 and more are generally seen as too large for the learning process to be supervised effectively. Moreover, in a large group it is harder to manage the group process in a way that helps the students to learn from each other. Working in groups of 3–4 students seems to be the model that is assessed most highly: the educational process can go deeper and there is sufficient safety. For the supervisor, a smaller group is easier to handle as it is easier to attend to the whole group, given the dialogue character of the supervision. A medium-sized group also has the advantage that students hear many different field experiences from each other and gain a more comprehensive vision of the field of social work; students value this.

Organizational considerations, including the financial aspects as well as the scarcity of expert supervisors, are often the cause of working with in larger groups. However, partly as a consequence of this project, the group size has now become the subject of discussion at several educational institutions.

Ambiguities and hidden questions

One of the hidden questions in this research is the difference between the plans as they are set out "on paper" and the experiences of the students and the supervisors. All schools describe their supervision policy in terms of desirability or development. In the interviews with students and with the supervisors, criticisms and suggestions for improvement were aired. The main points concerned the outcome of the supervision process, the subject of assessing supervision, the size of the group and the structure of the meeting and the process, the theory and practice transfer and finally the competences of the supervisor.

Although there is agreement on the goals of student supervision, the means of attaining these goals, and how they can be linked to the competencies described in Bologna (European Union [EU], 1999, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna.pdf), remains less clear. The cases make a distinction between practical learning goals and supervision goals, and the practical learning goals seem to be formulated more according to SMART[5] terms. Only in the cases of Belgium and the Netherlands are supervision goals linked to competencies that can be developed and tested (Agten, 2007), but how the supervisor and students are to do this is not clear. There is a sceptical tendency towards monitoring the effects of supervision since no research has been done and it is not possible to measure the learning outcome of student supervision.
The need to operationalize supervision goals is also magnified by the developments in the area of testing. If supervision is a component of the new "Bologna-based" Bachelor curriculum, it has to be tested and then we can read in the case of Croatia: "You can only test when you know what to test" (Van Hees & Geiβler-Piltz, 2010, p. 76). This would appear to question the transparency of supervision as an educational method.
Moreover, there is the question of assessment in relation to supervision as a room for "learning in freedom". Since student supervision is a specific form of supervision, situated and performed in the academic context, the student has to be assessed, which means that the traditional resistance to assessment has to be reconsidered.
The supervisor is assigned an important role, in the opinion of both students and the supervisors themselves. The benefits of supervision lie in the depth of the learning process. The supervisor guides the learning process of the individual student. His or her supervision skills must pertain to integrated supervisory learning, including the development of reflection skills in the student and allowing the learner to be the centre of the process. The responses of the students show that they have high expectations of the supervisor's expertise. They expect the supervisor to be a social worker and to be sufficiently grounded in social work theories and methods, as well as being

fully trained in learning processes, and having high ethical standards. In short, the supervisor is expected to have "personal and professional maturity" (Zorga, 2007). However, the fact is that most of the practising supervisors are not professionally trained in supervision. The question arises of whether the supervisor's expertise is currently sufficient or needs to be emphasized to a greater extent.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The question that we face now is: what has this study delivered? In the first place, we have gained information on how student supervision has become established as an educational method in the curriculum of Bachelor programmes in social work at seven different faculties of social work in Europe. We now also know something about how supervision is viewed and why. The results obtained from this comparative research can be seen as a trend in the supervision culture at the European social work study programmes.

All study programmes involve a learning method[6] that has been coupled to a practical training method. Aimed at learning the profession of social work by reflecting upon the practical experiences, with the student as the main focus. The support provided by the supervisor during this often highly sensitive process is essential.

The programmes use the same conceptual frameworks that apply to social work supervision, but often, due to historical and cultural developments, add a distinctive accent of their own which leads to different educational models, ranging from a practical training guidance tool to a more elaborate supervision method. The results of the research show that the more counselling-oriented models seem to move aside at favour of the learning concept.

Student supervision occurs at the border between the academic setting and the professional reality. From the point of view of the study programme, the practical training period integrates the body of knowledge and skills provided by the programme with the attendant assessment component. In the practical training, the social work agency and the field instructor enable contact with the client and social service work to be carried out, and here too assessment occurs: the job needs to be done well! In supervision, both realities come together and they are reflected on with a focus on the student, with attention to the development of the professional identity and a professionally normative framework: the social worker is an instrument of social service work.

The research has shown that the supervisor plays a crucial role. The supervisor must be able to draw on expertise from many fields – both in the opinion of the supervisors themselves and in the view of the students – and be closely connected with the programmes.

New perspectives on student supervision

Student supervision aims to develop self-direction and a learning attitude. This dovetails perfectly with the latest views on education, but this study has shown that it is not always clear how the learning questions of the student relate to the competencies of the programme, nor is it clear how best to assess the learning process. Transparency and result-driven processes are required from modern higher education in Europe and some discussion is warranted to consider the supervision method in those terms.

Today's social workers are required to have reflective competencies. The Procivi research (Potting, Sniekers, Lamers & Reverda, 2010) on the practice of the reflective professional shows that social work study programmes must establish a strong foundation for this development, which will then be of use to future social workers throughout their professional career. The same applies to the necessity of exploring modern social issues and the consequences of these issues in an innovative and development-oriented way in their professional life. Supervision can offer an important platform for research: a place for "the reflective and scientific practitioner" (Karvinen-Niinikoski, 2005). What is needed is a consistent supervision policy, which means a well-founded and effectively communicated vision, basic premises, objectives and working methods, and that this policy is consistent with new developments in education. The Bologna process offers a good prospect for such a reorientation, while this research study also has yielded useful insights and new inspiration for the participating programmes.

NOTE

1   In cooperation with the members of the network SSWEE and researchers in the project "Supervision in the Bachelor of Social Work in Europe":
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   • Brigitte Geiβler-Piltz, Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences for Social Work, Health and Education, Berlin, Germany (DE).
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2   SSWEE: Supervision in Social Work Education in Europe (http://cesrt.hszuyd.nl).

3   Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences for Social Work, Health and Education, Berlin, Germany (DE) / University of Barcelona, Faculty of Pedagogy, Social Work, and Social Services Department, Barcelona, Spain (ES) / Catholic University College KHKempen, Department of Social Work, Geel, Belgium (BE) / University of Gothenburg, Department of Social Work, Gothenburg, Sweden (SE) / University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work, Ljubljana, Slovenia (SI) / University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law, Department of Social Work, Zagreb, Croatia (HR) / Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands (NL).

4   Most cases discuss the guidelines for national educational programmes for social work. These show that supervision can be considered a standard component of social work curricula (Van Hees & Geiβler-Piltz, 2010).

5   Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Timely.

6   In the perspective of educational views supervision can be considered as a learning method since the student is the learner and supervision is student centred.

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