The role of the scholar-facilitator in generating practice knowledge to inform and enhance the quality of relationship-based social work practice with children and families

A Critical Review and Analysis

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Abstract

The publications chosen for inclusion for this PhD by publication comprise three books, three book chapters and four articles published in peer-reviewed journals. There are three major themes in this work. The first concerns the role and nature of practice knowledge and its contribution to effective relationship-based social work practice with vulnerable children and families. Practice knowledge is created by, and for, social workers operating under conditions of uncertainty, risk, emotion and anxiety. These publications can be located within, and aim to make, a significant contribution to social workers' practice knowledge. The second major theme concerns the process by which the practice knowledge described by these publications was created. The analysis identifies the author's role as a *scholar-facilitator* in facilitating the generation, testing and dissemination of this practice knowledge. The scholar-facilitator contributes to practice knowledge and theory generation by bridging the worlds of practice, academia and policy. Finally the significance and authority of the contribution to social work knowledge developed by these publications is demonstrated by reference to the ways in which they directly address contemporary challenges to child protection policy and practice in England.

Acknowledgement

The Publications

Books

1. *Supervision: Right from the Start: the Supervisor's Guide to Supervising the Newly Qualified Social Worker*. (2009) Children's Workforce Development Council. Leeds. 204 pages

2. *Staff Supervision in Social Care* (2005) Pavilion Publications. Brighton. 324 pages ISBN: 1 84196 168 X

3. *Effective Staff Training in Social Care* (1999) with Horwath, J. Routledge. London. Chapter 1 (60%), Chapters 2, 4, 8,9,10 (Sole author) Pages 177 out of 349   ISBN 0-415-16030-8

Chapters

4. Emotionally Competent Child Protection Organisations: Fallacy Fiction or Necessity (1997) in eds: Bates, J., Pugh, R., Thompson, N. *Protecting Children: Challenges and Change*. Aldershot: Arena. Pp 193-212   ISBN: 1 85742 323 2

5. Preparing Services and Staff to work with Young People who Sexually Abuse: Context; Mandate; Pitfalls and Frameworks (2004) in eds: O'Reilly, G., Marshall, W., Carr, A., Beckett, R. *Handbook of Clinical Intervention with Juveniles who Sexually Abuse*. Brunner Routledge. ISBN 1 58391 126 X pp 385-408

6. Assessing Parental Motivation for Change in ed: Horwath, J. (2009) *The Child's World: Assessing Child in Need.* (2nd edition) Jessica Kingsley. pp 305-325   ISBN 978 1 84310 568 8

Papers in Refereed Journals

7. Partnership and Collaboration: Rhetoric and Reality: (1996) *Child Abuse and Neglect* 20 (2) pp127-140.

8. Working Together to Safeguard Children (DOH, 2000): Challenges and Changes for Inter-Agency Co-ordination in Child Protection. *Journal of Inter-Professional Care* 14(4), pp.363-373.

9. Toolkit for assessing the readiness of Local Safeguarding Children Boards: Origins Ingredients and Applications (2005) Morrison, T; and Lewis, T. *Child Abuse Review* 14, pp 297-316.

10. Emotional Intelligence, Emotion and Social Work: Context, Characteristics, Complications and Contribution. (2007). *British Journal of Social Work*. 37, pp 245-263.

The work is exclusively the product of the candidate, with the exception of three items for which PhDP declaration forms are provided, and covers the author's work over a period of twelve years. Whilst the analysis will largely draw from more recent work, two early works (items 4 and 7) are included to show the first identification of key themes which are elaborated in subsequent work, namely the role of emotion and the role of anxiety. PhDP declarations have been provided for three items: *Supervision: Right from the Start: the Supervisor's Guide to Supervising the Newly Qualified Social Worker*. (Morrison 2009, item 1); *Effective Staff Training in Social Care* (Horwath and Morrison 1999, item 3) and *Toolkit for assessing the readiness of Local Safeguarding Children Boards: Origins Ingredients and Applications* (Morrison and Lewis 2005, item 9). In the case of (item 1) the CWDC's contribution (5%) was in formatting the final text for publication.

The submitted publications are part of a larger body of the candidate's publications, which are comprised in total of: 3 single authored books; 3 co-authored books; 1

edited book; 14 chapters in other books; 23 peer-reviewed articles; 6 other articles; 4 occasional papers; and a 50,000 word distance learning module written for an MSc Course on Leadership at the University of Leicester. Whilst some of the other works have been co-authored, none of these will be relied upon in describing the key contribution which it is argued is made by the submitted publications. Instead these other publications will be used to provide additional support and evidence only.

Introduction

Practice knowledge has been identified in the literature on social work practice (Sheppard 1998; Parton 2000); management development (Raelin 2007) and educational practice (Eraut 1994) as an epistemologically appropriate knowledge for practice that operates in conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity and indeterminacy. In such contexts the strict application of empirical or theoretical knowledge is frequently problematic. Practice-knowledge bridges the academic-practice divide, by drawing both on externally codified bodies of knowledge and internal knowledge that is generated in, and from, practice. Internal knowledge includes practice wisdom, tacit knowledge (Schon 1983), intuition and artistry (Ruch 2005). Ruch (2005) further argues that practice knowledge informs relationship-based practices which are seen as central to effective social work practice with both adults and children (ADSS/NCH 1996; Howe 1996; Department of Health (DoH) 1995; Trevithick 2003; Scottish Executive 2006; Wilson et al 2008).

The submitted publications contribute a body of practice knowledge across several inter-linked fields which have been recognised as critical to the capacity and effectiveness of social work with vulnerable children and families (Wells 2006; Glisson and Hammelgarn 1998; DoH 1995). These fields are: staff supervision (items 1 and 2); training (item 3); organisational climate and the management of anxiety (item 4); organisational systems and service development (item 5); assessment (item 6); inter-agency collaboration (items 7, 8 and 9); and emotional intelligence (item10). Underpinning the practice knowledge contained in these publications is the central importance of relationships at strategic, supervisory and practice levels. However attention is also paid to the impact of uncertainty, anxiety, and emotion on organisational and practice behaviours and relationships. The nature of the practice knowledge generated under these conditions forms the first major theme of this analysis.

Whilst the importance of practice knowledge in social work has been addressed by several writers (Sheppard 1998; Fook 2002) there has been much less exploration as

to how such knowledge is generated. Tenkasi and Hay (2004) working in the field of organisational development refer to the emerging role of the scholar-practitioner who acts as a bridge between the worlds of academia and of the workplace. Such individuals take on the role of facilitating, and forming theory-practice linkages for the purposes of framing, legitimising and sense making. This critical review and analysis identifies how the candidate's role as a *scholar-facilitator* assisted in generating, articulating and disseminating the practice-knowledge described in these publications. The exploration of the scholar-facilitator's role and skills thus forms the second major theme, and in particular how this contributes to an understanding of dialogic and relationship-based approaches to knowledge generation, theory-building and learning.

The final theme concerns the significance of these publications as a contribution to social work practice knowledge. It will be argued that their significance can be located in the current challenges facing child protection work in England, and their implications for the professional credibility and future practice of social work. If public and political confidence in statutory children's social work is to be restored, this will rest in part on an understanding and validation of the nature of the practice knowledge base upon which the profession relies.

In summary, the critical analysis of these publications and their contribution draws on three inter-connected strands: the role of practice knowledge in social work; the role of a scholar-facilitator in the creation and dissemination of such knowledge; and locating the candidate's publications within current policy and professional challenges

surrounding the role of social work in child protection.
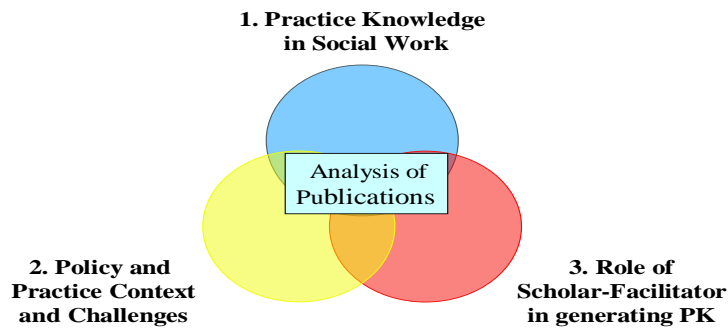
The critical review and analysis of the publications can be divided into seven sections covering:

1. The candidate's role;

2. Practice knowledge in social work;

3. Supervision;

4. Learning and training;

5. Integrating themes;

6. The role of the scholar-facilitator;

7. Conclusion.

1. The Candidate's Role

In the opening section the candidate's role and practice are described in order to show how the *scholar-facilitator* role was first identified, and to provide an example of how this role facilitated the generation of one of the submitted publications.

Following qualification as a social worker in 1977, the candidate worked for the probation service in Manchester and then moved in 1980 to a newly created NSPCC specialist child protection team in Rochdale where he worked for nine years, the last five of which as the manager. Since 1989 the candidate has been an independent trainer and consultant operating largely in the child welfare sector working with staff and managers in social services, health, education, criminal justice agencies and the voluntary sector. This work involves four broad areas:

- Development work at a strategic level with inter-agency partnerships such as Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) and Children's Trusts

- Research projects, most recently for the Welsh Assembly Government to develop a self assessment and improvement tool for Welsh LSCBs

- Development and training work with operational managers, specifically on supervision, service planning, leadership and team development

- Training with practitioners specifically on assessment practice, adult attachment-based interviewing, motivational interviewing, and emotional literacy.

The candidate is a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Huddersfield in the School of Human and Health Sciences. In addition, the candidate also works on a regular basis in other jurisdictions, mainly New Zealand, Australia, the USA, Canada and the Republic of Ireland. This role extends beyond social work and child welfare to other government sectors, most recently for the Department of Labour in New Zealand. In summary, the role covers: strategic, operational and practice domains; spans a range of public and voluntary sector organisations; and extends across the UK to other countries. The width of this role both enables, and requires, a systemic understanding of the interplay between policy, organisational, professional and personal factors when undertaking development work at any level. In addition it requires process knowledge and 'expertise to perceive holistic relations between the current problem and a vast array of previously experienced situations' (Wakefield quoted in Fook et al 1997:413) in order to be able to work across a range of fields. It is

this expertise which, it will be argued, underpins the role of the *scholar-facilitator* . In the case of the candidate, this role bridges the worlds of academia, workplace and policy making to make theory-practice linkages through which practice knowledge is generated. To illustrate the role and practices of the scholar-facilitator a case study will be used.

Case Study

In 1986, whilst working as manager for a child protection team, the candidate was asked to take on additional management responsibility for another team which had suffered considerable disruption, following which the manager had been removed. The circumstances were that two experienced team members had recently resigned without warning in the same week. The picture that emerged from individual interviews with the staff was of distress, confusion, fear, anger and guilt. Staff were feeling responsible for failing to notice, or support, two members who were sufficiently unhappy to resign without warning. The conduct of the team manager appeared to have been unpredictable, controlling and undermining. In addition it appeared that he was having a personal relationship with the senior administrator.

The situation brought to mind Roland Summit's (1983) seminal paper 'The Child Sexual Abuse Syndrome'. In this paper, Summit describes how the forces of secrecy and helplessness lead to children becoming entrapped in the abusive relationship. In order to survive and regain some sense of control, the child makes a psychological shift or accommodation by taking responsibility for being abused e.g. '*it's my fault'.* This shift (distorted though it is) offers a strategy by which the abuse might cease e.g. *'if it was my fault that I was abused, then if I am good, the abuse will cease'.* Unfortunately 'being good' in the eyes of the perpetrator means keeping the secret and complying with further abusive demands. Together these dynamics result in delayed disclosure of the abuse, which in turn reduces the perceived credibility of the allegations, and frequently leads to the child retracting the allegations.

It appeared that there were clear parallels between what had happened in the team and Summit's (1983) syndrome, which offered a potential framework to help them make collective sense of their experiences. Members had been struggling in isolation with their own distress and helplessness about the team's problems, and thereby assuming that the difficulties were of their own making, for being insufficiently resilient, or unable to adapt to the team environment. This resulted in individuals not sharing their concerns, and continuing to tolerate the situation, until finally there was a delayed disclosure in the form of two members' sudden resignations. It was as if two of the older children had fled the *abusive* family situation. Had action had not been taken to remove the manager, and investigate the situation, it was likely that new staff would have been appointed thereby confirming the status quo.

When an adapted version, the *Professional Accommodation Syndrome* was tentatively shared with the team, it was greeted with immediate recognition and a palpable sense of relief that the process had been both named and contained. The same framework also facilitated the generation of preventative strategies e.g. strategies to combat secrecy, helpless and so forth.

The case example illustrates how practice knowledge was generated through the facilitator adapting theory across contexts in order to assist the process of sense-making, and subsequently articulating and disseminating the practice knowledge in a publication (*Emotionally Competent Child Protection Organisations*, Morrison 1997, item 4). Although at that stage the concept of a scholar-facilitator had not been created, preparing this critical analysis has shown that the episode illustrates the essential elements of this role which are discussed in more detail later. It also reveals how 'knowing' and theorising about practice develops through dialogue and shared reflection (Parton 2000).

2. Practice Knowledge in Social Work

The history of social work has been peppered by debates about whether social work can be counted as a true profession or as a semi-profession. Central to these debates are questions about the nature, status and specificity of its knowledge base. As long ago as 1915, Flexner argued that disciplines such as social work lacked specific ends and had trouble providing a compact, purposefully organised educational discipline (Flexner in Kirk and Reid 2002 p 5). Greenwood (1957) argued that true professions have a dedicated academic knowledge base, professional authority derived from a specialised knowledge, community approval to have a monopoly on practice, a regulatory code of ethics and a professional culture consisting of organisations, values, norms and symbols.

It has been argued that social work cannot be counted as a fully fledged profession because its knowledge is largely drawn from external disciplines, in particular social and psychological sciences, rather than from its own practice. In addition, social work practice is significantly defined by non-social work authorities such the law. The result has been uncertainties and tensions about the professional status and authority of social work, particularly in relation to other professions such as doctors, psychologists and lawyers, upon whom social work frequently relies to discharge its statutory responsibilities.

However, the publication of Schon's (1983) book on the reflective practitioner offered social work a valid and profession-specific knowledge basis for their professional role. Through reflection, the practitioner integrates formal knowledge and practice wisdom in a manner which enables her to take responsibility for the exercise of professional discretion in circumstances where neither propositional knowledge, theory, nor procedural rules, offer an exact or appropriate guide. This is of special relevance to a profession which makes a 'particular contribution in situations where there are high levels of complexity, uncertainty, stress, conflicts of interest and risk' (General Social Care Council/GSCC 2008: Para 4).

However, Sheppard (1998) argued that reflection is of limited value unless it is located in a practice paradigm appropriate to social work, so that the knowledge generated has clear practice validity. Practice validity tests whether knowledge is capable of being used in a way that is consistent with the nature and limits of social work. It will be argued that the cited publications seek to fulfill the test of practice validity.

Parton (2000) takes Sheppard's argument a stage further by suggesting that it is the very nature of the theory/practice relationship and the commitment to practice that gives social work its rationale and raison d'être. The concept of 'practice wisdom' combining formal and reflective knowledge is also a way of satisfying Kirk and Reid's (2002) distinction between occupations and professions. Professions integrate abstract knowledge and theory with practice skills. This is formally acknowledged in the General Social Care Council's (GSCC) description of the knowledge base for practice which draws on a 'range of academic disciplines, formal research, service user feedback, and the experience and reflection of social workers and supervisors' (GSCC 2008 Para 33). This is supported by Trevithick's (2007) description of the three types of knowledge for social work practice: theoretical, factual and practice knowledge. Practice knowledge is defined as 'the way that theoretical and factual knowledge can be used to inform effective practice' (p 15).

The two concepts of reflection and practice knowledge also offer a counter to increasing managerialism in social work (Howe 1996). They do this by restoring both the importance of the professional's judgment and exercise of discretion, and by emphasising the centrality of relationships to effective practice. Indeed Ruch (2005) has argued that reflection is the basis for relationship-based approaches. Finally the concept of practice knowledge was seen as countering the dominance of social science academics over the profession, by bridging the traditional divide between theory (knowing that), and practice (knowing how) (D'Cruz et al 2007).

There is however a broader epistemological context in which the development of practice knowledge needs to be situated. This concerns changing ideas about the

nature of knowledge and the relationship between theory and practice. Raelin (2007) locates these shifts in the 'practice turn' in social theory and the de-centering of knowledge. Prior to this, modernist conceptions saw knowledge as objective, independent and external to the practitioner, whose role was to acquire and apply such knowledge. Thus theory was firmly separated from practice, knowledge producers were separated from knowledge users, and teachers were separated from learners.

The de-centering of knowledge production occurred through constructionist (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Gergen 1994) and postmodern movements (Lyotard 1997). These challenged the idea that there exists an objective and external 'truth,' arguing instead that knowledge claims are embedded in social-cultural milieu, and based on the social interactions, and discourses of meaning making communities. In this process, language, and reflection on language, becomes crucial in the shaping of reality. Language does not merely reflect reality, but constitutes it. As Howe (1994) states:

> *An understanding of the part that language plays in the formation of human selves, human thought and human subjectivity underpins the post modern perspective.* (p 541)

The result was a move to a pluralist epistemology which included not only formal knowledge, but also tacit, intuitive and creative forms of knowledge arising from experiences and practices. Shared reflection on such experiences and practice can thus not only expand knowledge, but improve practice. As Raelin (2007) states:

> *through shared conversations with other local practitioners, using detailed language specific to a trade or a function, practitioners develop their understanding about how to engage with the task. Their knowledge is thus inherently social. (*p 498)

In sum, a practice epistemology is one in which new theory can be generated *by* practice, rather than simply *for* practice, and which includes practitioners as producers

as well as users of knowledge. It also suggests that practice knowledge is emergent, tentative and provisional, as it is continuously tested and refined in new practice and socio-cultural contexts. Practice knowledge, expertise and scholarship thus involve a commitment, not only to continuous learning, but also to its articulation and dissemination through writing and teaching, a process which Trevithick (2003) argues is under-developed in social work.

Finally, having considered the 'knowledge' element of *practice knowledge*, we need briefly to consider the term 'practice'. Work in the field of the sociology of knowledge, known as the 'practice turn' approaches the definition of practice from three perspectives. Firstly, learning and practice are seen as social, rather than individual, processes. Secondly, rules are not enough to ensure shared practice, because they rarely contain rules for the application of the rule. Therefore knowledge about practice has to be communicated and embedded in a social context. Thirdly, understanding emerges from, rather than precedes, action. Thus Collins (2001) argues that practice comprises both thought and action, through which individuals can know what to do, particularly in situations for which rules are not a sufficient guide. Bloor (2001) defines practice as 'knowing in conditions of uncertainty'. Schatki (2001) expands this by making reference to a *teleo-affective structure* e.g. a process by which individuals can arrive at a set of shared goals, meanings and activities:

> *Practice is a set of doing and saying organised by a pool of shared understanding; a set of rules; and a teleo-affective structure*. (p 50)

In conclusion, sections 1 and 2 have sought to explain two key concepts that underpin this critical analysis of the cited publications: the role of a *scholar-facilitator*; and *practice-knowledge* . The challenge that has emerged is how to develop knowledge through, and for, practice, that is useful in conditions of uncertainty and indeterminacy. Taylor and White (2006) argue that such knowledge must be anchored in critical reflection, emotional awareness, and inter-personal skills. The following three sections

seek to show how the candidate's publications attempt to address these issues and thereby contribute to practice knowledge that is fully relevant for social work.

3. Supervision

This section looks at the candidate's work on staff supervision through two main publications: *Right from the Start* (2009 item 1) and *Staff Supervision in Social Care* (3rd Edition 2005 item 2). By placing the work in a historical and policy context, and identifying the development of the candidate's thinking since 1991 when the first edition of *Staff Supervision in Social Care* was published, it is intended to show how this work contributes to the literature in this area.

The practice of supervision in social work has a long history whose evolution can be seen to mirror the development of the social work profession itself (Bruce and Austin 2000). Early texts focused on themes of *administrative control and oversight* (Miller 1971), *training and education* (Burns 1965), and *therapeutic support for workers* (Miller 1977; Shohet and Hawkins 1989; Munson 1993); the *containment of anxiety*, *and reflection* (Hughes and Pengelly 1997). However, Butterworth and Faugier (1992) writing about supervision in nursing, stressed the need to protect the *professional independence* and *individual accountability* of the worker, by offering *clinical supervision* separately from management supervision.

Within social work, however, there was a continuing emphasis on the impact of supervision on both practitioners and *organisational dynamics and service planning* (Middleman and Rhodes 1985; Bunker and Wijnberg 1988). Holloway and Brager (1989) extended this theme by emphasising the *political role of the supervisor* in accessing resources for, or protecting, their work unit.

More recently the organisational and political focus has expanded through an increasing emphasis on *accountability and performance management*, both in

supervision and in practice. In sum we have arrived at a situation in children's social work where: managerialism, performativity and procedural compliance dominate (Howe 1996); little time exists for reflection (Jones and Gallop 2003); form-based information is privileged over relationships and narrative (Parton 2008); and knowledge becomes increasingly synonymous with information (Taylor and White 2006). According to Parton (2008)

> *Rather than be concerned with presenting a picture of the subject, social work increasingly acts to take subjects apart, and then reassembles them according to the requirements of the data base...........In the process we are left with a variety of surface information which provides little or no space for in-depth explanation or understanding* (p 263).

The very nature of social work is changing from a practical-moral activity to a rational-technical one (Parton 2000; Taylor and White 2006) in which rule-based responses override knowledge-based responses (Munro 2009). Crucially there has been an erosion of reflective and relationship-based approaches which focused on the work of the 'social' and an understanding of the 'subject'. This has been replaced by a focus on individuals and the recasting of 'subjects' and 'subjectivities' as 'objects' and 'objectives'.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this, the importance of supervision in social work has been a persistent theme. The Association of Directors of Social Services identified it as one of the five key factors for effective practice (ADSS/NCH 1996); and the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report stated that supervision is the cornerstone of all good social work practice (Cm 5730, 2003).

Options for Excellence (Department for Education and Skills, DfES/DoH 2006) lists appropriate support from supervisors, leaders and managers as the first priority in achieving a proud, professional and successful social care workforce of the future. This was reinforced by the publication of the first national guide on supervision policy

entitled '*Providing Effective Supervision: Workforce Development Tool'* (Children Workforce Development Council - CWDC/Skills4Care 2007). It is for these reasons that work on supervision has formed such a significant element of the candidate's writing and teaching.

The first edition of *Staff Supervision in Social Care* was published in 1991. This relatively short volume (124 pages) was the foundation for subsequent work which both elaborated on, and added to, this publication. However, the 1991 publication was one of the first texts about supervision combining theoretical discussion with action and reflective exercises that supervisors could use with their staff.

Staff Supervision in Social Care (2005 item 2)

The third edition published in 2005 (Morrison 2005, item 2) was nearly three times the size of the 1991 work. This reflected an elaboration of thinking about the links between supervision, practice and outcomes, the need to situate supervision more clearly within the wider policy and organisational context, and the need to address issues of under-performance. At its heart was a model based on an adaption of Harries' (1987) definition of supervision and the four functions of supervision outlined by Richards and Payne (1990).

Supervision is a process by which one worker is given responsibility by the organisation to work with another worker(s) in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives which together promote the best outcomes for service users. The objectives or functions are:

1. *Competent, accountable performance/practice (management function)*
2. *Continuing professional development (development function)*
3. *Personal support (support function)*
4. *Engaging the individual with the organisation (mediation function). (Morrison, 2005: p 32 item 2)*

The model conceptualises supervision, not primarily as an activity or method, but rather as a specific type of organisational relationship concerned with the performance of all staff, and designed to address four inter-related but distinct tasks. Because of the multi-layered, complex and sometimes conflicting nature of these four tasks, effective supervision requires a negotiation of purpose, process, power and relationship. In addition, by focusing on *supervision*, rather than the *supervisor*, space is available to negotiate for the different functions of supervision to be delivered by different people acting in different roles. This approach has made the material accessible to a wide range of disciplines, including social care, health, and criminal justice professionals operating in a variety of organisational settings and across a wide range of jurisdictions. For health professionals it provides a means of integrating clinical and managerial modes of supervision, by recognising the need for the organisation to have an overview of the performance of staff, whilst ensuring practitioners have access to knowledgeable and skilled supervisors.

At the core, therefore, of *Staff Supervision in Social Care (2005, item 2)* was the 4x4x4 model consisting of the:

- 4 functions of supervision (p 32 and pp 41-46);
- 4 stakeholders of supervision: staff, service users, the organisation and partner agencies (pp 21-22)
- 4 parts of the supervisory cycle: experience, reflection, analysis and planning (p 155).
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Whilst there had been a growing literature on supervision in statutory social work and public sector agencies (Bourne and Brown 1996; Hughes and Pengelly 1997;Pritchard , 2000) the need for practical texts remained, especially as the space and support for reflective supervision became ever more squeezed by procedural and performance management requirements (Jones and Gallop 2003). This book was therefore in part an attempt to counter the growing managerialism in supervision, by offering a contemporary and practical model of relationship-based reflective supervision situated within a performance management framework. Thus the book contains discussion

about, and practical frameworks for, a range of activities which underpin reflective supervision. These include: establishing a supervision policy (p 26, pp 47-49); negotiating supervision agreements (p 114-130); using supervision histories (pp 88-101); understanding the impact of organisational culture, anxiety and emotion on supervision (pp 67-79 and ch.8); and the use of 'story' and 'supervisory' cycles (pp 155-162) by which supervisors can engage practitioners in reflective thinking and questions (pp 167-172).

However, perhaps the major contribution of this edition was its description of the relationship between supervision, practice and outcomes, described in the Supervisor-Outcome chain (p 54-60). This argued that there were six key factors that link the quality of supervision with the quality of social work practice, which in turn explain the impact of the worker on service user outcomes. It drew both from research about supervision and outcomes (Wonnacott 2003; McKeown, 2000) as well as reflections with, and on, supervisors' own experiences. It was argued that the influence of these six factors lay in the fact that they are equally important in both the supervisory relationship and the practitioner's relationship with the service user. The six factors are:

1. Role clarity

2. Role security

3. Emotional intelligence

4. Accurate assessment

5. Appropriate level of partnership relationship

6. Clear planning

Given the paucity of literature about this key issue of the relationship between supervision, practice and outcomes, the development of the supervisor-outcome chain was a significant contribution. It created a preliminary model for evidence-based supervision which was rooted in relationship-based and outcome-focused supervisory practice. The supervision-outcome chain was a powerful means of demonstrating how

supervision is integral to the service delivery process and can be seen as part of the intervention process. This simple idea has had a profound impact on many participants undertaking supervision training across disciplines and jurisdictions. It reinforces and, in some cases, reawakens the professional identity of the supervisor and their vital role in leading practice. It confirms and confers the meaning and value of their role in facilitating good outcomes for service users.

The other major contribution of the 2005 edition was its approach to the role of supervision in relation to under-performance, an increasingly important aspect of supervision which receives little attention in most texts on supervision. Chapter 6 (item 2) combined behavioural and psychological frameworks to describe and analyse the nature, impact and possible causes of under-performance. The 'blocked cycle' (p207) presented under-performance through the simple idea of workers getting *stuck* in feelings, thinking, action or experience. It was supported by a set of descriptors about the impact of being *stuck* on practice (pp 208-217). In addition, the idea of being 'stuck' as a self-protective mechanism in the face of role conflict, anxiety or overload was introduced through the use of attachment theory (pp 193-207). The aim of this approach was three fold: firstly to locate performance concerns primarily within a practice, rather than a procedural/HR domain; secondly to consider the underlying meaning or function of the 'stuckness' (p 206 and p 220); thirdly to provide practical strategies for helping the worker get 'unstuck' (pp 225-241).

This critical analysis of the 2005 edition (item 2) also highlighted two interesting differences between this and the original 1991 edition. The first difference is the shift from a realist/positivist to a constructionist position which can be seen in the approach to the supervision cycle. In the 1991 edition the supervisory cycle is based on Kolb's (1984) adult learning cycle: concrete experience; reflection; conceptualization; active experimentation. However, by the 2005 (item 2) edition the cycle had been expanded into two parallel cycles, one about practice and one about supervision. The practice cycle uses the narrative metaphor of 'story' to describe the practitioner's engagement with the service user around the cycle, which is then mirrored by a parallel supervision cycle. In Fig 2 we see how Kolb's original cycle (concrete observation, reflection, analysis, action) has been reworked as *experience, reflection, understanding, plans*

and action. Secondly, the 'story' cycle about practice is now integrated within the supervision cycle, which reinforces the links between supervision and practice.
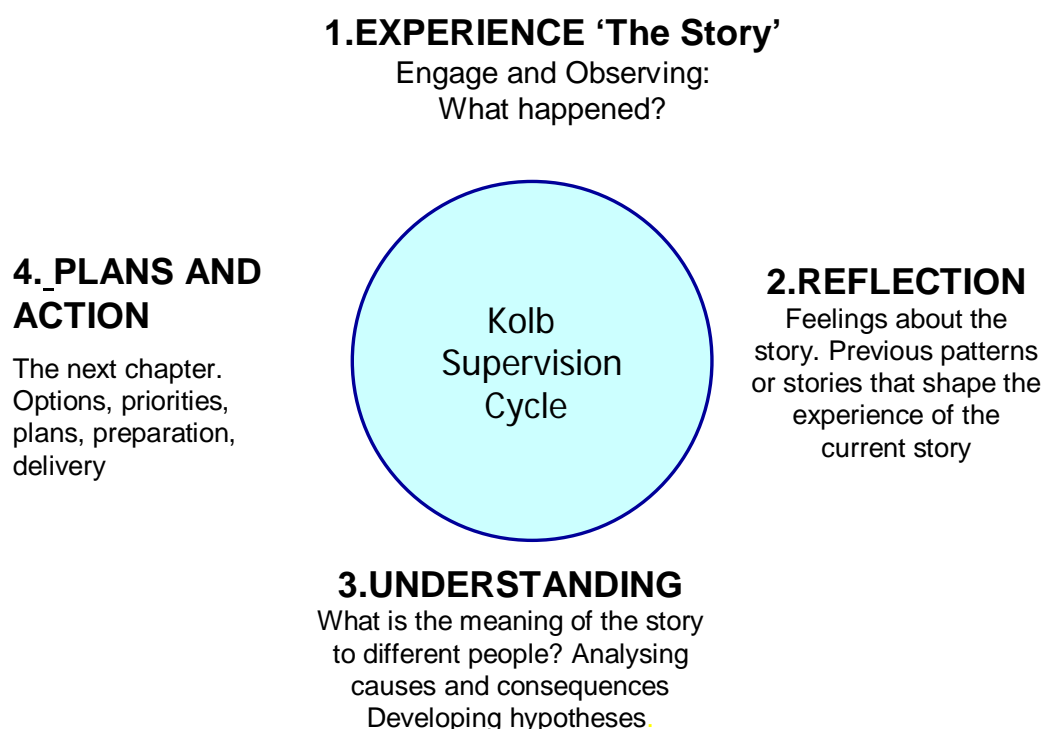
1.EXPERIENCE 'The Story'
Engage and Observing:
What happened?

4. PLANS AND ACTION

The next chapter. Options, priorities, plans, preparation, delivery

Kolb Supervision Cycle

2.REFLECTION
Feelings about the story. Previous patterns or stories that shape the experience of the current story

3.UNDERSTANDING
What is the meaning of the story to different people? Analysing causes and consequences Developing hypotheses.

Fig 2: The Story and Supervision Cycles (Morrison 2005 p 155 item 2)

In addition the supporting text notes:

> *In other words the practice story does not exist as an objective bite of information. Instead the way in which the supervisor asks about the worker's observations shapes both the focus and scope of the practice story. Open ended and wide angled questions will elicit a very different account from the worker than narrow closed questions by the supervisor.* (p 159)

This simple shift of language was initially made to make the cycle more accessible and alive. However, on reflection it is increasingly clear that by 2005 that something more profound was occurring in the candidate's thinking. Ramsey's (2005) analysis of the Kolb cycle provides a useful lens for exploring this.

Ramsey takes as her starting point the idea of '*concrete experience*' at the start of the Kolb cycle. This assumes the existence of an objective external reality to which the individual adapts through their cognitive response.

> *These realist assumptions imply just one reality and blind the learner to a potential for multiple realities that could be narrated…..The focus on the individual as the site for reflection will underestimate the jointly co-ordinated construction of any action. As a consequence by ascribing agency to a 'self' attention is directed from the role of the other. (pp 220-1)*

Challenging the positivist assumption underpinning the original Kolb cycle and revising it within a relational and social constructionist perspective (Gergen 1994) leads Ramsey to offer a revised cycle. This is based on the idea of shared narratives which pave the way for joint action. The ontological shift from a realist to a constructionist perspective, also points to a more pluralistic epistemology. Now, knowledge is no longer restricted to 'data' or concrete observation. It is expanded to include other forms of knowledge which are contained within a narrative framework such as experience, recollection, metaphor, meaning and intuition, and which are accessed through a dialogic and relational process such as supervision. In the context of current concerns about the colonisation of social work practice by data, information, and electronic recording systems (Parton 2008), the importance of a narrative-based approach to the supervision of practice is potentially significant.

Critically such an epistemology is based on a view of knowledge, not as an externally described phenomenon but rather as a co-constructed social and relational process. Such an approach recognises that stories are communal, not individual. In so doing, this creates space for alternative stories. Within this knowledge paradigm, multiple realities are assumed to exist whose meanings are viewed as socially embedded. The 'story' can only be constructed by hearing all voices through which shared narratives and *potentially* shared meanings can be jointly created. These joint or shared stories can then become the basis for co-ordinated action.

Narrative, therefore, rather than just being a way of knowing, offers learners and practitioners a more performative action-orientated potential. It is creative rather than descriptive. ….As a consequence of its potential for multiple narrators and plots, it becomes a location for working out the interplay of differences. (Ramsey 2005 p 227)

Here we can see the value of a constructionist paradigm both to the practice and supervision of social work, because as a relational and collaborative approach, it is implicitly partnership-orientated. This approach also supports forms of partnership practice that incorporate both social justice and 'therapeutic' levels of engagement with service users (Howe 1992 quoted in Morrison 2000 item 8).

One implication of a constructionist paradigm of special relevance to supervision, concerns the personal and private nature of tacit knowledge. There is a danger that tacit knowledge may be taken for granted, or be unacknowledged, by the practitioner, and therefore unavailable for either personal reflection or external/supervisory critique. Unexamined tacit forms of knowledge may become cemented in the mind of the practitioner as an 'artificial objectivity' or 'truth', which can take hold in ways that lead to subjective and thus unaccountable forms of practice. Indeed this is a central part of Munro's (2008) and White and Taylor's (2006) concerns about decision-making, and the rush to premature categorisation in child protection practice. It is also why a reflective approach to supervision, as described by the 'story cycle' and the accompanying questions, is so important in eliciting and testing the practitioner's tacit and intuitive knowledge to ensure that such knowledge and the resultant practice are accountable (Fook 2002) .

The second feature of the 2005 edition (item 2) is the introduction in chapter 6 (pp 192-7) of attachment theory as a means for understanding practitioners who get 'stuck' or blocked in practice. Thus although the 'blocked cycle' existed in the 2001 edition, the absence of an underlying explanatory theory had unintentionally presented supervisors with a purely behavioural description of concerns, without the analytical tools to identify their source (organisational or individual or both). This was an example of the candidate's own 'tacit' knowledge and understanding about performance issues

remaining un-elicited in the text, potentially leaving readers at risk of devising inappropriate or superficial solutions. However, in the 2005 edition an attachment perspective is introduced to consider possible underlying sources of under-performance, which include dysfunctional organisational processes. However, it is also made clear that attachment-based responses (fight, flight, freeze) may be as indicative of organisational problems as practitioner deficits ('Two Words of Caution' p 193 para 2) .

Right from the Start (2009) item 1

In June 2008 the candidate was approached by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) to write the first national guide for the supervision of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs). The guide was written to support eleven outcomes statements for NQSWs published by CWDC and was entitled *Right from the Start* (item 1). Whilst this built on the candidate's previous work on supervision, it included new material in two areas: the impact of supervision on professional socialisation and identity, and a framework for the supervision of assessment practice.

The material on identity was used to explore the issues involved in making the transition from student to NQSW. The purpose was to help supervisors appreciate that making such transitions depends not only on NQSWs understanding their new role and acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills, but also in negotiating a socially acceptable and recognised professional identity (MacKintosh 2003).

> *Underlying these transitions are changes in the individual's sense of identify and self.* (MacKintosh 2003 p 11)

In other words, in making the transition from being a student, the NQSW is changing not only *what* they do, but *who* they are. Understanding that such transitions are socially, as well as individually and professionally, negotiated is an idea that has relevance for social workers' understanding of life stage and other significant changes that occur within families with whom they are working. Unfortunately professionals working with families, not just social workers, tend to focus much more on parental

'roles' than on parental 'identities'. In doing so the opportunity is missed to look beneath role and behaviour to see how it is shaped by values, history, emotions and meaning.

However, it is the addition of chapters four and five on the supervision of assessment practice that represents perhaps the most significant advance in the candidate's thinking on supervision. Whilst the centrality of assessment practice in effective social work had been identified in the *Staff Supervision in Social Care* (Morrison 2005 item 2), no specific frameworks for supervising assessment practice had been offered. However, on reviewing the literature (Beth et al 2007), it became clear that the fortunes of assessment are strongly linked to the quality (or not) of supervision. This is depicted in the diagram on page 4 of chapter four (item 1). Based on the findings of the literature review described in chapter four, a six stage framework for the supervision of assessment work was created (Fig 3), supported by practical tools, suggested supervisory activities, and a set of reflective questions for each part of the framework (ch 5 pp 22-27, item 1).
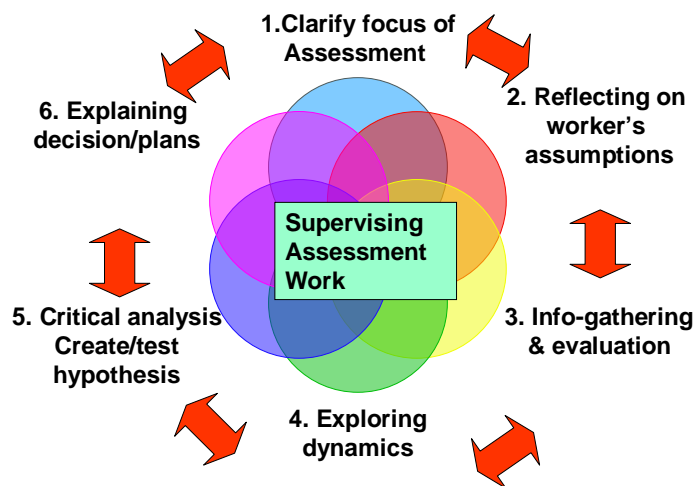
Fig 3 Six Stage Model for the Supervision of Assessment (Morrison 2009 ch.5 p 3 item 1)

The six stage framework addresses two limitations of the four part cycle (Fig 2) used in *Staff Supervision in Social Care* (item 2). Firstly, the four part cycle starts with the assumption that there is an experience or story as a subject for reflection. Whilst this is true where assessment is being undertaken on an existing case, this does not apply to new assessments. Hence there was a need to include a role for the supervisor in helping the worker to 'clarify the focus and scope' of the assessment at stage 1 of the six stage framework cycle.

Secondly, picking up Munro's (2008) concern about workers making assumptions about the family, before even meeting them, this framework includes a stage of reflection *before* rather *after* action (stage 2). This is an opportunity for the supervisor to help the worker reflect on what assumptions, concerns, knowledge, or gaps in knowledge, they may have about the family or undertaking the assessment. Reflection is thus separated into two parts: anticipatory reflection at stage 2, and reflection on the worker's experience of the family at stage 4. It can also be noted that 'the story' has

been moved from the top of the four part cycle (Fig 2) and is now contained with the 'information gathering' at stage 3. The six stage framework (Fig 3) has therefore added two new elements to the previous four part cycle (Fig 2) in order to adapt it to the supervision of assessment practice. The other important change was to separate evaluation of the quality of information in stage 3, from overall analysis of the case in stage 5. This was facilitated by the provision of the 'information evaluation matrix' (Fig 4) which is already proving to be a simple and practical tool in helping workers and supervisors address this important but often over-looked task.

STRONG EVIDENCE

4. FIRM GROUND
Intelligence

1. Ambiguous
Information

Strongly
Held View

Unclear or
No view

3. Assumption-led
Information

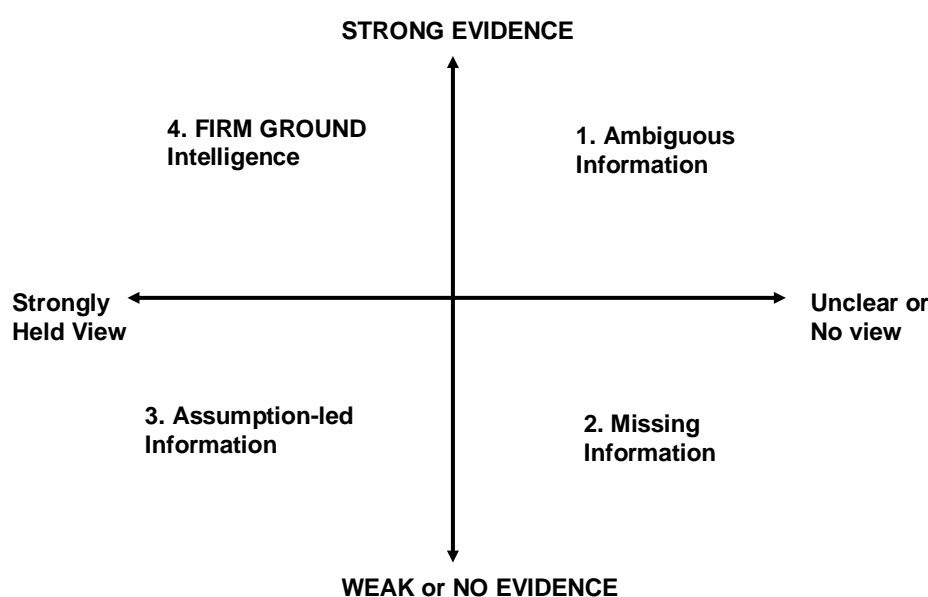**2. Missing**
Information

WEAK or NO EVIDENCE

Fig 4 Information Evaluation Matrix Morrison Ch 4: p 13 (2009 item 1)

The final chapter in *Right from the Start* focuses on the role of emotion, power and anxiety under the heading '*Creating a Secure Environment for Practice*'. It describes the contribution of emotion, as a form of knowing, to effective practice (Ch 6 pp 6-7, item 1). It draws upon *Emotional Intelligence Emotion and Social Work* (Morrison 2007, item 10) which explores the influence of emotional competence in relation to five core social work tasks: engagement; observation; assessment; decision-making; and working with others. Finally, it addresses the impact of anxiety on organisational behaviour, supervision and practice (ch 6 pp 16-22, item 1), something that Lord Laming's (2009) recent review of child protection in England also highlighted:

It is important to recognise the stressful and emotional content of social work and to create an environment that enables social workers to share their feelings and anxieties without being labeled as inadequate. Such a support system needs to be reinforced by a system of good line management that is creative, empowering and sensitive to the individual needs of frontline staff, yet confident enough to set and secure high standards of delivery. (p 20)

Right from the Start (Morrison 2009, item 1) is not only the first national guide on the supervision of social workers, but it also contains, to the candidate's knowledge, the first attempt to describe a specific and reflective model for the supervision of assessment practice. Given the frequent criticisms of supervision that appear in child abuse inquiries, it is remarkable that this has not been addressed hitherto. Indeed Lord Laming (2009) echoes this concern:

There is concern that the tradition of deliberate, reflective social work practice is being put in danger because of an overemphasis on process and targets, resulting in a loss of confidence amongst social workers. It is vitally important that social work is carried out in a supportive learning environment that actively encourages the continuous development of professional judgment and skills. Regular, high-quality, organised supervision is critical, as are routine opportunities for peer-learning and discussion. (p 32)

An early test of the material has been feedback from a national CWDC supervision training programme that the candidate is currently co-directing, designed to help supervisors apply the material from *Right from the Start*. The programme evaluation (Morrison and Wonnacott 2009) indicated that the six stage model and the practical tools that accompany it were well received. As such, not only is *Right from the Start* a major advance in the candidate's own thinking, it is potentially a significant contribution at a national children's social work policy and practice level at a time when, as Trevithick (2008) states, there is:

A heavy reliance on agency policy and procedures - which is a highly accessible form of knowledge but the danger is that policy and procedures can be presented within agencies as the only form of knowledge that social workers need to acquire and apply. (p 18)

An interesting example of Trevithick's point was the outcome statements which describe the role of the newly qualified social worker almost exclusively in terms of compliance with national policy, legislation, statutory guidance, and procedures (CWDC 2008). Under these circumstances the fact that *Right from the Start*, which was written to improve the supervision of newly qualified workers operating to these statements, was endorsed by both CWDC and the Department for Children Schools and Families is interesting. The result has been the production of a national supervision guide that is grounded within a social work, not managerialist, paradigm offering practice knowledge that is valid for supervision practice (Sheppard 1998). Put more simply, *Right from the Start* offers a knowledge-based response to rule-based guidance (Munro 2009).

5. Training and Learning

The second major area of publication focus has been training in social care. The Association of Directors of Social Services/ADSS (1996) listed training as one of the five pre-conditions for effective practice, along with supervision. Wells (2006) cited adequately resourced caseworker training as one of the few empirically supported managerial practices that improves service delivery, alongside supervision. However, the literature on training in social care has been very limited. *Effective Staff Training in Social Care: From Theory to Practice* (1999 item 3) was designed to address this gap, by offering a text that combined a clear theoretical foundation, with practical frameworks, covering the continuum from commissioning to evaluation of training in social care.

Effective Staff Training in Social Care was a co-authored text, so the following discussion will address only those chapters written by the candidate. These chapters focus on: the context and challenges for training in social care (ch1); how people learn (ch2); inter-agency training (ch4); planning training (ch8); methods of training (ch9); and learning transfer (ch10).

The material drew on earlier publications (Morrison 1988; Morrison 1997) which had begun to define training less as a technical activity concerned with planning and presentation techniques, and more as socio-technical process. In the candidate's chapters in *Effective Staff Training in Social Care* the blending of social and technical elements can be seen in the way that technical discussion about training is situated as a social process occurring within a wider set of organisational, professional and personal forces. With this in mind, the ensuing discussion seeks to identify the key features of this contribution to the literature on training in social care.

Strategic definition and location of training

The opening chapter identifies the need for a strategic approach to training, integrated within a wider human resource planning framework, underpinned by a positive organisational learning culture. Throughout, the emphasis is as much on learning as

training. Adapting Hinricks's (1976 quoted in Bramley) definition, training in social care is defined as:

> *Any organisationally initiated process which is intended to foster learning and competence throughout the workforce in order to meet: the needs of service users; contribute towards organisational goals; ….and meet the professional development needs of individual staff.* (Morrison and Horwath 1999 p 34, item 3)

An organisational framework for effective learning is identified based on: agency values; performance management; workforce planning; strategic commissioning of training; and reinforcement and evaluation of learning transfer (Morrison and Horwath Fig1.2 p 31, item 3). Learning as a social process is also addressed in terms of the interplay of individual, group and organisational processes and their impact on learning. Particular attention is directed to the role of anxiety at both individual and organisational levels, and the consequences for training and learning processes.

Although the role of anxiety was mentioned earlier in relation to supervision (Morrison 2005, item 2), the organisational impact of anxiety had first been discussed in the context of inter-agency working in *Partnership and Collaboration* (Morrison 1996, item 7) in a section entitled 'The Anxious Environment'. In *Effective Training in Social Care,* however, the focus is on the impact of anxiety on learning. The presentation of two contrasting organisational responses to anxiety forms a core theoretical underpinning for the book. It also provides a mechanism by which conflicting dynamics of learning within organisations can be understood.

The conceptual models are based on work by Vince and Martin (1993) about how action learning sets respond to anxiety. They used the idea of *functional* and *dysfunctional* learning cycles. However, in chapter 1, the two cycles are applied to organisational functioning and linked to Menzies' (1970) idea of social defense systems. Thus in the *dysfunctional* cycle (Morrison and Horwath Fig 1.1 p 26, item 3) organisational denial of anxiety leads to fight and flight responses. Preoccupation with

procedures and tasks results in the suppression of questioning, doubt or distress, leading to defensiveness, and denial of feelings, information and responsibility. Eventually parts, or even all, of the workforce become disengaged, as it focuses on ritualised or bureaucratic activities that keep at bay the underlying uncertainty and denied reality.

> *It goes without saying how easily these processes can permeate the learning environment, both as a projection of painful organisational realities and as a defense against the challenge posed by change and the demand to review attitudes and acquire new skills. In this environment engaging and reflecting on experience, the principle way in which adults learn, is rejected..............These organisational distortions of training can then in turn become reflected in the attitudes and behaviours of learners at an individual level* . (Morrison and Horwath 1999 pp 27-28, item 3)

In contrast the *functional* learning cycle (Item 3 Morrison and Horwath p 32) describes a much healthier organisational culture in which anxiety and uncertainty are seen as normative rather than pathological, and in which the complexity, ambiguity and indeterminacy of the work are addressed rather than denied. Difference is acknowledged and there is a willingness to acknowledge mistakes and take the risk of trying new approaches. The unresolvability of many child welfare issues is acknowledged and 'struggled' with, through which partial resolution, or, at least, insight is achieved. As a consequence, a sense of inter-dependence and shared capacity is generated that builds the confidence to tackle new challenges. In summary:

> *This is an agency culture in which thinking and feeling and not just doing are legitimised*. (Morrison and Horwath 1999 p 32, item 3)

Throughout the text, reference is made to the impact of organisational culture at every stage of the training and learning process, and in particular on emotions and the capacity to reflect. The functional and dysfunctional cycles are used to explain not only individuals' responses to learning, but also the behaviour of groups and how these

both shape, and are shaped by, organisational structures and systems. Organisations are thus seen as emotional places in which:

> *Individuals and groups continually manage and organise on the basis of their emotional responses to organisational issues as well as on the basis of avoiding emotion.* (Vince and Saleem 2004 p 134)

This view follows the work of the Tavistock Clinic on organisational and group dynamics (Menzies 1970; Obholzer and Roberts 1994) which has been subsequently elaborated by Vince (2001). From an organisational sociology perspective, Vince (2001) argues that emotion is a central part of what creates and sustains organisations. Thus emotions are inseparable from learning or power, and all three are key elements in the understanding of organisations. By bringing politics, learning and emotion together, the inherent ambiguities of organisations are revealed. In their quest for survival, organisations are seen as struggling with the competing forces of continuity versus change. This perspective also fits with the idea that learning, at both individual and organisational levels, requires the resolution of conflicting ways of dealing with the world: such as observation versus action; emotion versus reason; accommodation versus assimilation (Eraut 1994). Thus

> *The study of emotion is situated in the context of complex and competing desires - to avoid and serve, as well as challenge, established expectations, norms and power relations.* (Vince and Saleem 2004 p 138)

Situating learning within the context of emotion, politics and competing organisational desires is particularly relevant to the nature of the social care task. The task is characterised by moral and professional dilemmas, the competing needs of different stakeholders, the management of risk, the exercise of statutory power, and the emotionally charged nature, not only of service user problems, but also of the interaction with, and intervention in, their lives. It is a field infused with uncertainty, indeterminacy and bounded rationality (Spender 2003) which in recent years has been increasingly exposed to public vilification and blame, due largely to highly publicised

child protection inquiries and inspections. In this climate, learning lessons from such inquiries has become more a matter of allocation of blame, and compliance with procedures, than a development process. This 'compliance-led' process transforms learning into a political, rather than professional activity. It also challenges humanistic models which suggest that individuals possess an intrinsic drive to learn in the pursuit of personal growth.

> *A social, rather than self-actualisation, theory of learning focuses on the role of learning either in securing compliance with a dominant culture, or enabling individuals and groups to reflect critically on an understanding of themselves within their socio-cultural context.* (Morrison and Horwath 1999 p 55, item 3)

In other words caution should be exercised about positivist assumptions that learning is inherently 'good'. As Vince and Saleem (2004) note, learning to cover one's back is important learning, but may also restrict what can or should be learned. This in turn has significant implications for the nature and use of knowledge which is the subject of chapter 2 (Morrison and Horwath 1999, item 3).

Knowledge and the context of use

Earlier the constructionist shift towards the de-centering of knowledge was noted. This is further reflected by reference to the work of Eraut (1994), discussed in chapter 2 (Morrison and Horwath 1999, pp 61-65, item 3). Drawing on extensive observation of professional development in teachers, nurses and doctors, Eraut concludes that knowledge occurs in the context of its use. He lists three dimensions of knowledge each of which affects its nature and application:

1. The type of knowledge e.g. propositional (knowing that) v. practical (knowing how)
2. The context of knowledge use: academic, organisational, individual
3. The modes of knowledge use: imitation, application, interpretative, associative.

The proposal that knowledge occurs in the context of use is further reinforcement of the idea that knowledge is social, and its interpretation and use (for better or worse) is embedded within the organisational contexts in which social care training occurs. It also suggests that learning occurs both formally and informally, intentionally and incidentally, consciously and unconsciously through the ways in which:

> *Individuals or groups acquire, interpret, reorganise, change or assimilate a related cluster of information skills and feelings. It is also the primary way in which people construct meaning in their personal and shared organisational lives.* (Marsick and Watkins 1990 quoted in Casey 2005 p 133)

This has important implications for trainers in how they frame notions of knowledge, competence, learning objectives, transfer and outcomes. Whilst there are methods, frameworks and tools which assist the 'technical' aspects of training, to which we will return (Morrison and Horwath 1999, chapters 4, 8, 9, and 10, item 3), the socially-mediated aspects of training suggest that knowledge is provisional so that:

> *It is not possible wholly to predict what learners will learn, or do, in response to what is taught, for participants will transform public knowledge in making personal use of it in their work. This means that the transfer of knowledge……is rarely immediate or exact. Trainers need to be alert to the danger that by focusing on formal knowledge, intuitive, internal and practical knowledge……….may be ignored, invalidated, unexpressed or left unchallenged. Under these conditions professionals may develop very divergent personal theories-in-use without conscious appreciation of doing so, or of the consequences (for their practice).* (Morrison and Horwath 1998, p 62, item 3)

The contribution of uncertainty and emotion to knowledge

A particular aspect of the context of knowledge use in children's social care is the erosion of professional discretion and its replacement by targets, policies and procedures. Munro (2009) identifies this as a shift away from *knowledge-based* to *rule-based practice* . *Rule-based practices* provide procedurally 'correct' ways of acting that

workers and agencies can use to defend themselves in the event of adverse outcomes and external criticism.

> *In circumstances where the evidence to form a rule is lacking, the advantage of operating with rules over professional judgment, is that when the rule leads to error, no one person is to blame……. In a system grappling with serious institutional risks, creating a set of rules to prescribe 'good practice' becomes an effective way of neutralizing blame*' (Munro 2009 p 17)

This can be linked with Vince and Saleem's (2004) research on the impact of caution and blame systems on learning in organisations. In such contexts workers under pressure to come up with the 'correct' response, may rush to judgment, which ironically only increases risk. For instance the report on the death of Victoria Climbié (Cm 5730, 2003) expressed concern about the poor and premature judgment made by the social worker in determining that there was a low risk of significant harm to this child. As Taylor and White (2006) comment, too much certainty had been drawn from ambiguous and contradictory information. They identify how social workers striving for certainty under pressure, engage in a process of rapid, intuitive and sometimes premature social categorisation, in situations where, as Lord Laming (Cm 5730, 2003) concluded, a position of 'respectful uncertainty' would often be more appropriate.

This offers the intriguing idea that *not knowing* is an important component of knowledge. Spender (2003) states that organisations exist to manage uncertainty, because they operate in conditions of bounded rationality. This is reflected in the *Functional Learning Cycle* (Morrison and Horwath 1999 p 32, item 3) in which anxiety, uncertainty and risk are incorporated as positive contributions to the learning process. In order to make effective decisions organisations need both external information and subjective sources of knowledge, the latter through accessing uncertainty and emotion as types of knowing. Spender (2003) argues that the types of knowledge that we recognise are directly related to the types of uncertainty and emotion we admit. Ignorance is only one form of uncertainty. Uncertainty may also reflect indeterminacy (something that cannot be known), or incommensurability (conflictual knowledge systems) as for instance between medical and social models of child abuse. According

to Spender (2003) the task is therefore one of constructing a provisional rationality sufficient to make goal-orientated decisions under conditions of uncertainty.

Parton (2009) invitingly offers social work the 'rehabilitative idea of uncertainty'. This is in part a recognition of post-modern understandings of knowledge, but on a more practical level, is a stimulus towards collaborative practice with service-users:

> *The acknowledgement of uncertainty is an essential element of the post-modern practice of social work and such a position can push workers to make the effort to understand a service user's experience.........a commitment to uncertainty, indeterminacy and unpredictability will reinforce social workers' continual attempts reflexively to consider what they are doing .* (Parton 2009 p 225)

Finally, Taylor and White (2006) consider what alternatives exist to the technical-rational mode of education for professions, such as social work, whose task is undertaken under conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity. They propose the need to revitalise reasoning by acknowledging the importance of emotion and interpretation. This is the focus of *Emotional Intelligence, Emotion and Social Work: Context, Characteristics, Complications and Contribution* (Morrison 2007, item 10) which argues that emotion is central to analysis and decision-making.

The 'Technical' elements: Knowing how

In contrast to the largely theoretical focus of the first two chapters, chapters 4, 8, and 9 of *Effective Staff Training in Social Care* are more practice-based and provide trainers with a range of frameworks, tools and guidance. These cover inter-agency training (ch 4), the planning of training events (ch 8) and training methods (ch 9). Examples of the practice tools provided for trainers include:

- An inter-agency framework for co-ordination (p 111)

- A discussion of issues for inter-agency trainers (pp 125-129)

- A framework for inter-agency training (pp 130-137)

- A ten-stage training design model with detailed planning exemplars (ch 8 pp 239-255)

- A description of four types of training methods: presentations, group discussion, experiential, and reflective methods, each with a summary table of benefits and issues to consideration (ch 9 pp 270; 276; 283; 286; 288).

Throughout, the aim is to provide practical strategies and frameworks whilst avoiding a 'cook book' approach. However, the success of practical methods is dependent not only on the management of social and group learning processes, but also on the exploration of systems of meaning. For that reason these chapters also contain conceptual discussion particularly around definitions and terminologies. See for example discussion of the terms '*coordination*' (p 110) and '*inter-agency*' training (p 113). Alongside this, the impact of anxiety, emotion and power on training and learning processes are regularly considered, both in terms of the technical planning and delivery of events and the trainer's own behaviour.

> *Good course design, clear planning and the skilled delivery of appropriate methods are essential if a secure learning environment is not only to be established but also maintained. The trainer's emotional responsiveness will not be enough if the training programme lacks direction or coherence.* (item 3 p 230)

In summary, the chapters covering planning and method make clear the limits of a technical approach to training, or one based on a purist conception of adult learners as self directing agents. Learners need guidance and structure if they are to make use of their self-directing capacities (Allen 1985). Learning is an inherently social process.

The final chapter for consideration is on learning transfer (Morrison and Horwath 1999 ch 10 item 3). The chapter is divided between discussion of the problems of learning transfer, (pp 289-302), and practical advice as to how learning transfer can be

enhanced (pp 302 -317). Four key transfer factors are identified: the learner; the nature of what is to be transferred; the training process; and the organisation.

In many ways this chapter reflects a watershed in the candidate's thinking about the relationship between individual and organisational concepts of learning. Whilst the impact of social and organisational factors on learning is discussed, notably in chapter 1, the focus is very largely on individual learning. This is particularly emphasised in the discussions about learning transfer in chapter 10. However as the following comments suggest, successful transfer involves a process of social negotiation in the workplace:

> *The main reason training is not transferred is not because ineffective learning has taken place, but because transfer has been prohibited by colleagues, bosses, and clients either formally or informally …..Changes to behaviour have to be informally approved by peers and supervisors.* (Analouie quoted in Morrison and Horwath 1999 p 296)

What this critical analysis has identified, however, is an absence in this work of any real discussion about, or conceptual frameworks for, organisational learning. Whilst the chapters provide a significant account of the theory and practice of training as a strategy for *individual professional* development, they need to be embedded much more in the theory and practice of *collective and organisational* learning. However, this is a relatively new area of study, with most models adopting an 'additative' paradigm. This suggests that organisational learning occurs through the impact of a critical mass of individual learning taking place at all levels. But as Casey (2005) points out:

> *Individual learning theory is not sufficient to understand learning in, and by a collective. If organisations are defined as complex systems of social action then the level of theorising about organisational learning needs to match the complexity of the phenomena being studied.* (Casey 2005 p 136)

Casey goes on to propose Parson's (1951) general theory of action as a means by which organisational learning can be framed within a theory about collective

behaviour. Parson's theory focuses on the systematic relationships between the actions of actors in the social system, and their collective capacity to adapt to internal and external environments. Thus organisational learning is linked to the organisation's ability to survive and strategically renew itself (Vince and Saleem 2004). In the current climate of severe fiscal pressure, and external scrutiny, there are real threats to the survival and leadership of failing children's social care services. Under those circumstances, individual models of learning will be a necessary but not sufficient contribution. Models and strategies for organisational learning will increasingly be required through which:

> *A system of actors, actions, symbols and processes enable organisations to transform information into valued knowledge which increases its long-run adaptive capacity.'* (Schwandt quoted in Casey 2005 p 138)

However Vince and Saleem (2004) comment that whilst there is often strong organisational motivation to engage with learning, there is a limited understanding of how emotion and power influence collective learning processes. In conditions of caution and blame, reflection, upon which learning depends, is either suppressed or restricted to an individual activity. In order to improve learning, there is a need to shift from individual to collective reflection, and to engage in action learning approaches that enable structures, as well as individuals, to reflect, connect, adapt and change.

5. Integrating Themes from other cited publications

Thus far the analysis has focused on three major publications (items 1-3). However, many of the themes which have emerged from critical analysis of these works are reflected in, or draw upon, the other cited works (items 4-10). The importance of emotion at every level in children's social work has been a persistent theme, and has been linked to the impact of anxiety and uncertainty on organisational culture. Interestingly, the earliest articulation of the two 'anxiety cycles' in *Partnership and Collaboration: Rhetoric and Reality* (Morrison 1996 pp132 and 136, item 7) was set in an inter-agency context. Here the concept was used to describe the parallel anxiety

experienced by service users, practitioners and organisations operating in a child protection context.

> *Anxiety runs like a vein throughout the child protection process. It is present in the anxious or unrewarding attachment that forms the family context in which abuse may occur. It is present in the highly charged atmosphere of the parents' first encounter with professionals concerned about their child. It is present too within the professional system, as child abuse represents a crisis not only for the family, but also for the professional network. Finally anxiety exists not just at the level of the individual, but also, as Menzies (1970) has pointed out, as an organisational phenomenon. In the current climate of rapid change the organisational anxiety generated in the management of risk, is compounded in many organisations by the struggle for their own survival.*   (Morrison 1996 p 131, item 7)

Another theme of this early paper is a systemic understanding of the inter-relationships between organisational, professional, inter-personal forces. The paper argued that partnership with families could not be considered separately from partnership practice within, and between, agencies. This point was powerfully reinforced by Glisson and Hammelgarn's (1998) research. This found that intra-agency functioning was a more powerful predictor of outcomes for children than inter-agency collaboration. In a comment, that unwittingly foreshadowed subsequent findings in serious case reviews (Brandon et al 2008), the paper commented:

> *The front line of partnership where workers seek to engage with families, may too often be an interaction between two parties neither of whom feels understood, valued, respected, prepared or supported. Under such circumstances the likelihood of dangerous retreats into minimization, paternalism or collusion is all the more.* (Morrison 1996 p 135, item 7)

That practitioners can experience, at the hands of their agencies, many of the same negative psychological processes as service users, is reflected in two other papers. In

Emotionally Competent Child Protection Organsations: Fallacy Fiction or Necessity (Morrison 1997, item 4) the Professional Accommodation System, described during the introduction, was an organisational adaption of the Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome (Summit 1983). In *Working Together to Safeguard Children Challenges and Changes for Inter-Agency Co-ordination in Child Protection* (Morrison 2000, item 8), Howe's (1992) matrix of partnership between practitioners and service users is adapted to describe four different types of inter-agency relationship based on whether collaboration is voluntary or not, and on whether or not it is participatory in nature (Morrison 2000 p 370, item 8).

Implicit in this systemic analysis is a *relational* view of the world which posits that: context gives meaning to behaviour; individuals exist in relation to others; interaction revolves around the meaning of one person for another; and relationships and communication are a function of each other (Reder and Duncan 1999). A number of implications arise from this perspective, not only for the practice of individual social workers, but for the organisations in, and with which, they operate. These revolve around the centrality of relationship-based practices in social work (Schofield 1998; Trevithick 2003; Ruch 2005). Wilson et al (2008) open their comprehensive text on contemporary social work practice by stating that:

> *We see at the heart of social work the provision of a relationship to help people negotiate complex and painful transitions and decisions in their lives…..The essential and distinctive characteristic of social work is its focus on the individual and the social setting and context* (Wilson et al p.xiii)

Relationship-based practice involves a commitment to reflection, and the use of practice knowledge. Ruch (2005) argues that reflection, reflective practice and use of self are key ingredients for effective relationship-based practices. Reflective practice enables practitioners to hold the inner and outer worlds of both service users and themselves. It also allows practitioners to theorise about their practice, and make connections between external and subjective forms of knowledge such as intuition, practice wisdom, and tacit knowledge.

Relationship-based practice requires practitioners who possess sufficient emotional competence, self awareness, empathy and inter-personal skills to work in a relationship-based way (Howe 2008). Relationship-based practices are also strongly linked to the quality and outcomes of assessment. In *Emotional Intelligence, Emotion and Social Work: Context, Characteristics, Complications and Contribution* (Morrison 2007, item 10) research by McKeown (2000) is quoted, showing that service user characteristics (IQ, history, socio-economic status, and social support) account for 40% of the prognosis for change, whilst 30% was accounted for by the relationship with the worker. Interestingly the method of intervention, and service user's verbally expressed optimism accounted for only 15% each. As assessments involve asking family members about emotionally and morally laden areas, the inter-personal skills of the assessing worker are crucial to accessing such sensitive information and generating an accurate and balanced picture of the service user's characteristics, difficulties and context. Thus the fortunes of assessment are closely related to the inter-personal skills of the worker. Together these two factors account for nearly three quarters of the total change effort. In sum relationship-based practices enable practitioners to engage in more collaborative, attuned and in-depth assessment work (Ruch 2005; Howe 2008).

Relationship-based practices are strongly implicated in the service-user's level of motivation and confidence to change. In *Assessing Parental Motivation for Change* (Morrison 2009, item 6) motivational interviewing theory (Miller and Rollnick 2002) is used to argue that the worker is a significant determinant of the service user's motivational state, and moreover that this is established very quickly (Spratt and Callan 2004). For instance Biehal (2006) reported that for adolescents receiving services, their own motivation, combined with optimism about the worker's ability to assist, were significant predictors of change. Elaborating on Protchaska and Di Climente's (1982) model of change, the paper describes a seven step model for assessing motivation (Morrison 2009, item 6) which has close links to the motivational dialogue approach developed by Tober and Raistrick (2007).

However, relationship-based practice needs to be supported by clear and coherent organisational processes and supportive/open cultures, in order to contain the uncertainty and anxiety that arises from the emotionally-charged nature of the task (Ruch 2005). When organisational processes undermine individual confidence in a field working with risk and uncertainty, focus and energy become quickly dissipated, as staff defend against an environment that is too difficult or dangerous to confront (Menzies 1970). As Ruch (2005) observes there are powerful connections between context, organisation and personal agency:

> *The significance of the societal contexts in which clients are located and the organisational contexts in which practitioners are situated, cannot be underestimated. Practitioners find themselves at the confluence of individual stresses percolating upwards from clients and the organisational stresses permeating down.* (p 119-120)

This means that organisations must provide the leadership, vision, clarity, security, training (Morrison and Horwath 1999, item 3), supervision (Morrison 2005 item 2; Morrison 2009 item 1), boundaries and healthy communication for staff to have the competence and confidence to engage fully in the task. This requires not only emotionally competent practitioners, but equally leaders who act with emotional wisdom:

> *The everyday practice of leadership is central to meeting the challenge of establishing shared direction across increasingly complex systems and communities, whilst being rooted in an ethical commitment to children. Leadership is the nexus that enables people to take risks and go beyond their familiar practices. Whilst intellect will be important, emotional intelligence, the ability to take into account how different professionals see their roles, and bring them together around shared objectives will be at least as important.*
> Lownsborough and O'Leary (2005 p 33)

One example of the candidate's work on the structure-personal agency relationship is in relation to services for young people with sexual behaviour problems. As the

founding chair of the National Association for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) in 1991, the candidate has been widely involved in both policy and practice development work (Morrison 1999; Morrison and Henniker 2006).Through this involvement, the importance of providing staff working in this difficult area with a coherent and safe framework of policy and practice has become abundantly clear. In *Preparing Services and Staff to work with Young People who Sexually Abuse: Context; Mandate; Pitfalls and Frameworks* (Morrison 2004, item 5) a framework for building effective services is described covering: needs mapping; funding; inter-agency collaboration; philosophy of intervention; programme development; staff management ; external networking; evaluation; concluding with pitfalls to avoid (pp 393-406, item 5). A key message throughout this chapter is that knowledge from work with other troubling and troubled young people is transferable to this specialist field. This challenged existing knowledge-power relationships in the field, which had held that only specialists could do this work. However, by identifying and validating the transferability of the generic practitioner's practice knowledge, non-specialists were empowered to become involved in this work.

Finally, these publications contribute to practice knowledge beyond social work, to the literature on inter-disciplinary collaboration. This reflects the role of the social worker in facilitating and co-ordinating the contributions of the wider inter-agency community, particularly in the assessment, planning and review of services. One example of this is *Working Together to Safeguard Children (DOH, 2000): Challenges and Changes for Inter-Agency Co-ordination in Child Protection* (Morrison 2000, item 8) which considered the implications of new guidance on inter-agency arrangements for the co-ordination and the assessment of child protection cases.

Another example is the *Toolkit for Assessing the Readiness of Local Safeguarding Children Boards: Origins. Ingredients and Applications* (Morrison and Lewis 2005, item 9) which is a practical framework designed to facilitate inter-agency co-ordination. This describes the development and application of a twenty-one item diagnostic toolkit, devised to assist Area Child Protection Committees to make the transition to statutory Local Safeguarding Children Boards following the Children Act 2004. It was based on data collected by the candidate from a survey of 16 ACPCs (Morrison and Lewis 2005

pp 302-4, item 9). The tool was piloted in a regional seminar and the eventual toolkit (pp 313-316, item 9) was used by an estimated one third of ACPCs in England and Wales. Moreover it provided the template for the development of a subsequent self-assessment and improvement tool which has been formally adopted by the Welsh Assembly for all LSCBs in Wales (Horwath and Morrison in press). Both toolkits are examples of frameworks that enable structures and systems, not just individuals, to undertake the types of collective reflection advocated by Vince and Saleem (2004).

6. Role of the Scholar-Facilitator

At the beginning of this critical review the candidate's role as a trainer and consultant within the child welfare sector was outlined. Attention was drawn to the diversity of role, subject focus, context, agencies, and jurisdictions in which the candidate operates. The idea of the scholar-facilitator was introduced with reference to the development of the Professional Accommodation Syndrome (Morrison 1997, item 4). In this section, the origins, definition and contribution of the scholar-facilitator role are described.

The origins of the scholar-facilitator role lie in attempts to resolve the traditional divide between academic and practice contexts, not only in social work, but across professional groups. Leinhardt et al (1995) contrast declarative, formal and universal knowledge gained during professional training in universities, with the procedural (how to), pragmatic, situational, and tacit nature of knowledge gained in professional practice. The challenge lies in the integration of knowledge associated with one location, while using the ways of thinking associated with the other location. Leinhardt et al (1995) argue that in addressing this problem, universities must learn to value practice knowledge and extend their sense of the theoretical:

> *Theory must become something students produce, as well as ingest. Practitioners should be given the opportunity to construct their own theories from their own practice, and generate authentic episodes of practice from their own theories.* (p 404)

Tenkasi and Hay (2004) took up this issue in the context of management and organisational development, a field with similarities to social work, through its dual emphasis on social practice and knowledge of change. Indeed both fields are practice-based disciplines. Following the call of Astley and Zammuto (1993) for a cadre of professionals with membership of both academic and practice worlds to act as 'semiotic' brokers, Tenkasi and Hay (2004) focused on the role of *scholar-practitioners*. In their study, these were recent graduates from a doctoral organisational development programme, operating as internal change agents within companies, or academics with extensive experience as industry consultants.

The conceptual basis for the scholar-practitioner role lay in Vygotski's (1962) Activity Theory. This suggested that the '*theory versus practice*' conflict could be resolved by redefining the concept of action in such a way that activity could serve as a uniting rather than dividing force. Thus:

> *Activity is defined as the engagement of a subject towards a goal...Human beings mediate their activity through artifacts...... Tools are the central artifact-mediating force that enables a subject to act on an object to realise certain outcomes* (Tenkasi and Hay 2004 pp 180-1)

These tools, whose purpose is to help individuals address goals, objectives, needs or problems, comprise of:

- Psychological tools such as language, models, theories, frameworks, and standards;

- Physical and technical tools such as computers, cars etc;

- Social tools such as norms, contingences, rules, routines and procedures.

It can be readily seen how social workers and other professionals make use of all three tools when engaging with particular goals on behalf of their clients, or when they

are involved in collaborative activities. Activity theory thus construes both practice and theory as tools that mediate different types of action:

> *We construe theory as actions mediated by formal domains of knowledge, as available in the form of books etc. Practice is construed as actions mediated by non-theoretical tools that may include contingences, conventions, norms, routines rules and established procedures. Theory and practice are linked when a theoretically mediated action influences a practically mediated action or via-versa'.* (Tenkasi and Hay 2004, pp 181-2)

In their study of organisational development projects, Tenkasi and Hay identified a number of practice-mediated and theory-mediated components undertaken by the scholar-practitioners. Practice-mediated actions were those which facilitated the definition, execution and outcomes of the project and included:

- Project initiation, commissioning, visioning and legitimisation
- Project planning, management, scheduling, piloting
- Project realisation, products, application, learning, evaluation

Theory-mediated actions were those which included:

- Framing of projects within current literature, personal experience and expert advice
- Data gathering, sense making, reflection, literature review, synthesising
- Theoretical outcomes from empirical findings, theoretical insights, publications, and other dissemination

The arrows in Fig 5 below indicate the iterative process occurring both within, and between, the practice and theory components during the life of an organisational

development project. Throughout the project, scholar-practitioners used reframing techniques. Reframing makes an element familiar and more acceptable, by locating it within the particular community's system of meaning, and thereby facilitates dialogue across theory and practice contexts. In their study, reframing allowed theoretical perspectives to become relevant within a business environment, and practice-related elements to become theoretically significant.
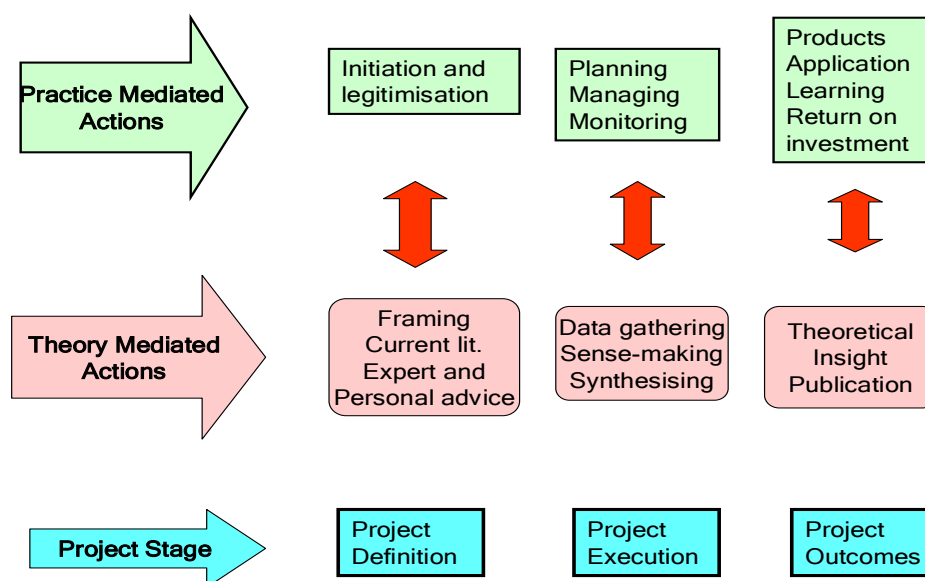

Fig: 5 Theory and Practice-Mediated Components of Scholar-Facilitator Role (Tenkasi and Hay 2004 adapted)

Whilst the components described above are all elements of the candidate's work, the term scholar-*facilitator* has been used in preference to scholar-*practitioner*. This critical analysis is entitled: *'The role of the scholar-facilitator in generating practice knowledge to inform and enhance relationship-based social work practice with children and families'*. The reasons for using the term scholar-*facilitator* are now discussed, showing how the new term potentially extends Tenkasi and Hay's work, and also provides a key vehicle for describing the candidate's roles and methodology.

The first reason for using the term scholar-facilitator is that the candidate's role is not that of a practitioner. The candidate is a *facilitator* of learning, operating in a range of

roles including: trainer; mentor, writer; consultant; project advisor; speaker; and action researcher. However, as a visiting research fellow at this university, and as an external examiner in another university, the candidate is also located within a scholastic setting.

Secondly the term scholar-facilitator can be used to encompass a role that extends beyond the bridging of academic and practice communities, to include the policy-making community. *Right from the Start* (Morrison 2009, item 2) and *Toolkit for assessing the readiness of Local Safeguarding Children Boards* (Morrison and Lewis 2005, item 9) are both examples of practice-knowledge created in response to national policy developments. The former was commissioned by CWDC, a government agency, to provide a national guide for supervision based on a set of outcomes for newly qualified social workers. The latter was in response to the establishment of statutory Local Safeguarding Children Boards under the Children Act 2004. Both of these publications required the integration of systems of meaning across practice, policy and academic communities in order to maximise their impact and credibility. For those operating in the public sector, understanding and engaging with the policy context is fundamental to the construction and dissemination of practice knowledge.
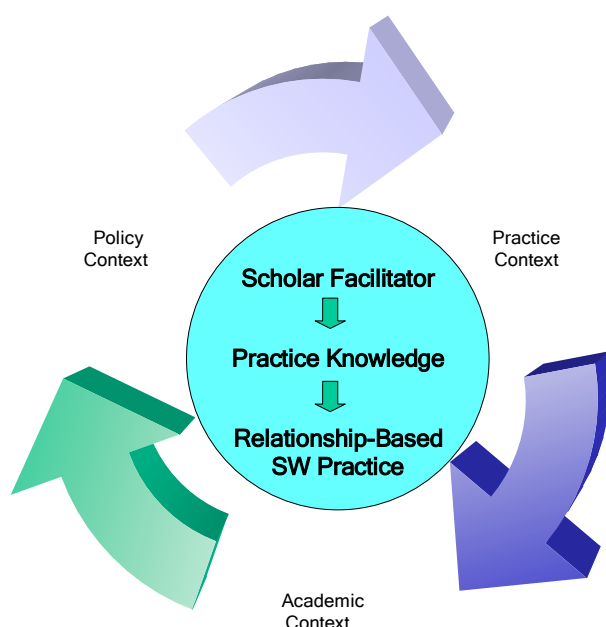
Thirdly the term scholar-facilitator is more readily suited to someone operating outside the organisation, by allowing for a wider range of roles to be encompassed. This in turn expands the diversity of knowledge, contexts and experience available to the scholar-facilitator. In the case of the candidate, this has enabled a much wider testing and transfer of knowledge and paradigms across contexts (academic, policy, practice, jurisdictions, professions), levels (strategic and operational), and roles (trainer, mentor, researcher). This in turn has enhanced the practice knowledge contained with these publications, and their relevance to relationship-based practice for social workers and other professions working with vulnerable children and families.

6. Conclusion

The argument of this critical analysis is that the cited publications have made a significant contribution to 'practice knowledge' in the field of social work with children and families. As Leinhardt et al (1995) noted, such knowledge is different to declarative or propositional knowledge. Professional or practice knowledge is activity-orientated and:

> *Includes not only facts and theory, but also information which is required to define and understand the problems a professional is confronted with. Such information is not represented mentally in the form of easily reproducible statements and rules. The cognitive set of tools necessary for successful professional practice includes images metaphors and adjectives.* (Bromme and Tilemma 1995 p 263)

Practice knowledge is not atheoretical knowledge. Rather it is a form of theorising that arises from pluralistic forms of knowing that include not only external facts and information, but also subjective forms of knowledge such as intuition, practice wisdom and emotion which are elicited through a process of dialogue and shared reflection (Raelin 2007; Ruch 2005; Fook 2002).

Weick (1995) and Fook (2002) also make a distinction between *theory* and the process of *theorising.* Indeed according to Weike (2005) few theories truly meet the modernist test of being a systematic set of ideas which provide explanation and are generalisable. Most theories are signposts, or approximations along the theory-building pathway. Weick (2005) notes that the word 'theory' belongs to a family of words that includes 'guess, speculation, supposition, hypothesis, conception, explanation, model' (American Heritage Dictionary). Therefore, argues Weick, theory can, and needs to, be used to label interim struggles as well as ultimate triumphs. Such interim struggles include activities such as abstracting, generalising, relating, selecting, explaining, synthesising, all of which are given added weight when the context, assumptions and sequence of thinking are made clear.

Whetton (2001) suggests that new theory is rarely invented from scratch but rather arises from improvements and adaptions to existing theory. He notes that one of the most fruitful approaches to theory building involves borrowing a perspective from other fields. This can lead to revising causal maps and metaphors, and thereby extending theory. The cited publications provide several examples of this:

1. The adaption of Summit's (2003) Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome into the Professional Accommodation Syndrome extended the syndrome to include the impact of organisational systems on staff, and therefore on their ability to respond to abused children (Morrison 1997, item 4).

2. The adaption of Howe's (1992) partnership matrix was broadened to include the organisational and inter-agency factors as influences in shaping different types of practitioner-service user partnerships (Morrison 2000, item 8).

3. The 7 step model of motivation extended Protchaska and DiClimente's (1982) model of change. It translated the 'contemplation' stage of Protchaska and DiClimente's model into a sequence of motivational steps by which practitioners can identify, and work with, the complex processes that are contained within the 'contemplation' stage (Morrison 2009, item 6).

4. The development of a new six stage model for the supervision of assessment practice addressed a gap in the supervision literature (Morrison 2009: ch 5, item 2).

It is argued that each of these models meets Whetton's (2001) criteria for a 'legitimate and value-added' contribution. The first two models (1) and (2) identify how the adaption enlarges accepted relationships between the variables, through the addition of macro/organisational-level explanations. These broaden an understanding, not only of the original phenomena, but also their causation and potential remedies. In relation to (3) above, the adaption is designed to render the somewhat abstract notion of 'contemplation' in a manner more akin to practice-knowledge. Finally, the Six Stage Model for the Supervision of Assessment Practice (4 above) is new, albeit that it builds on an existing four part model of supervision (Morrison 2005 ch 5). However, as the Six Stage Model can operate without reference to its predecessor, it might justifiably be claimed as a new model.

Fook (2002) describes theorising as existing along a continuum from a single idea, concept or label, to more complex sets of related ideas. Post-modernist ways of thinking, and interpretivist research methods, challenge the privileged position traditionally accorded to the scientific researcher, by including the lived experience of practitioners as legitimate contributors to theorising. However, theorising from practice also requires reflexivity to legitimate both the process and the outcomes.

> *What makes theorising from practice a legitimate research activity is ultimately the social contribution it makes: the accountability and transparency of the theorising method; the communicability of the theory to others; and its ability to transfer meanings and transform practice* (Fook 2002 p 93)

This is where the researcher, in this case the candidate, makes their assumptions and reasoning transparent, and critically reviews how their own theory, and engagement in other theory, have enriched or changed their theorising. Indeed there have been several points, notably in relation to training (Morrison 1999, item 3), in which the

candidate's reflexivity has led to the recognition of the need for theoretical revisions and updating. In sum, this critical analysis has sought to meet Fook's (2002) four tests for theorising from practice.

In drawing this critical analysis to a conclusion, consideration is given to how the candidate can further develop his role and contribution as a scholar-facilitator, building on the work described above. One project which is already well advanced is the development of an empirically-based self assessment and improvement tool for LSCBs in Wales, undertaken in collaboration with Professor Jan Horwath. This was based on a more sophisticated version of the *Toolkit for Assessing the Readiness of Local Safeguarding Children Boards: Origins, Ingredients and Applications* (Morrison and Lewis 2005, item 9) which was completed by a pilot group of Welsh LSCBs who submitted evidence to support their self-assessment ratings. Analysis of this data resulted in the creation of a national LSCB self assessment tool for Wales based on 21 standards, each comprised of four bands with evidence-based descriptors reflecting the degree to which the LSCB has made progress against the standard. This has now been formally incorporated as part of the inspection framework for LSCBs in Wales. The same researchers are now involved in further work to create a comparable tool, using the same methodology, for Children and Young People's Partnerships in Wales. Together these projects represent a significant addition to the literature, practice knowledge and methodology of partnership development, and the collective reflection (Vince and Saleem 2004).

Further work is also been undertaken by the candidate in extending the national supervision guide (Morrison 2009, item 1) to include additional chapters covering the supervision of social workers during the Early Development Period. This includes the supervision of complex practice and the management of performance concerns. Alongside this, the candidate, in partnership with In-Trac Training and Consultancy, is involved in developing additional national supervision training materials based on the new material. This will result in the training of a further 1500 social work supervisors across England, in addition to which the training programme will, with the addition of an academic assignment, attract credits towards the Higher Specialist Award in Social Work. The overall result of this work will be the establishment for the first time of a

national guide to the supervision of children's social workers, a nationally approved and piloted training programme and the framework for the accreditation of supervisors.

Finally the candidate is involved in the development of a practice workbook on the application of adult attachment theory to the assessment of, and intervention with, adults who pose a risk of harm to themselves or others. This is based on a four day multi-disciplinary training course that the candidate has been running with a colleague, Clark Baim, based on the work of attachment theorists such as Crittenden (2000) and Howe (2005). The course trains participants in the identification of attachment strategies based on an analysis of speech or discourse patterns, and in the use of a five stage intervention model. The workbook seeks to maximise the accessibility of complex attachment theory to non-specialist practitioners through the use of a series of attachment stories built around five characters, and recounted by actors in audio clips, and supported by theoretical material, visual illustrations, reflective exercises and an attachment-based interviewing manual. This workbook is based on extensive teaching of this material in a wide variety of contexts and disciplines. It is therefore a clear example of the scholar-facilitation role in the development and dissemination of practice knowledge.

However the potential value and legitimacy of these projects for both social work, and other disciplines upon which social work relies to discharge its role, have undoubtedly been enhanced through the findings of this critical analysis. More widely, however, the articulation, validation and dissemination of practice knowledge has a key role to play in bolstering public and professional confidence at a time when social work with children, in the UK at least, is facing such significant challenges.

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