Tuia te whakaaroa rua kia tina – Working together, learning to understand each other, enhancing our wellbeing

Pauline Ward

Tena koutou katoa
Te mea tuatahi, he honore he kororia ke Te Atua
Hei whakaaro pai ki nga tangata katoa
Te mea tuarua, te marae e tu nei tena koe
Te Papa i waho nei, tena koe
Te hunga mate ki te hunga mate,
Te hunga ora ki te hunga ora
Tena koutou, tena koutou tena koutou katoa.

Pauline is of British descent on her maternal side, her ancestors having arrived in New Zealand from England in 1858. On her paternal side she is of Ngapuhi and Ngatiwai iwi descent; her hapu is Patu-harakeke. Pauline has worked as a social work practitioner for over 20 years at Department of Social Welfare, Child Youth and Family, Northland Health and in the community. She is currently employed at NorthTec as a fieldwork educator on the Bachelor of Applied Social Service programme.

Te manu e kai ana i te miro,
nona te rangatiratanga o te ngahere,
Te manu e kai ana i te matauranga,
nona te rangatiratanga o te ao.
(Traditional whakataukī)

Introduction

A student’s journey through the social services programme is a time of learning, challenge, excitement, hard work and enlightenment. The fieldwork education component is where theory is integrated into practice and where hopefully it all starts to make sense!

The term fieldwork educator is defined in this paper as the fieldwork education co-ordinator at NorthTec and the agency supervisor is the social worker within the placement agency, who supervises the student (NorthTec, 2005: 66). At NorthTec the role of the fieldwork educator is to source the community placements and match the students with the appropriate agencies depending on their interest, level of skill and knowledge. The fieldwork educator also organises and runs pre-placement workshops for the agency supervisors and the students, oversees the placement by visiting the student and supervisor three times during the placement and sets and marks the assessments. Community networking also plays a major part in this role.
An important aspect of fieldwork education is the students’ participation in group supervision. The students meet fortnightly in small groups and receive supervision from an external trained social work supervisor who assists in the integration of theory and practice. Group supervision meets the needs of the provision of clinical supervision and also provides vicarious learning as students discuss their placement in other fields of practice. While individual external professional supervision might be preferable the cost of providing that for up to 30 students would be prohibitive.

Students receive weekly individual supervision from qualified social work supervisors within their placement agency.

The model this paper discusses is Tuia Te Whakaaroa Rua Kai Tina, which is based around Maori principles that underpin my practice. It will describe how those principles are used within the context of fieldwork education and also identifies the importance of supervision and its contextualisation within practice.

The paper also reflects a parallel process of my own learning of raranga and uses korari throughout.

**My own journey of learning**

I recall the first piece of raranga that I attempted to weave. It was a kete which I gave to my husband so it will always remain in our home to remind me of the effort, frustration and challenge involved and the pleasure it gave when I achieved that. It is a unique piece of work. It has its own whakapapa, history and knowledge and certainly has its own shape! It does not have a fine weave, the kete has many holes in it. For me this indicated that there was still a lot of learning for me to do.

This symbolises the students that come onto the social services programme. They arrive with their own whakapapa and learning and for some they already have experience in the social work field. Students come onto the social work programme to gain further knowledge of theories and practice skills, safe practice, supervision and many other tools for their kete.

**Te Ao Maori**

Maori social work practitioners are constantly faced with questions like, ‘What place do Maori cultural templates have in guiding my practice?’ and ‘How safe are these cultural templates in my workplace?’ The recurrence of such questions suggests that cultural integrity constantly strives to be acknowledged, in the framing of social work practice and theory in Aotearoa New Zealand. Associated with such questions is a hidden yet never-ending campaign, ultimately from the heart, mind and soul of every Maori practitioner, the contenders being Maori and non-Maori world views (Pohatu 2003: 1).

The following concepts describe the use of a Maori world view and the philosophical values which guide the writer’s practice.
Whanau, hapu, iwi and whenua

Korari, also known as harakeke or flax is an important resource in Te Ao and is one of the resources used for weaving. It grows in fan-like structures called whanau. In the centre of each whanau is te rito (1), the baby shoot. On either side are nga matua (2), the parents. These three leaves are never cut; this is to protect the continuing life force of the plant. The awhi rito or support stems (3 and 4) are numerous and provide a circle of support that creates stability for the nurturing and growth of the central shoot.

Like the korari, tangata whenua are intrinsically connected to whanau, hapu and iwi by whakapapa and whenua. Whanau, hapu and iwi are not seen in isolation from each other.

In the context of this paper the student is te rito or the new shoot of the korari. Nga matua are the students’ own whanau and also includes their mentors and peers in the classroom and workplace. The hapu are the social services programme lecturers, student services, counsellors and agency supervisors. The iwi is the professional body of the Social Workers Registration Board and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. The Social Workers Registration Board is a statutory body established by the government under the Registration Act 2003; and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers is the voluntary professional body that represents the interests of social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand. The whenua is represented by the clients who are supported and empowered by the students and social work practitioners.

‘E hara taku toa, I te toa takatahi ēngari he toa taku tini. My strength is not from myself alone, but from the strength of the group (Ngarimu, 2005).

Whakapapa

Whakapapa is the genealogical descent of all living things from the gods to the present time. The meaning of whakapapa is ‘to lay one thing upon another’ as, for example, to lay one generation upon another (Barlow 1998: 173).

It is the knowledge of ancestry and genealogy. This knowledge is passed down through generations of whanau and gives a sense of pride, belonging and connection by understanding the roots of our heritage.

Similarly, social work in New Zealand has a history and dual heritage developed from ‘British origins and influences’ (McDonald 1998: 15) and ‘Papahurihia or Te Atua Wera’ which was formed as a movement to resist, ‘…the infiltration of Western religious influences
on the social, political, spiritual and economic dimensions of tangata whenua’ (Ruwhiu 1999: 34). Later, the ‘Puao-te-Ata-Tu’ report in the late 1980s saw the ‘movement towards an indigenous model of practice based on principles of bicultural justice and dignity’ (McDonald 1998: 15).

Social work education and training has also developed as the industry has strived to become more professional and the introduction of competency and latterly the Social Workers Registration Board has propelled this forward. Fieldwork education is seen as a pivotal part of social work training.

**Te Reo Maori**

Te reo Maori is the language of Maori (Barlow 1998: 114). It is the life force by which whakapapa, tikanga, history and knowledge are passed down through the generations and the value base that guarantees the maintenance of culture. It is the link between past, present and future knowledge.

Pepeha are recited through te reo Maori as a way of connection from the past to the present at the powhiri on the first day a student comes onto the campus and are present throughout the students’ journey through the social services programme and at the whakawatea when the students finally complete their studies.

They are also used by the fieldwork educator as a way of connecting with agencies when securing placements. Whakapapa and te reo are an implicit part of the powhiri process when the student goes on placement and are also used extensively with whanau within the practice setting.

**Tikanga**

The meaning of tikanga is ‘method, plan, reason, custom, the right way of doing things’ (Marsden 2003: 66). Tikanga relates to culture, customs, practice and how things are done within an iwi in this context it is Ngapuhi, and refers to both NorthTec and the fieldwork agency.

The tikanga of NorthTec relates to the specific way students and staff are welcomed onto the campus by the powhiri process and leave through the process of whakawatea. Tikanga relates to the way things are done on campus and the expectations of how students and staff will conduct themselves while on campus or when representing North Tec.

The tikanga of the agency where the student is placed is about its processes, expectations and how things are done within that organisation. In relation to fieldwork education tikanga may refer to the way agencies select their students for placement; some may have a reasonably relaxed process while others may be more formal or rigorous. It may also relate to dress code, powhiri, karakia, waiata and their preferred models of practice.

It is, therefore, important that the fieldwork educator has some knowledge of the tikanga of the agency to assist the student make a safe and comfortable entry into the agency.

**Wairua**

‘Wairua...is the source of existent being and life’ (Marsden 2003: 47). It is the spiritual essence of a person, that uniqueness which we hold inside ourselves which is also portrayed
externally. On placement a student will observe many life situations, some of which may ‘trigger’ memories from their past. There may be a change in their emotions and wairua as they try to come to terms with this. The fieldwork educator may have an awareness of this change in wairua. Sometimes this will come through reading the daily journals, a call from the agency supervisor or from the student themselves. When this happens support needs to be given to the student by way of debriefing, supervision, referral to counselling, karakia or some kind of deeper spiritual healing which the student may seek from within their own whanau.

Ako
‘The concept of ako means both to teach and to learn and supports a relationship where both teacher and student can learn from each other’ (Walsh-Tapiata and Webster, 2004: 15). Learning is a life long process, we learn from many people in our lifetime. This is also the case in this relationship.

The teaching and learning process is a three way process between the student, the agency supervisor and the fieldwork educator. It is not just a matter of the lecturer teaching the student; I have learned many things from students and agency supervisors which have enhanced my own practice and professional development.

Similarly, while the agency supervisor is also a teacher and role model to the student in the practice setting, I think that those of us who have supervised students would agree that we have learnt from them also, especially when they have challenged us!

Aroha
There are many interpretations of the kupu aroha, the most common being ‘love, sympathy and charity’ (Barlow, 1998: 8). In this context aroha also includes the mutual respect that develops between the student, agency supervisor and fieldwork educator. It also means genuineness, care and concern, empathy and sympathy given to the student as they go on this placement journey. There can be an element of pastoral care in the role of the fieldwork education as students often have to grapple with issues in their personal lives which impact on their placement and vice versa.

Awhi
According to Pa Tait (1992) awhi denotes the qualities of support, advocacy and standing alongside. The role of the fieldwork educator is to support the student throughout the process of placement; from the decision about which field of practice they may like to enter, to securing the placement, support at their powhiri and throughout the placement, and encouraging them through the assessment process. It includes praising them on their successes and assisting them in their times of self doubt.

Tika
Tika is about truth and integrity (Tait, 1992). To me, it includes being true to myself, to my own values, beliefs and principles. This means being honest in the selection processes of students onto the social services programme and not setting students up to fail; to me it’s not just about how many seats are filled.

It’s about not compromising my own practice by setting up placements which are unsafe just to get students placed; or allowing a student to remain in an agency where bad or unsafe
practice is occurring and being responsible enough to withdraw a student from an agency or from placement if they are practising unsafely or unethically.

Tika is also about recognising boundaries – I have had to place former colleagues, some have been friends, so there is a need to remain professional and not be influenced by the past and to assess their work in a way that is fair to them and to the rest of the class.

It also means up-skilling myself to ensure I am competent at my work so that I can give the best I can to students by ongoing reading, study and training to maintain that competence.

It includes acknowledging that there is an imbalance of power between myself and the student and being honest, fair and transparent in my dealings with all stakeholders.

Tika involves me working to the Social Work Code of Ethics and ensuring my professional accountability to the Social Workers Registration Board and Aotearoa NZ Association of Social Workers through my registration and membership.

The responsibility of the student under this concept is that they recognise they are a professional student and that they adhere to the ANZASW Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, Bicultural Code of Practice and ANZASW Practice Standards. It also includes adhering to the conduct policy as written in the NorthTec Social Services Programme handbook.

**Mana**

There are many interpretations of the kūpū mana, they include ‘power, authority or prestige’ (Barlow 1998: 61). ‘Mana is what makes you what you are…It can be bestowed on you, handed down…but you ought to be what you are, what you have achieved’ (Orewa, cited in Metge 1986: 69). ‘…You know you have the mana of the tuāpuna, but over the years you have acquired mana of your own, he mana nou ake….’ (Yardley, cited in Metge 1986: 69).

Part of the fieldwork educator’s role is to ensure that the student’s mana is maintained and enhanced throughout the process of fieldwork; that they are empowered and have a feeling of self worth. ‘Within the social work training context, mana can be increased and it can be shared with others. Likewise, it can be easily lost, reduced or severely impaired’ (Ruwhiu, 2001: 60).

I remember praising a student for doing a good piece of work, and the student responding by saying his spirit was lifted. At the time the student was struggling with personal issues and was not feeling particularly good about himself – by praising him his mana was enhanced.

Sometimes a student struggles on placement and there is a realisation that they may not pass the assessment. It is essential while working through this that the student’s mana is maintained and that we can look at some other positive options together. I see mana as being woven throughout the entire process.
Supervision

Supervision for the student is provided by the social worker in the agency and also through fortnightly group supervision provided by NorthTec. If there is no suitable supervisor in the agency, supervision is provided by one of the lecturers on the programme.

Clinical supervision can include individual, tangata whenua (or kaupapa Maori supervision), cultural, peer, group and team supervision and debriefing when required. Supervision for me is about and includes support, education and administrative guidance, critical reflection including values, ethics and practice skills, accountability and challenge in a safe environment with a competent supervisor.

Tangata whenua or kaupapa Maori supervision is defined as ‘an agreed supervision relationship by Maori for Maori with the purpose of enabling the supervisee to achieve safe and accountable professional practice, cultural development and self care according to the philosophy, principles and practices derived from a Maori world view’ (Eruera 2005: 4).

I see supervision as a korowai watching over and guiding my practice.

Conclusion

I believe this model comprises all the components of working towards good practice for fieldwork education. It is a bicultural model and has within it:

- A set of values;
- A development process centred on the integration of theory and practice;
- A tripartite learning contract between the student, the agency and the fieldwork educator. It ensures safety by way of tikanga, ako, tika and supervision;
- The enhancement of the mana of the student throughout their journey;
- The provision of supervision which is educative, supportive, administrative, accountable and develops and manages self care;
- A commitment to professional practice;
- Accountability to NorthTec; the industry by way of the agencies, the Aotearoa NZ Association of Social Workers and the Social Workers Registration Board.

It maintains a process of learning and challenge which is built on support, care and development (both personal and professional for the student). It is a model which minimises risk and emphasises safety for the student, the agency, clients and the fieldwork educator.

When I now compare the first and the third kete I made, I can see there has been a whole lot of learning going on! The third kete is more finally woven than the first one, it has a definite shape, fewer holes in it and I think you can recognise that it is a kete, but there is still a lot more learning to be done.

This is our goal for those students who complete the social services programme – that they will have a good understanding of theories and models and how they are integrated into practice. They will have learnt more practice skills and be committed to best practice supervision and self care and recognise that there is still more learning to undertake.
At the end of the course when the student has successfully passed all the papers we see the dawning of a new practitioner and the beginning of a new journey – that is symbolised by the flowering of the harakeke reaching out to new horizons. However, as in all new journeys it also means more learning. Learning continues as a life long process.

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Glossary

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<td>Tikanga - custom</td>
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References


