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**DIALOGUE JOURNALS: A SUPERVISION TOOL TO ENHANCE  
REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND FAITH INTEGRATION**

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Dialogue Journals: A Supervision Tool to Enhance Reflective Practice and Faith Integration

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## **Abstract**

*Dialogue journaling is a supervision tool which has potential to transform learning within field and employment settings. Dialogue journals enhance reflective practice, critical thinking, and integration of faith in practice. The impact of dialogue journaling within a field setting will be explored through perspectives of student, field supervisor, and field director.*

Keywords: dialogue journaling, field education, reflective practice, faith in practice

## Dialogue Journals: A Supervision Tool to Enhance Reflective Practice and Faith Integration

Social work field education is intended to challenge students to apply classroom learning to practicum experience while simultaneously socializing students to the profession. This requires the student to engage in critical reflection in order to integrate classroom knowledge with field experience. The importance of field education is emphasized by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2008) refers to field education as social work's "signature pedagogy" and charges field educators with the responsibility of designing educational opportunities for students (p. 8). Thus, developing field supervision methods which promote communication and critical reflection between the student and supervisor is essential to the educational experience and professional development of social work students. Dialogue journaling is a supervision method which has potential to transform learning within field and employment settings through enhancing reflective practice, developing critical thinking skills, and providing a venue to integrate faith in practice.

Dialogue journaling is a form of interactive writing in which a student and teacher engage in written conversation on a regular basis over a designated period of time (Peyton, 2000). Traditionally the teaching strategies of dialogue and journaling provide a forum for shared learning (Bunkers, Berkland & Berkland, 2006). The experience of dialogue journaling between a field supervisor and student simplifies this forum. As a supervision tool, dialogue journaling is designed to enhance reflective practice, critical thinking, and decision making skills. Dialogue journaling also may be used to facilitate the integration of faith in practice as students have

opportunity to articulate issues related to client spirituality and explore their own faith in relationship to practice.

Good communication between the field supervisor and student becomes a vital part of the practicum experience. Thus, overcoming the communication barriers inherent in relationships of imbalanced authority is both necessary to building rapport and characteristic of good supervision (Roberts & Greene, 2002). When communication barriers are broken, the supervisor and student are freed up to engage in a dialogue of critical reflection on shared practicum experiences (Tillman, 2003). Since the frenetic pace of the social work profession does not always allow for timely, in-depth verbal conversations between student and supervisor, dialogue journaling promotes this important discussion in written format allowing for responses to be composed at a convenient time for both parties.

In this project, the process of dialogue journaling is explored and a case example presented in which a bachelor level social work student and field supervisor embark on a joint journaling effort which results in professional growth for both. The student is a senior practicum student enrolled in an accredited Social Work Program. The Program has 80 bachelor level students with approximately 25 senior practicum students each semester. The Program resides within a state university of 12,000 students. This particular student is placed in an agency for a 400 hour senior practicum experience during one semester. The field supervisor is a licensed master's level practitioner who has practiced social work for seven years and serving as a field supervisor for the first time. The agency is a law office which employs the field supervisor to assist with life care planning needs of vulnerable, elderly clientele.

The joint journaling effort is facilitated electronically through utilizing weekly log forms scheduled on the Intern Placement Tracking system (Ipt) developed by Alcea Software. The

system is set up to allow students to enter hours, activities, and reflections on a weekly log. The field supervisor is able to view the logs electronically and make comments. The field director is able to view both student and field supervisor entries.

### **Literature Review**

Grise-Owens & Crum (2012) found that reflective writing of a critical incident enhances deeper learning. This significant, deep learning occurs through the relationship between experience, reflection, and action resulting from that reflection (Knott & Scragg, 2010). For deep learning to occur, students must be able to experience what Mezirow terms “perspective transformation” as well as have the access to and opportunity for the “reflective space” necessary for deep learning (Knott & Scragg 2010, p. 15).

“Reflection involves taking the unprocessed, raw material of experience and engaging with it as a way to make sense of what has occurred” (Boud, 2001, p. 10). This ability to reflect on experiences leading to greater self-awareness is essential to the professional growth and development of social work students (Moore, Bledsoe, Perry, & Robinson, 2011). Writing enables the development of reflective practice as students have opportunity to reflect-on-action and develop the skill to reflect-in-action (Knott & Scragg, 2010).

Larkin (2010) describes a four-step process (LEDS) designed to enhance reflective experiencing in which students 1) listen by observing and focusing on select field experiences, 2) explore through the critical thinking process, 3) document by writing about the experience and process of reflection, and 4) share the reflection and learning in order to develop ethical practice. In the field experience, dialogue journaling, a form of reflective writing, has potential to incorporate this four-step process.

The reflective aspect inherent in dialogue journaling allows students to assign meaning to their learning and to identify what else they need to know. Reflective dialogue contributes to significant learning and allows social work students to continue to develop their professional selves throughout their career (Fink, 2004; Miller, Tice, & Hall, 2011). Reflective practice serves as a bridge in linking theory to informed practice wisdom (Knott & Scragg, 2010) and assists students in developing the critical thinking skills required for complex decision-making necessary for effective social work practice (Wilson, 2011).

The CSWE EPAS (2008) highlights critical thinking as one of the ten competency areas required for professional practice. Critical thinking is central to social work practice as decisions often must be made quickly, during action, and within a context of uncertainty (Miller, et al., 2011). Critical thinking is facilitated through active learning in which students engage in doing and thinking about what they are doing. Dialogue journals take into account both content and context which acknowledges critical thinking as a dynamic process (Miller, et al., 2011).

Opportunity to receive feedback in the reflective process is essential (Knott & Scragg, 2010) and contributes to the development of critical thinking and ethical practice (Larkin, 2010). In dialogue journaling, the reflection is shared and processed as the field supervisor is able to access and read each of these experiences and contribute to the learning through commenting on student reflection. The field supervisor functions as a guide for the student in “searching through uncertainty via reflection” (Neufeldt, 1999 as cited in Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011, p. 88). Peer feedback serves as validation, correction, and brings depth to understanding (Van Horn & Freed, 2008). The field supervisor not only extends this valuable feedback but also offers an opportunity for mentorship in which both student and supervisor embark on a learning journey (Wong et al., 2009). Thus, supervisory access to the student journal facilitates this professional

learning and mentoring relationship as well as enables the field supervisor to serve as a model for reflective practice.

As reported in Gutiérrez (2012), “Students who have had positive mentors are more likely to do well in school, be more productive, have stronger professional skills, be more self-confident, and have larger professional networks” (p. 1). Student feelings of competency and competence are nurtured through a positive mentoring experience (Gutiérrez, 2012).

The challenges presented in the practicum experience regularly stir feelings of doubt not only for students, but also for professionals new to a field and to a new employment setting. The importance of mentoring to professional development is well established (Tillman, 2003; Bunkers, Berkland & Berkland, 2006). As a general supervision tool, dialogue journaling can be used as a mentoring tool with new employees and clinical supervisees. Dialogue journaling promotes professional development and may increase new employee retention (Tillman, 2003). Dialogue journaling assists supervisors in assessing employee development and in making “informed leadership decisions” (Tillman, 2003, p. 228). The employee also benefits from establishing the essential habit of reflective practice.

Learning logs or journals have been found to deepen the quality of learning, increase the ability to reflect, enhance problem-solving skills, allow opportunity to explore personal constructs and understand one’s view of the world (Knott & Scragg, 2010; Boud, 2001). The following benefits have been associated with dialogue journaling specifically: facilitate learning course material and language, promote self-reflection and self-understanding, provide procedural conveniences including extended contact time and a means of expression not hindered by classroom logistics, give students the opportunity to express ideas, encourage more participation by introverted students, allow students to receive feedback on ideas and questions, and improve



the teacher-student relationship (Garmon, 2001; Peyton, 2000). As the importance of self-care for social work students is critical, reflective journaling can prompt emotional and mental well-being by allowing students a platform in field to process stressful situations (Moore, et al., 2011).

In the midst of developing a professional identity while engaged in field practice, matters of faith, family, and self-care are at the center of many students' lives (Moore, et al., 2011).

“Developing a healthy professional identity requires a high level of self-awareness and critical analysis of the ‘thoughts and intentions of the heart’ (Hebrews 4:12)” (Pooler, 2011, p. 447). For Christian students the idea of dialogue journaling is analogous to prayer journaling in which a “disciple” engages in written prayer communication with God. In the process of journaling, themes emerge between the practice of social work and spiritual self-care (Moore, et al., 2011). The journaling of challenges and prayers enables the student to reflect on God's leading in life. Through reflection, students' awareness of their purpose as a social worker is increased (Larkin, 2010). Larkin (2010) proposes a curricular module for inclusion in field education which supports reflection and the development of the professional self, including the facet of spirituality. Dialogue journaling is another method which can be infused within the field curriculum to support this spiritual development.

Dialoguing journaling can assist in creating a learning environment that invites the transformative learning so essential to spiritual development and faith integration (Freeman, 2007). Social work students often start out in the profession “compelled by their spiritual yearning” (Freeman, 2007, 285). However, as Freeman (2007) points out, “our educational programs often consider spirituality as irrelevant and unprofessional, and the longer people stay in the social work educational arena, the more distant they grow from their spiritual and religious roots” (p. 285). Larson and Robertson (2007) highlight the need to actively advance the

integration of spirituality and social work practice and point to the responsibility of social work education to ethically integrate spirituality and social work practice in the curriculum and in field experiences (Larson & Robertson, 2007; Hemert, 1994; Gilham, 2012). Giving “permission” for spiritual exploration within reflective logs through dialogue journaling allows the student to integrate essential faith components within their practice.

### **Project-The Process of Dialogue Journaling**

Dialogue journaling serves equally important, but distinctive, purposes for the student, field supervisor, and field director. For the student, dialogue journaling offers a venue in which to express thoughts and integrate personal views with the perspectives of others (Van Horn & Freed, 2008). For the field supervisor, dialogue journals provide a means to be “supportive, positive...and available” (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011, p. 88) and a method to assess student needs and progress. For the field director, dialogue journals give insight as to learning and support needs for both student and field supervisor.

Throughout the semester, the student in this project engaged in writing weekly reflective journal log entries. The assignment called for at least two “meaty” entries per week in which the student was required to reflect on a challenge, growing self-awareness, an ethical issue, and/or application of theory in practice. The field supervisor reviewed the log at least weekly. Per program guidelines, field supervisors are free to comment in writing on student entries and/or process entries verbally with students during their weekly supervision time. This particular field supervisor chose to comment in writing in addition to verbally processing events with the student. Thus, the student and field supervisor quickly established a dialogue through journaling which facilitated the attention of the field director and in turn, the development of this project as the rich learning potential was recognized.

In analyzing the fifteen weekly logs post-semester, the field director, field supervisor, and student individually reviewed and thematically coded the log entries. Individual coding was then compared in order to find common themes. As themes were analyzed, professional growth of both student and field supervisor could be seen. The following growth themes emerged for the student: initial self-doubt leading to greater self-awareness; overwhelmed reaction shifting to proactive application of knowledge and skills; tentative connections with personal spirituality to confident integration of faith issues within practice; natural tendencies toward a strengths-perspective and use of humor to incorporation of the field supervisor's model of passion, joy, and fun found in social work practice. The field supervisor consistently made statements offering validation and encouragement by providing immediate feedback and normalizing experiences. The field supervisor allowed the student to be human and fallible. Throughout the strengths-oriented comments, the field supervisor infused language which identified the student as part of the agency TEAM.

The below excerpts from the weekly logs demonstrate examples of these predominant themes of student growth. The professional growth in the field supervisor's skills are also evidenced as the supervisor begins with tentative comments then moves to greater comfort in utilizing appropriate self-disclosure, reference materials, and direct teaching. The log excerpts are followed by statements regarding the impact of the learning from the individual perspectives of the student, field supervisor, and field director.

### **Week 1**

With the first entry the student focused on self and own comfort level in the field agency setting.

“Today was a good day that left me with interesting insight into my own comfort levels with different people...I came to realize I am not as comfortable with men as women.”

The field supervisor, seemingly unsure of her role, seeks to establish the supervisory role, boundaries, and norms.

“Student is able to recognize her comfort zone and realize when she is uncomfortable.”

By the end of the first week, the student is able to share on a feeling level.

“I feel challenged, overwhelmed, and exhausted by the complexity of the legal aspects...”

Responding, the field supervisor opens the door to “use of self” and entries turn to speaking directly to the student in dialogue:

BREATH!!! You are what I consider to be “natural”. It is clear you have a great desire to work with and improve the lives of the individuals that we have the privilege to work with as our clients...You will do great, you already have been. Please let me know when you are feeling overwhelmed and we can adjust and regroup. Thank you for taking the leap to join us.

### **Weeks 2 and 3**

The student recognizes self-doubt, fear (Am I capable of doing this job?), and the seriousness of the profession while purposefully applying self-care strategies in response to field supervisor’s prompting.

“I always feel an overwhelming sense of self-doubt. Would I know how to appropriately and professionally resolve these situations?”

The field supervisor consistently responds to student doubts and questions while continually validating and encouraging.

“You are correct.”

“We are lucky to have you as part of the Team.”

The field supervisor also firmly establishes ethical boundaries on client respect and dignity in response to an ethical situation student observed in another agency.

“I believe in the line of work that we do there is no room for mocking, disrespecting or making clients feel as if they are ‘less’ than us.”

### **Weeks 4 through 6**

The student conveys a deepening of learning and understanding through honesty in exploring personal reactions and biases as well as recognizing the need for balance, being attuned to the client, and mirroring the field supervisor’s modeling of a strengths orientation, passion for work, and joy in the process.

“I get a real life experience with a living, breathing client, and then, (field supervisor) helps me to interpret and understand the meaning of the experience from a social work practice perspective.”

The field supervisor continues to validate and gently educate.

“I have come to learn that one of your strengths that will make you a great social worker is your courage!!! ‘Courage is being scared to death-and saddling up anyway’”.

“I may be sensing negative thinking here????...That stuff is hard...down right confusing with no clear answers.”

During Week 4, the student also reaches out to talk about spirituality and faith integration.

One of my continued prayers from my first day of college has been that God would order my steps and shine a light so bright on the path He has for me

that I can't stray from it. At this point, I'm certain our paths were meant to cross!

Although the field supervisor does not yet directly respond to the student's entry, as the student continues to infuse tidbits of spiritual conversation throughout Weeks 5 and 6, the field supervisor begins to tentatively use "spiritual" language to respond.

"I have been in this situation when I can only pray that the door will open, and they (clients) will be okay."

In Week 5, the student's growing passion for the elderly population and conviction in her career choice is evident:

I am continually amazed at the wonder of the older adults we serve...The resiliency and strength I see in this generation is inspiring...More and more, I am convinced this is the population I would like to spend the next 20 years or so of my life working with.

The field supervisor encourages the student with her reply:

"I realize I am biased, but if this is the population you decide to work with, it will be better served with you in it because of your compassion, empathy, and a great ability to connect with individuals."

### **Weeks 7 through 9**

During Week 7, the field supervisor clears the way to rich exploration of faith in practice throughout the rest of the semester while also establishing ethical boundaries and reasons why exploration of the spiritual is necessary to practice particularly within this agency which deals with end of life issues.

Faith is something that I believe is not looked at nor talked about enough in our professional realm. I would have to look up those specific boundaries as far

as supervision and student but I feel we have a pretty open relationship where you would voice your concern if I were to 'step on your toes'...It's kind of weird to me that lack of discussion around faith and prayer in our education. To be honest as a person and a social worker I have relied on both a TON to survive...To dismiss this aspect is not treating or helping our clients to the fullest of our abilities...Please review, according to our code of ethics... 1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity....

The student continues to struggle with challenges and high expectations of self in practice. In contrast to early logs in which she reacted to challenges, the student now begins to more purposefully apply theoretical concepts and frameworks as well as a spiritual lens to work through the challenge successfully.

I think part of my stress does stem from a feeling of there being so much to take in, wanting to grab onto as much of it as possible, and being at that point in the mountain you talked about that feels like it is straight up. I've come a long way in my perfectionist struggle, but it's still painful to feel like I'm performing below the level I want to...

The field supervisor responds directly to student wrestling through use of self in sharing her own experiences.

Our world is not controllable, our job throws stuff at us all the time, professors and education could rock our world on any given day...anything can come up and push against happiness...BUT ONLY IF ALLOWED. We will always have more dreams, more goals, and more to accomplish...However, if we reach our life in the end and look back and don't enjoy it and feel true happiness, was setting all those

goals worth it in the end?...as a social worker I feel that if I myself cannot find happiness, how do I expect my clients to find it?

### **Weeks 10 through 12**

The student has more moments of joy and satisfaction with work yet moments of feeling inadequate and crying for help seep in unexpectedly.

“...I felt a real sense of joy rise up in me...that feeling of happiness for two clients today felt like water to a parched soul. We need to celebrate our clients’ victories!”

“...Would I know where to begin? I’m afraid of this important stuff.”

The field supervisor normalizes the growing process.

It is your drive, fear, and ability to not only recognize the importance of what we do, but your ability to ask for direction that has brought this whole big picture into your lap. You have to have faith and hope that it will work out.

### **Weeks 13 through 15**

The student demonstrates growing confidence in the integration of theory in practice.

It really tickles me to see how we have come to a position of trust with this man (a client who initially was distrustful of services)...So what social work competencies are we talking about? Well...(student goes on to log specific examples of demonstrating CSWE EPAS Competencies 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10 in practice with this client.)

The field supervisor validates the learning and then pushes for even more depth in encouraging further assessment for this client.

Finally in Weeks 14-15, a poignant exchange occurs between student and field supervisor as they come to termination of the student-field supervisor relationship.



Field supervisor: Again I will state that I believe you were a gift from above. There are many reasons that we could list now why our paths have crossed...I have faith that with your skills, abilities and the deep desire for this population we will grow to serve many families...

Student: My time as a student has come to a close. I have a picture in my foyer that says, "When God closes one door, He opens another."

### **Discussion-The Impact of Dialogue Journaling**

#### **Student Perspective**

As a student of social work, I spent long hours in class eager for a meaningful exchange of ideas with my classmates. I knew instinctively my classmates had rich stories of overcoming challenges, suffering and heartache that informed their insights. While I understood and respected my classmates keeping their story safe, I was curious about their insights. Unfortunately, when prompted with a question by a professor, we often sat in awkward silence with our insights and vulnerabilities safely tucked away. From other experiences, this passive approach to learning via taking in a lecture seemed muted in comparison to engaged, interactive learning (Kirkpatrick & Brown, 2006). I wondered if this experience was typical or if it was the nature of my cohort that left me longing for dialogue.

At this point in my education, I had been required to keep a reflective journal in several social work classes. This is not to suggest I enjoyed the process, or that I fully understood its purpose. Generally, I understood it as a process that fosters reflective practice, brings a new depth of meaning to learning and promotes integration of theoretical knowledge with personal and practice experience which leads to increased self-awareness and professional development (Gursansky, Quinn & LeSuer, 2010; Hyams, 2010; Knott & Scragg, 2010; Ritchie, 2003).

However, I also understood journals to be yet another written assignment with a due date. Journal assignments are largely viewed by students as busy work (Hubbs & Brand, 2010; Ritchie, 2003). Myself and other students in my cohort wagered whether or not journals were read by faculty. In testing this, we submitted some sloppy writing and concluded that some faculty members gave them a closer look than others. For some educators, journaling is a space for students to freely explore new learning through writing. Other faculty members expect formal academic writing (Gursansky, Quinn & LeSuer, 2010; Hubbs & Brand, 2010). In my journal keeping, I continued to wonder about the insights of others and struggled to get outside of my own head. Perhaps this monotone prelude of reflective journals and an affinity for learning from those around me brought special significance to the dialogue journaling that evolved during my senior practicum experience.

In choosing a senior practicum agency, I prayed for a place that had good, ethical people who might enjoy a healthy exchange of ideas in the learning process. God is faithful.

The field supervisor at my practicum agency was a friendly, authentic social worker who puts the world around her at ease. However, she was also very busy. The pace of the practicum setting, meetings with clients, and managing a multiplicity of responsibilities created situations where I was bursting at the seams with questions and a desire to discuss what I was observing, but, at times, unable to ask. Hence, I looked forward to the required weekly log journaling.

As I clicked the submit button on the first entry in my reflective journal, I noticed the column titled "Field supervisor Comments." I wondered if my field supervisor would read it (and if she did, what would she think about me?) Indeed, she did read it! Moreover, she filled the column reserved for her comments with encouragement, affirmations, questions that furthered my reflection, insights from her practice experience and humor. With this, journaling became a

process of dialogue and had added greater significance to learning (Ritchie, 2003). We entered a dialogue through reflective journaling that rounded out the monotone voice of my reflective journal and encouraged me to think more critically.

### **Field Supervisor Perspective**

The role of a field supervisor is one of guidance and education, not intimidation. A good relationship has to be built first and worked on continually. Relationships are built not only on good communication and trust, but also by leveling out the power of authority to create an open, non-judgmental environment in which students are free to speak their mind so the instructor can understand their point of view and help guide them in the correct direction. By overcoming barriers inherent in this unbalanced relationship of authority, building rapport can help improve good supervision between the student and field supervisor (Roberts & Greene, 2002).

Field supervisors have the ability to create a fun learning environment to help students see book work come alive while working with clients. Dialogue journaling is a tool that can be utilized to help both the student and field supervisor increase learning opportunities and assist with time management. Journaling is an outlet to discuss our values, the way we practice, our growing self-awareness, and our personal interactions between the client, the supervisor, and the student (Billings & Kowalski, 2006). Dialogue journaling is an immediate education tool that can be effective in guiding students and reducing common self-doubt.

Dialogue journaling can help students reach the level of reflection that is needed for deeper learning if they feel safe to express themselves to their field supervisor. To promote and educate, students must be pushed beyond their own comfort zone in situations to facilitate and elicit personal reflections (Hyams, 2010). Dialogue journaling can assist the field supervisor in assessing student's need for feedback or additional guidance on how to connect the classroom

education with field work. The field supervisor's role is to guide and evaluate the student while assessing the student's growth and ability to tie practice into theory (Peleg-Oren, Macgowen, & Even-Zahav, 2007).

While working with students through dialogue journaling, the moments are clear in which additional education and guidance are needed. Themes of self-doubt, feeling overwhelmed, uncertainty, challenges, and growth can be traced and addressed when appropriate.

Dialogue journaling can be a safe place for students to express thoughts involving faith and spiritual beliefs that they may not feel comfortable exploring while sitting face to face with their supervisor. Students need to explore their own spirituality so they will feel comfortable exploring spirituality with their clients. "Clients themselves, as well as a broad body of research, tell us that spirituality is a significant dimension in health and may hold important keys in understanding healing" (Miller & Thoresen, 1999, p. 14). The NASW Code of Ethics (2008) Section 1.05 states,

social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability. (p.1)

Creating a space through dialogue journaling in which the student may openly dialogue regarding practice issues, growing personal and professional self-awareness, and faith integration leads to strong rapport and a positive mentoring experience. This process not only facilitates student development, but also has potential to deepen the supervisory experience and the field supervisor's own professional growth.

## **Field Director Perspective**

Field directors in small to moderate-sized programs have the advantage of being able to place students in a field agency and also teach senior seminar courses. The field director role is to oversee the process of student learning and assist students in integrating theory with practice. This is accomplished through reading and commenting on student logs weekly and processing experiences directly in senior seminar.

When a field supervisor and student choose to engage in the dialogue journaling process, the ability for a field director to monitor student learning is increased. The field director is able to assess student development which enables better identification of learning needs and goals to more appropriately structure the senior seminar course. In addition, by monitoring field supervisor comments, the field director can more effectively respond to needs for field supervisor training.

By participating in the dialogue process through journaling, the field director is able to engage directly in the learning process thereby enhancing the validity of assessing student competency achievement and increasing the understanding of current issues facing students, field agencies, clients, and community.

## **Conclusion**

The practicum experience is an impetus for the student to explore previous classroom learning and connect it to present field experience. During the field practicum, students become increasingly aware of the importance of demonstrating competency and developing professionally which can be overwhelming (Adolson, 1995, as cited in Skovholt, 2011). Social work students benefit from exploring new learning with a like-minded professional. Indeed,

students want a field supervisor who is easy to talk with and supportive as the student explores new learning (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011).

However, the very nature of social work itself presents challenges to open dialogue between students and instructors. Sometimes the presence of a client makes questions and discussion inappropriate. At other times, the constraints of time do not allow for discussion of shared practicum experiences (Moore et al., 2011; Ritchie, 2003). Thus, for students, it is important to have a venue to ask questions and engage in a dialogue of critical reflection on shared practicum experiences (Tillman, 2003).

Dialogue journaling is a supervision tool which has potential to transform learning within field and employment settings. Students view dialogue journals as a place to find reprieve from the overwhelming demands of balancing family, school, and faith (Moore et al., 2011). Dialogue journals promote a trust relationship between students and field supervisors. This deepening of trust and relationship in turn leads to the type of supportive environment that enables students to freely and safely explore new learning in a practicum experience (Ritchie, 2003). Engaging in critical reflective practice with a more experienced professional resolves self-doubt and assuages the overwhelming angst of students as they step boldly forward into a new profession (Tillman, 2003).

As demonstrated through literature and practice example, dialogue journals can be an effective supervision method used to enhance reflective practice, develop critical thinking skills, and create a venue to integrate faith in practice.

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