

Enhancing students' fieldwork experience through a collaborative staff-student engagement program

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What's your research question?	How can we prepare students to actively engage in fieldwork? What strategies and resources assist fieldwork/clinical supervisors to manage students who are underperforming during fieldwork placements?
Main point of your idea...	Many students struggle when they commence the fieldwork components of their courses. Fieldwork is, by nature, complex and demanding, particularly when assessment of student performance occurs at a level of intensity that students are not prepared for during campus based activities. Students often report that they have not been adequately prepared for the experiences that fieldwork will present. On the other hand, when students are struggling to perform to the required standard whilst on placement, their supervisors also report that they are not adequately equipped to manage these students. The "failure to fail" underperforming students is a well-documented phenomenon.
Importance of your idea...	There are considerable similarities in the supervision of students engaged in fieldwork across multiple disciplines. Encouraging student engagement prior to fieldwork and managing the fair and rigorous assessment of students during fieldwork are two areas that can be addressed with generic principles and tools.
What is the context?	A recent review of the health professional literature indicated gaps in two areas that impact our ability to optimise fieldwork/clinical education experiences for students. Firstly, while the student-supervisor relationship has been shown to be critical, research on how to prepare students to actively engage in these relationships is limited. Secondly, research on effective approaches for supporting, and when necessary failing, students who are performing below the expected standard is also lacking.
Does it require a methodology? If yes, what is it?	Our project utilises a mixed methods investigation into the impact of a multipronged program for students, fieldwork supervisors and academic staff involved in fieldwork. The specific research questions are: 1) How do students rate the set of guidelines developed for them?; 2) What impact did the training program for fieldwork supervisors have on their knowledge of good educational practice within fieldwork (e.g. feedback, scaffolded learning, relationship management)?, and 3) What impact does the training program for fieldwork supervisors have on supervisors' capacity to engage in highly collaborative relationships with students during fieldwork?
What (if any) are the meta issues?	
What are the implications for SoTL?	The application of a remediation process that is consistent across multiple disciplines allows for increased rigor and fairness when assessing students engaged in fieldwork. This should increase practitioner confidence in managing students who struggle, reduce appeals by students and reduce the conflict management role played by university staff.
Is there a professional practice outcome and is it applicable across disciplines?	This project aims to enhance the rigor and fairness of assessment of students engaged in fieldwork across multiple disciplines.

<p>What is your key question to or insight sought from the 'critical friends'?</p>	<p>Does this project align with the audiences' experiences in fieldwork?</p>
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