At the Heart of Social Work: Best Practice for Managing Emotion in the Technology-enhanced, Practice-based Learning Classroom

Jane Cowie and Renae Summers

Jane Cowie PhD, BSW (Hons) – University of South Australia, Whyalla Campus
Renae Summers PhD, Grad Cert Ed (Uni teaching), BSW (Hons) – Flinders University

Address for Correspondence:
jane.cowie@unisa.edu.au

ABSTRACT

In this article we argue that the ethical use of technology-enhanced, practice-based learning requires teachers to attend to the affective aspects of teaching and learning. This is important in social work education as social work is inherently emotional and we have a responsibility to prepare students for professional practice. We reflect on our experiences of teaching a subject on interviewing skills, across face-to-face and blended modes, and explore strategies for managing emotion in technology-enhanced, practice-based learning.

Keywords: *Technology-enhanced, practice-based learning; Affective learning; Teaching social work skills; Simulation; Emotion; Interviewing skills; Experiential learning*

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, practice-based learning is being enhanced by technology. This is the case both in the classroom, with practice skills being taught in purpose-built learning spaces in which technology is used to simulate realistic situations, and online, with a growing number of practice skills subjects being delivered in a blended learning mode or entirely online (Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006). At the same time, practice-based learning has been found to be emotive for both students and teachers (Askeland, 2003; Barlow & Hall, 2007; Cartney, 2006). While practice-based learning has both affective and cognitive components, teaching has predominantly focused on cognitive learning (Barlow & Hall, 2007, p. 399). We argue that teachers must attend to the affective aspects of teaching and learning (Bowen, 2014; Taxer & Frenzel, 2015, p. 79). While this argument is not new (i.e., Brown, 1971; Castillo, 1974; Hubbard, 1972) it is still relevant as the affective aspects of teaching and learning have continued to be largely ignored, potentially due to the influence of rationalism in higher education (Campbell, as cited in Barlow & Hall, 2007, pp. 399–400). The affective aspects of teaching and learning occur between students and teachers and, as has been cautioned by Phelan (2015, p. 260), it is crucial that the use of technology in teaching social work skills does not overshadow the importance of "human connection" underpinning the profession. Paying attention to the affective aspects of teaching and learning is particularly relevant in social work education as social work practice is complex, relational and requires the use of self, making it inherently emotional (Prosser, Tuckey, & Wendt, 2013, p. 319).

This article contains descriptions of, and reflections upon, our experiences of teaching using technology-enhanced, practice-based learning. The authors co-taught a second-year subject on interviewing skills in technology enhanced learning spaces known as "social work studios". In this subject, as a part of their assessment, students video-record an interview with another student, focusing on a low-key, real-life issue. While we have found that technology-enhanced, practice-based learning can be emotive for students and teachers, we argue that this is necessary as emotion is at the heart of social work and we have a responsibility to prepare students for professional practice (Gair, 2011). This article explores strategies for managing emotion in this form of learning; these include using a student-centred approach, acknowledging emotion, establishing group norms, managing group dynamics, supporting critical reflection, encouraging mindfulness and self-care and providing support. Such strategies enable students to develop the skills in emotion management, which are essential for professional practice.

Practice-based learning in social work education and affect

Experiential learning has been central to social work and welfare education for decades (Washburn & Zhou, 2018, p. 2). Experiential learning focuses on "learning by doing" (Dewey, 1913). Practice-based learning is a form of experiential learning (University of South Australia, n.d.), focussing on preparing students for professional practice (Higgs, 2012). Practice-based learning emphasises the application of theory to practice (University of South Australia, n.d.) and the development and demonstration of professional "capabilities" (Higgs, 2012, p. 4) and skills. Practice-based learning is often "situated" in the workplace (Hodge et al., 2011; Rovio-Johansson, 2018), for example, during field education place-

ments; however, it can also involve simulating a work environment to enable students to develop skills for professional practice (University of South Australia, n.d.). Washburn and Zhou (2018, p. 2) note that "simulations can be simple, such as peer-to-peer role playing in the classroom, or quite complex, such as standard patient simulations using actors to portray clients in a specific practice context." Simulations offer students, both in the classroom and online, opportunities to develop essential practice skills (Washburn & Zhou, 2018, p. 2). We are focusing on practice-based learning rather than simulation-based learning in this article as, although the concepts overlap, simulation-based learning "utilizes actors portraying simulated clients in scenarios designed to emulate social work practice" (Kourgiantakis, Sewell, Hu, Logan, & Bogo, 2019, p. 2) and the use of actors was not considered in the subject we are discussing here. Additionally, the importance of practice-based learning in social work education has been recognised at both national and international levels (Campbell, 2012; Cartney, 2006; Harawood, Parmanand, & Wilde, 2011).

Increasingly, practice-based learning is enhanced by technology. Technology-enhanced learning has been defined as "any learning that occurs through the application of electronic communications and computer-based educational technology, combined with pedagogical principles and practices that are applicable to and tailored for this purpose" (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, 2017, p. 1). Therefore, technology-enhanced, practice-based learning is understood here as experiential learning focused on preparing students for professional practice that utilises educational technology. For example, simulated work environments, such as interview rooms and offices, in which students practise interviewing or group work skills, may be fitted with audio- and video-recording equipment, video-conferencing facilities, one-way mirrors and microphones which allow students and staff to observe simulations and give input or feedback during and after simulations.

A further example of technology enhanced practice-based learning is provided by Ross, Lathouras, Riddell, Buchanan, and Puccio (2017, p. 76), who experimented with using "spatially immersive technologies" to simulate a real life, community-based scenario. They utilised an "immersive space"; "a large, windowless room with minimal furniture, where three of the four walls could display projected images, videos, text and other context-creating materials" (Ross et al., 2017, p. 81), which facilitated both cognitive and affective engagement. The space was also used for "communication with other real people in real time", including a community leader, and students experienced "acting on the world" (Ross et al., 2017, p. 81).

Simulations are used in both face-to-face and online teaching (Ross et al., 2017, p. 80). Goldingay and Land (2014, p. 59) used "small-group formative peer- and self-assessment" in teaching a pre-placement subject online. Students "posted three videos of their own role-play practice onto their group site to gain feedback from the other members of their group" (Goldingay & Land 2014, p. 61).

The use of digital storytelling in practice-based learning is also increasing (Crisp, 2018; Goldingay, Epstein, & Taylor, 2018; Hafford-Letchfield, Dayananda, & Collins, 2018; Vicary, Copperman, & Higgs, 2018). Digital storytelling places a "strong emphasis on… first-person narrative" (Hafford-Letchfield et al., 2018, p. 805). Hafford-Letchfield et al.

(2018, p. 805) state that "the use of multimedia such as photographs, video, animation, sound, music or text", which are often utilised in digital storytelling, has been "shown to be effective in health and social care education." Goldingay et al. (2018, p. 790) reported using digital storytelling in creating an online case study: a "form of practice simulation". The case study was "based around a fictitious service user" (Crisp, 2018, p. 724). In addition, Hafford-Letchfield et al. (2018) utilised digital storytelling in an interprofessional practice subject: "students created digital stories as a part of their assessment" (p. 804).

In order to discuss the affective aspects of this kind of learning, an understanding of affect is required. While the theoretical concept of affect is contested, it is understood here as the experience or expression of emotion (Burton, Westen, & Kowalski, 2012, p. 401) which occurs "between human beings" (Massumias, cited in Prosser, Tuckey, & Wendt, 2013, pp. 323–324). The experience or expression of emotion relies on cognition; therefore, affect is more than our emotions and also relates to our thoughts and values (King & Sawyer, 2013).

The affective aspects of practice-based learning, and teaching and learning more generally, have not been adequately researched (Goldingay & Land, 2014). While there has been some recent research on emotion in teaching and learning (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015), this has mostly focused on primary and high school education, rather than on higher education (Bowen, 2014). In addition, this work has primarily focused on the experience or expression of emotion by teachers (King & Sawyer, 2013; Taxer & Frenzel, 2015, p. 79). Only a handful of studies have considered the expression of emotion by students or the interactions between teachers and students in social work education (Askeland, 2003; Barlow & Hall, 2007; Cartney, 2006; Goldingay & Land, 2014; Harrawood, Paramanand, & Wilde, 2011; Oehlers & Shortland-Jones, 2016).

The lack of research in this area may be because "the affective nature of experiential education" is "potentially inconsistent" with "the rationalist nature of most Western educational methods" (Campbell, as cited in Barlow & Hall, 2007, pp. 399–400). However, due to the silence on this topic, "academic programs often neglect to support students with the affective aspects of learning" (Campbell, as cited in Barlow & Hall 2007, pp. 399–400). Instead, cognitive and skill development are emphasised (Barlow & Hall, 2007, p. 399).

Teaching interviewing skills

Interviews are an essential tool in social work practice (Kadushin & Kadushin, 1997, p. 3). A well-conducted interview allows us to gain an understanding of the client's situation and facilitates the identification of core issues, client goals and strategies for achieving them. Learning about the skills required to interview people is important. However, in order to competently and confidently apply these skills in practice, students must have the opportunity to develop them as a part of their education and training (Askeland, 2003; Cartney, 2006).

The authors co-taught a large, second-year subject on interviewing skills. The subject is offered both internally and externally. The internal offering is taught across a metropolitan campus and two regional campuses. Blended learning has been implemented in the internal offering, which includes a combination of face-to-face teaching and online activities.

Teaching and learning activities include weekly online lectures and face-to-face workshops in the social work studios, in which students practise and develop their interviewing skills. The social work studios are further described below.

In line with the requirements of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (AASW, 2015), students enrolled externally participate in a compulsory two-day workshop; hence, the external offering is also taught in a blended modality. Teaching and learning activities in the external offering also include weekly online lectures and online activities, which help students to prepare and practise prior to the two-day workshop and assessment.

The social work studios were purpose-built in 2011 to bridge a gap between theory and practice that was identified by students, who were seeking more "real life" experiences throughout their degree (Campbell, 2012). The studios enable students to practise their skills in a simulated work environment. Each studio consists of one or two small interview rooms which adjoin a classroom. The interview rooms and classrooms are fitted with audio- and video-recording equipment and are joined by one-way mirrors and microphones, which allow observation and feedback during teaching and learning activities. Videos can also be reviewed in the classroom using audio-visual equipment. A small computer laboratory adjoins the studios which can also be used by students to review videos.

In the subject we are discussing here, as a part of their assessment, students conduct a 15-minute interview with another student, focusing on a low-key, real-life issue personally experienced by the interviewee. The use of personal experiences is further discussed below. The interview is video-recorded. Students also undertake a critical reflection on the interview. The interview and critical reflection are equally weighted. Similar models and methods of assessment are employed in other countries (Cartney, 2006).

The significance of experiential learning in developing interviewing skills

This model is congruent with Knowles' (1984) theory of andragogy which stipulates that adult education must incorporate several features in order to effectively engage learners; these include articulating the relevance of learning, experiential learning, problem-solving and the learning being of "immediate value" to the student. Culatta (2013) suggests that methods such as simulations, role plays, case studies and self-reflective activities are effective in achieving the above. As highlighted by Campbell (2012, p. 775), "when students are exposed to real or realistic situations their learning is more effective".

Applying knowledge to practice enhances student learning and results in a rich and holistic understanding as opposed to a more superficial understanding gained from simply restating learnt facts (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Although slightly more controversial, the use of low-key, real-life issues has been identified as being more beneficial than conducting role plays with other students (Askeland, 2003, p. 366). According to Askeland (2003), the use of real-life experiences assists students to respond genuinely and empathically and increases their agency which, in turn, enhances their motivation to learn and consequent interest in the topic. Additionally, it enables students to gain a deeper understanding of the content being taught, which results in greater knowledge retention (Felder & Brent, as cited in Roberts & Smith, 2002).

Interviewing each other using low key, real-life issues requires students to think critically and aligns with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory. For example, students are immersing themselves in the experience of practising their interviewing skills, which is described by Kolb (1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005) as having a "concrete experience". Students also engage in "reflective observation" (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005) by critically reflecting upon their video-recorded interviews, to identify and discuss strengths and areas for improvement. This also encourages learning at the "abstract conceptualisation" level (Kolb, 1984) as students are required to critique their work according to relevant theory. This then engages the student in the "active experimentation" level of Kolb's (1984) theory, as they identify ways to improve their practice, leading to experimentation.

When learning interviewing skills, it is important that students have the opportunity to practise conducting interviews. There is a distinction between knowing *theoretically* how to conduct an interview and actually *doing* it (Askeland, 2003; Cartney, 2006). This gap between the theoretical knowledge taught at university and the "real-world competencies" required for practice has also been identified in the literature (Llewellyn & Frame, 2013). Practising interviewing skills with peers provides students with hands-on experience in applying their knowledge of the interview process and social work theories to practice (Askeland, 2003). It provides them with invaluable practice experience and the opportunity for self-reflection as well as tutor and peer feedback on their skills (Cartney, 2006, p. 829), which then increases their competence and confidence in their ability to conduct a human service interview (Askeland, 2003). Video-recorded interviews are an effective method of learning and assessing communication skills, with students, teachers and researchers reporting the benefit of students' practising their skills and observing and critiquing video-recorded interviews (Cartney, 2006, p. 829).

It must be acknowledged that conducting an interview in a simulated and technology-enhanced environment can seem artificial. As highlighted by Cartney (2006, pp. 837–838), "there is not a 'perfect fit' between the skills laboratory and the world of practice". Nonetheless, this method of teaching and learning is "closer to the real thing than sitting down [and] writing a [response to a] case study" (Cartney, 2006, pp. 837–838). This argument is strengthened by Harrawood et al. (2011, p. 203) who draw attention to the importance of students developing empathic understanding and confidence in their interviewing skills, both of which increase through practice-based learning. This is imperative as essential, interpersonal communication skills and qualities such as body language, tone of voice, facial expressions and empathy are vital components of communication that are not easily developed or assessed in more traditional assessment methods such as essays (Cartney, 2006, p. 830).

Student emotion in learning interviewing skills

Through our teaching, we have found that students experience a range of emotions when practising interviewing, particularly when they are being observed by others or video-recorded for assessment purposes. Other authors (Askeland 2003; Cartney 2006; Harrawood et al., 2011) also report this to be the case, although Harrawood et al. (2011, p. 198) note that the "literature does not identify the range of emotion experienced by students."

When in the interviewer role, it is not uncommon for students to feel overwhelmed and anxious. This is as a result of multiple factors including a sense of responsibility to do no harm and to care for their peers; a perception of being underprepared or incompetent; and fears about being video-recorded. Hafford-Letchfield, Dayananda, & Collins (2018, pp. 808–809) note that the use of technology can be anxiety provoking.

Practising their interviewing skills in class is, for many students, their first exposure to the reality of social work and the emotions and sense of responsibility that accompany professional practice. Furthermore, although students are strictly instructed to discuss low-key topics only, being genuinely listened to can lead to further self-disclosure than originally intended. This can bring up current or previous personal experiences of trauma and pain or intense emotions in response to their peers' lived experiences. Although the use of real-life situations to practise in the classroom could be perceived as risky, Askeland (2003) puts forward a strong case for this model of learning stating:

> Social workers deal with users and their own feelings all the time… If students do not learn during their professional training to open up their own feelings, to set their own limits for self-disclosure, and to contain feelings from others, this might limit their competence when working with people. An educational setting should be a safe framework for testing oneself out. (p. 376)

Students' first exposure to the realities of practice often occurs during field education (Campbell, 2012). Practice-based learning prepares students for their first placement by exposing them to some of the emotions that accompany social work practice. In their research on Canadian social work students' experiences of field education, Barlow and Hall (2007, p. 399) found that students experienced "intense emotionality". Rompf et al. (as cited in Barlow & Hall, 2007, p. 400) likewise found that students experienced high levels of anxiety in preparing for field education. Students reported worrying about their competency and experienced "feelings of inadequacy" due to a "lack of experience" (Barlow & Hall, 2007, p. 402). They reported having strong emotional reactions to clients' stories, either because they were reminded of their own traumatic experiences or because they had not been exposed to such experiences previously (Barlow & Hall, 2007, pp. 402–403). Therefore, we argue that it is essential that social work students are provided with opportunities for learning how to manage their own and others' emotions in a safe environment prior to undertaking their first field education placement (Askeland, 2003; Hafford-Letchfield et al., 2018). Similarly, Goldingay et al. (2018, p. 790) found that practice simulation utilising an online case study "meant students developed ways to self-manage and reflect on their emotional reactions to confronting and overwhelming situations without harming real clients."

In our experience, and as also reported by Harrawood et al. (2011), although student anxiety and fear was high during their first experience in the role of interviewer, their fear decreased and confidence grew throughout the semester. In the subject we are discussing here, external students, in particular, are often anxious at the beginning of the two-day workshop; however, their competence and confidence grows exponentially over the two days.

Students also described feeling comforted by the fact that they were practising their skills with peers (Harrawood et al., 2011). Hafford-Letchfield et al. (2018, p. 809) comment that learning a new skill "seemed to stimulate increased expressions of peer support". Whilst there is a level of discomfort that accompanies this method of teaching and learning, and it can be confronting and anxiety provoking (Askeland, 2003; Cartney, 2006, p. 837), these emotions also enhance student attention and motivation and create "valuable learning experiences" (Bowen, 2014; Harrawood et al., 2011, p. 203). However, due to the emotional component of this type of learning, it requires careful scaffolding across subjects (Bowen, 2014).

The importance of emotion in learning is not a new concept, as is evident in early writings on confluent learning theory such as Brown (1971), Hubbard (1972) and Castillo (1974). Confluent learning theory initially targeted primary school education but has since been applied to a range of learning and higher education environments (i.e., Loon & Nichol, 2015; Misch & Peloquin, 2005; Ward & Shortt, 2012). In the words of Brown (1971), confluent learning is a "philosophy and a process of teaching and learning in which the affective domain and the cognitive domain flow together, like two streams merging into one river". Confluent education theory draws attention to the need for education to incorporate both the "cognitive and affective domains" and focusses on the development of both "emotional abilities" and "intellectual abilities" simultaneously (Castillo, 1974, p. viii). This has been identified as a valuable tool in the development and expression of empathy and self-awareness (Misch & Peloquin, 2005). Given the nature of our profession and the necessity of empathy and self-awareness, the deliberate integration of affective and cognitive learning in social work education is particularly important. Oehlers and Shortland-Jones (2016, p. 8) likewise argue that "emotional learning leads to a deepening of the reflective process which contributes to the development of emotionally literate social work practitioners". As stated by Oehlers and Shortland-Jones (2016, p. 10):

> It is a necessity for future social workers to have confronted, head-on, the power of potentially destabilising emotions whilst in their undergraduate courses so as to minimise risk to themselves and future clients. We must then, as educators, be mindful of how we ask students to personally reflect and consider how we can become a "safety net" should emotions arise that are previously hidden or dormant.

As highlighted by Askeland (2003), social work professionals are required to identify and manage their own emotions so that they can focus upon and assist clients without being overwhelmed by their feelings. In summary, practice-based learning can assist students to develop skills in emotional engagement and management.

Learning practice skills online

There has been extensive debate about the use of online learning in social work education (Crisp, 2018; Goldingay et al., 2018; Jones, 2014; Levin, Fulginiti, & Moore, 2018; Miles, Mensinga, & Zuchowski, 2018; Vicary, Copperman, & Higgs, 2018). In the Australian context, distance and online learning have broadened access to social work education (Crisp, 2018, p. 719), making social work education accessible to students living in regional and remote areas, as well as those excluded "by health issues or social and economic disadvantage" (Miles et al., 2018, pp. 705–706). Emerging research on online social work education

demonstrates its effectiveness as well as student satisfaction (Levin et al., 2018, p. 775; Miles et al., 2018, p. 706). At the same time, there is significant concern amongst academics about whether online social work education can "prepare social work students for the realities of practice" (Goldingay et al., 2018, p. 790; Levin et al., 2018). Levin et al. (2018, p. 775) note that "perceptions of effectiveness are lowest for practice-oriented competencies". Concerns focus on the capacity to form student–teacher relationships as well as students' capacity to develop practice skills (Smith, 2014, p. 236), in particular, "relationship-based skills" (Miles et al., 2018, p. 706; Vicary et al., 2018, p. 686).

Another consideration here is the emotional component of learning, particularly when teaching practice skills such as interviewing. There has been limited research on the emotional effects of studying social work online (Goldingay & Land, 2014). It is important to consider the social needs of online students, since online learning can be isolating (Jones, 2014, p. 227; Miles et al., 2018, p. 706; Phelan, 2015, p. 261). In short, the use of technology must not compromise relationship as this is central to the social work profession (Phelan, 2015, pp. 260–261).

Online social work education also presents many opportunities (Phelan, 2015, p. 257). Technology has expanded our options with regard to how we teach social work practice skills to students. This is improving as technology advances, with the use of online virtual worlds, realistic simulations, virtual classrooms and video-conferencing, which provide students with the opportunity to apply knowledge to practice and build their skills in an online environment (Washburn & Zhou, 2018). Affordances in technology "allow synchronous albeit virtual, face-to-face participation" (Vicary et al., 2018, p. 685). The use of digital storytelling was discussed earlier (Goldingay et al., 2018; Hafford-Letchfield et al., 2018). Digital simulations with realistic settings and interactive characters also provide students with experiential learning opportunities in the online environment (Llewellyn & Frame, 2013, p. 16).

Given the potential of technology to enhance social work education, combined with the concern amongst social work academics about online learning, particularly in teaching practice-based skills, it is not surprising that blended learning has received much attention (Ayala, 2009, pp. 281–282; Miles et al., 2018, p. 706). Blended learning "provides us instead with new options and opportunities to purposefully use and combine the best of both approaches (face-to-face and online learning) to suit particular educational goals" (Ayala, 2009, pp. 281–282). Several authors have highlighted the utility of blended learning in teaching practice-based skills, such as interviewing skills (Ayala, 2009; Jones, 2014; Miles et al., 2018; Phelan, 2015). While it is beyond the scope of this article to thoroughly engage in the debate about the use of online learning in social work education, a blended modality has been adopted in the interviewing skills subject we are discussing here, which arguably combines the affordances of technology with face-to-face teaching (Ayala, 2009) addressing concerns about the lack of student–teacher relationship (Smith, 2014) and the development of relationship-based skills in online learning (Miles et al., 2018; Vicary et al., 2018).

So far, we have discussed the role and value of technology-enhanced, practice-based learning in social work education, focussing particularly on interviewing skills. We have also

drawn attention to the numerous and varied emotions experienced by students during this learning. We have argued that the emotions experienced play a crucial role in the learning process, and also prepare students for professional social work practice, which is inherently emotional. The debate about online social work education and affordances in technology have been briefly discussed. We will now move on to focus on ways to acknowledge and manage student emotion in technology-enhanced, practice-based learning.

Attending to the affective aspects of teaching and learning

In order to attend to the affective aspects of teaching and learning, pedagogy and teaching practices must be student centred. This includes ensuring that teaching and learning activities are matched to students' learning needs and capabilities. For example, learning in the social work studios is scaffolded across the degree; in their first year, students are exposed to the studios but do not undertake assessment in this space; in the second year, students engage in the learning described in this article; and in the third year they build on this in an advanced practice subject.

A student-centred approach entails focusing on students' learning experiences (Roberts & Smith, 2002), including the emotional components of learning. In the subject we are discussing, we attend to the affective aspects of teaching and learning by regularly acknowledging common emotional responses, which helps to normalise students' feelings. This includes acknowledging that demonstrating interviewing skills can be uncomfortable and emotive. It also includes acknowledging that technology-enhanced learning can seem artificial.

Student-centred learning emphasises that teaching and learning activities must be relevant. In this subject, we take time to explain the purpose and benefit of teaching and learning activities, such as video-recording and reviewing an interview, highlighting the importance of "pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone" in order to increase skills and confidence in conducting a social work interview. We also emphasise benefits such as increased competence upon commencing field education placements.

Smith (2014, p. 239) argues that, since social work is relational, teaching practices should also "reflect this orientation". We have a responsibility to manage group dynamics, establish professional boundaries around relationships and create a "safe space" for learning (Gair, 2011). Furthermore, because of the potential risks when using real-life situations, it is imperative that students are sufficiently supported whilst developing their skills. We put a number of strategies in place to minimise the risk of emotional trauma to students in both the interviewer and interviewee roles. These include the formation of group norms; incrementally building knowledge and skills across subjects; ensuring that students select low-level topics; and an emphasis on mindfulness, self-care and reflection. Each of these strategies will be discussed in more depth below.

At the beginning of the subject, we take time to negotiate expectations or "group norms" with students. We then refer to these throughout the semester. For example, "group norms" might relate to respect, confidentiality, self-disclosure and giving constructive feedback. We facilitate this activity online for both internal and external students using a platform called Padlet. Padlet is a secure online notice board that can be embedded into websites and allows

students and teaching staff to brainstorm and share links and pictures. Each class has their own online Padlet board that only students in that class can view and contribute to. This provides a central location for students in each class to interact, contribute to and revisit group norms.

The subject is structured so that students engage in a variety of activities which incrementally build upon their knowledge, skills and confidence prior to interviewing their peers. We focus initially on creating an empathic collaborative partnership and gradually introducing each micro-skill and stage of the interview process; the provision of videos and teacher demonstrations of interviewing skills; and the use of group activities and case-study examples prior to having students interview each other. This ensures that they have sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding of certain professional standards and boundaries prior to interviewing each other.

To ensure that that students choose low-level topics for their interviews, students are asked to brainstorm appropriate topics in an early workshop activity. Students are also provided with a list of suggested topics, such as work–life balance, time management and career aspirations. It is also highlighted that the topic must be negotiated between the interviewer and interviewee, and both must be comfortable with the topic. They must then have their intended topic approved by their tutor prior to conducting their assessment. Students are also encouraged to speak to their tutor and access the student counsellors should their interview bring up strong feelings or current or past experiences.

Furthermore, we encourage the use of mindfulness and include an online five-minute mindfulness video each week. Mindfulness activities have not only been identified as assisting student counsellors to develop a therapeutic presence (McCollum & Gehart, 2010) and greater counselling self-efficacy (Greason & Cashwell, 2009), but also as enhancing self-regulation in the presence of difficult emotions (Donald, Atkins, Parker, Christie, & Ryan, 2016); developing self-compassion (Coaston & Lawrence (2019); promoting job satisfaction and preventing burnout by mediating the effects of emotional exhaustion often experienced by counsellors (Hulsheger, Alberts, Feinholdt, & Lang, 2013).

We also attend to the affective aspects of teaching and learning by supporting critical reflection, which is emphasised in both the literature on adult learning and social work education. We endeavour to make space for "mistakes" and reflective improvement, emphasising that there is no such thing as a "perfect" interview and placing value on the lessons learnt through practice. Askeland (2003, p. 372) stresses that, when facilitating practice-based learning, "time for reflection is essential to make the approach educational and not a happening, to prevent reflection from disappearing for the benefit of the emotional experience." The subject is intentionally designed to do this by incorporating peer feedback, weekly reflective journaling questions, and a critical reflection assessment.

In addition, we highlight the importance of self-care as a necessity in social work. A lecture on self-care has been included in the curriculum. We also facilitate an online activity on self-care using Padlet. The activity requires that all students post a self-care activity idea that they could do after a stressful day, in five minutes and in one hour. Students then choose

one of the activities on the board to try during that week. This activity was well received by students and again, because it was online, was equally accessible to all students regardless of their modality of study. Our role as teachers also includes providing support to students and making referrals to the student counsellors when necessary.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the ethical use of technology-enhanced, practice-based learning requires teachers to attend to the emotional components of learning. This involves taking a student-centred approach, acknowledging emotion, establishing group norms, managing group dynamics, supporting critical reflection, encouraging mindfulness and self-care and providing support. Using a range of technologies, such strategies can be creatively incorporated into courses to enable students to develop the skills in emotion management which are essential for professional practice, since social work is inherently emotional and relational.

References

Askeland, G. A. (2003). Reality-play: Experiential learning in social work training. *Social Work Education*, *22*(4), 363–373.

Australian Association of Social Workers. (2015). *Australian social work education and accreditation standards 2012 V1.4.* Retrieved from https://www.aasw.asn.au/careers-study/education-standards-accreditation

Ayala, J. (2009). Blended learning as a new approach to social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 45*(2), 277–288.

Barlow, C., & Hall, B. L. (2007). "What about feelings?": A study of emotion and tension in social work field education. *Social Work Education*, *26*(4), 399–413.

Biggs, J. B., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. London, UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Bowen, J. (2014). Emotion in the classroom: An update. *To Improve the Academy*, *33*(2), 196–219.

Brown, G. (1971). *Human teaching for human learning: An introduction to confluent education.* New York, NY: Viking Press.

Burton, L., Westen, D., & Kowalski, R. (2012). *Psychology* (3rd ed., Australian & New Zealand). Milton, QLD: Wiley.

Campbell, A. (2012). Enhancing student engagement through practice experience in social work education: The social work studio. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *31*(6), 773–784.

Cartney, P. (2006). Using video interviewing in the assessment of social work communication skills. *The British Journal of Social Work, 36*(5), 827–844.

Castillo, G. A. (1974). *Left-handed teaching: Lessons in affective education.* New York, NY: Praeger.

Coaston, S., & Lawrence, C. (2019). Integrating self-compassion across the counsellor education curriculum. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, *14*(3), 292–305.

Crisp, B. (2018). From distance to online education: Two decades of remaining responsive by one university social work programme. *Social Work Education, 37*(6), 718–730.

Culatta, R. (2013). Andragogy (Malcolm Knowles). Retrieved from http://www.instructionaldesign.org/theories/andragogy.html

Dewey, J. (1913). *Interest and effort in education.* Boston, NY: Houghton Mifflin,

Donald, J. N., Atkins, P. W., Parker, P. D., Christie, A. M., & Ryan, R. M. (2016). Daily stress and the benefits of mindfulness: Examining the daily and longitudinal relations between present-moment awareness and stress responses, *Journal of Research in Personality*, *65*, 30–37.

Gair, S. (2011). Creating spaces for critical reflection in social work education: Learning from a classroom-based empathy project. *Reflective Practice*, *12*(6), 791–802.

Goldingay, S., & Land, C. (2014). Emotion: The "e" in engagement in online distance education in social work, *Journal of Open, Flexible and Distance Learning, 18*(1), 58–72.

Goldingay, S., Epstein, S., & Taylor, D. (2018). Simulating social work practice online with digital storytelling: Challenges and opportunities, *Social work education,* 37(6), 790-803.

Greason, P. B., & Cashwell, C. S. (2009). Mindfulness and counselling self-efficacy: The mediating role of attention and empathy. *Counselling Education and Supervision, 49*(September), 2–20.

Hafford-Letchfield, T., Dayananda, A., & Collins, D. (2018). Digital storytelling for interprofessional collaborative practice to develop quality and service improvements. *Social Work Education, 37*(6), 804–812.

Harrawood, L. K., Parmanand, S., & Wilde, B. J. (2011). Experiencing Emotion across a semester-long family role-play and reflecting team: Implications for counselor development. *The Family Journal*, *19*(2), 198–203.

Higgs, J. (2012). Practice-based education. In J. Higgs, R. Barnett, S. Billet, M. Hutchings, & F. Trede (Eds.), *Practice-based education* (pp. 3–12). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Hodge, P., Wright, S., Barraket, J., Scott, M., Melville, R., & Richardson, S. (2011). Revisiting "how we learn" in academia: Practice-based learning exchanges in three Australian universities. *Studies in Higher Education, 36*(2), 167-183.

Hubbard, R. S. (1972). *Confluent education: Theory and practice* (Doctoral dissertation). The Claremont Graduate University, California. Available from ProQuest Dissertations Publishing No. 7226237.

Hülsheger, U. R., Alberts, H. J. E. M, Feinholdt, A., & Lang, J. W. B. (2013). Benefits of mindfulness at work: The role of mindfulness in emotion regulation, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *98*(2), 310–325.

Jones, S. J. (2014). Benefits and challenges of online education for clinical social work: three examples. *Clinical social work journal,* 43(2), 225 – 235.

Kadushin, A., & Kadushin, G. (1997). *The social work interview: A guide for human service professionals* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

King, S., & Sawyer, T. (2013). *Affective domain of teaching: University teaching and learning priority grant final report*. Adelaide, South Australia: University of South Australia.

Knowles, M. (1984). *Andragogy in action*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kolb, A., & Kolb, D. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: enhancing experiential learning in higher education, *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 4*(2), 193-212.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kourgiantakis, T., Sewell, K., Hu, R., Logan, J., & Bogo, M. (2019). Simulation in social work education: A scoping review. *Research on Social Work Practice,* 1–18. doi:10.1177/1049731519885015.

Levin, S., Fulginiti, A., & Moore, B. (2018). The perceived effectiveness of online social work education: Insights from a national survey of social work educators. *Social Work Education, 37*(6), 775–789.

Llewellyn, A., & Frame, S. (2013). Online experiential learning: Bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world competence. *Development and Learning in Organizations*, *27*(1), 16–18.

Loon, M., & Nichol, L. (2015, June). *Confluent learning: Using a design approach to develop cognitive abilities and enhance affective capacities through change management curriculum*. Item/workshop presented at 16th International Conference on Human Resource Development Research and Practice, Cork, Ireland.

McCollum, E. E., & Gehart, D. R. (2010). Using mindfulness meditation to teach beginning therapists therapeutic presence: A qualitative study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 36*(3), 347–360.

Miles, D., Mensinga, J., & Zuchowski, I. (2018). Harnessing opportunities to enhance the distance learning experience of MSW students: An appreciative inquiry process. *Social Work Education, 37*(6), 705–717.

Misch, D. A., & Peloquin, S. M. (2005). Developing empathy through confluent education. *Journal of Physical Therapy Education*, *19*(3), 41–51.

Oehlers, K., & Shortland-Jones, R. (2016). A reflection on a teaching activity with a focus on emotions conducted with first-year social work students. *Advances in Social Work & Welfare Education*, *18*(2), 8–23.

Phelan, J. E. (2015). The use of e-learning in social work education. *Social Work*, *60*(3), 257–264.

Prosser, B., Tuckey, M., & Wendt, S. (2013). Affect and the lifeworld: Conceptualising surviving and thriving in the human service professions. *Health Sociology Review: The Journal of the Health Section of the Australian Sociological Association*, *22*(3), 318–327.

Roberts, A., & Smith, K. (2002). Managing emotions in the college classroom: The cultural diversity course as an example. *Teaching Sociology*, *30*(3), 291–301.

Ross, D., Lathouras, T., Riddell, J., Buchanan, A., & Puccio, V. (2017). Exploring the value of immersive technologies and authentic scenarios to engage students in anti-oppressive praxis. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education, 19*(2), 76–92.

Rovio-Johannson, A. (2018). Experiences of practice-based learning in phenomenographic perspective. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 30*(1), 48–64.

Siebert, D. C., & Spaulding-Givens, J. (2006). Teaching clinical social work skills entirely online: A case example. *Social Work Education*, *25*(1), 78–91.

Smith, W. (2014). Relational dimensions of virtual social work education: Mentoring faculty in a web-based learning environment. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 43*(2), 236–245.

Taxer, J., & Frenzel, A. (2015). Facets of teachers' emotional lives: A quantitative investigation of teachers' genuine, faked, and hidden emotions. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 49*(1), 78–88.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. (2019). Guidance note: Technology-enhanced learning: Version 1.2. Retrieved from https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-technology-enhanced-learning

University of South Australia. (n.d.). Practice-based learning. Retrieved from https://i.unisa.edu.au/staff/teaching-innovation-unit/your-teaching/student-engagement/practice-based-learning/

Vicary, S., Copperman, J., & Higgs, A. (2018). Social work education through distance learning: The challenges and opportunities. *Social Work Education, 37*(6), 685–690.

Washburn, M., & Zhou, S. (2018). Teaching note–technology-enhanced clinical simulations: Tools for practicing clinical skills in online social work programs. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *54*(3), 554–560.

Ward, J., & Shortt, H. (2012). Evaluation in management education: A visual approach to drawing out emotion in student learning. *Management Learning*, *44*(5), 435–452.