

Evaluating Experiential Learning of Group Work Practice: Engaging Social Work Students in Community Development Activities in Senegal

by

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Résultats d'une étude menée auprès d'étudiants sénégalais en travail social revenant de stage, afin de mesurer dans quelle mesure ils ont intégré les connaissances acquises lors d'un cours sur le service social de groupe.

Results of a study with Senegalese social work students, after a field practice, in order to measure to which extent they have integrated the content of a group work course.

The fast pace of modernization that followed the independence of Sub-Saharan African countries had prompted a series of political, economic, and social changes that affected the life of most people living in these former European colonies. In fact, due to the subsequent rapid pace of urbanization and industrialization, rural populations headed to large new cities where manufacturing jobs and trading became available. This rural exodus phenomenon represented a major factor in the disruption of the cultural and social traditions of these communities, which valued community gatherings and collective activities that organized groups help carry out. In most villages, community development projects such as farming and road construction were done by groups of individuals who set up their objectives and determined the process by which they could meet their goals. This tradition of Task Groups implemented to ensure that

development activities improve community environments is being upheld by the Senegalese National School of Social Work (NSSW), which is playing an important role in educating social work students and preparing them to become agents of development skilled in initiating and implementing community development projects.

One factor that led to the emergence of the NSSW was a paradigm shift that prompted African governments to understand that foreign expertise would not meet their expectations of effectiveness in designing and implementing community development projects. These leaders realized they needed to train their own African experts who were more likely to understand the physical and social environment as well as local cultures.

Universities and professional schools were then created or restructured with new curricula to undertake this challenge. Social workers were among the first professionals who emerged due to the fact that social work had already gained professional status in Africa (Chitereka, 2009). Another factor that led to the creation of the NSSW was the fast speed of the urbanization and industrialization processes that occurred in Senegal. These phenomena exacerbated the rural exodus, housing, transportation and health problems encountered by Senegal's main cities. In order to tackle these problems and the subsequent juvenile delinquency and criminality conundrum, the government created this public school of social work.

Currently, students from more than fifteen African countries attend the NSSW although another school of social work has been created in Senegal and many more in other African countries. The curriculum includes coursework, along with field education, which the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) defines as "signature pedagogy", since it "represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioners" (CSWE, 2008). This educational methodology

Intervention, la revue de l'Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec.
Numéro 133, (2010.2) : 21-30.

requires the combination of coursework and fieldwork, which is aligned with the Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984). According to Smith (2001), experiential learning has been defined first as an education that occurs as a direct participation in the event of life, second as learning through sense experiences, and finally as “a sort of learning undertaken by students who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting” (p. 1). Smith (2001) further stated that experiential learning involves a direct encounter with the phenomena being studied and therefore is a sort of learning sponsored by an institution and might be used in training programs for professions such as social work, and teaching. Exponents of this pedagogy argue that people learn best from experience, or learning by doing. The model of experiential learning designed by Kolb (1984) is a learning cycle that includes four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Each stage has its own specificity; at the concrete experience stage, the learner carries out a particular task with intention but usually not reflecting on it as the reflection takes place at the next stage during which the learner steps back from task involvement and reviews what has been done; in field practice, this is a teaching moment for the field instructor who assesses the tasks and provides feedback for improvement. In the abstract conceptualization stage, learners interpret the events and complete tasks through the field instructor’s feedback, which allows them to understand the relationship between these events and the tasks. Their understanding of the events contributes to their successful transition to the active experimentation stage during which they apply learning behaviors in new situations.

The National School of Social Work has designed field service learning projects that complement classroom instructions. Nandan (2010) defines the concept of service learning as an instructional method used by academic disciplines to enhance students’ involvement in the community. One of the field practicums that provides students with an opportunity to get involved in their community is the “Accelerated Participatory Research

Methodology” project known in French-speaking African countries as “La Méthode Accéléérée de Recherche Participative” (MARP). This specific MARP project is implemented during the second year of instruction in a three-year social work program. It is a model of group work used for the implementation of a research methodology also named “Participatory Rural Appraisal”, which Chambers (1994) viewed as “approaches and methods that are evolving so fast that to propose one secure and final definition would be unhelpful” (p. 953). Meanwhile, it may be described as a methodology of field research carried out primarily in rural areas by groups of specialists who assess community resources and potentials, prerequisite for initiating community development projects that seek to address local residents’ needs.

In this paper, the author analyzes MARP sessions involving a cohort of 24 students who were divided into three groups of 8 members before being sent to their field placement. Each group stayed five days in the assigned village and produced one report at the end of the field practicum. For this study, these reports were evaluated to assess students’ knowledge of the practice of group work. More specifically, the reports were examined to assess the students’ experiential learning of group theory and practice; their understanding of group concepts; their knowledge of social work with group principles; and the group practice behaviors they acquired and exhibited during the field practicum. The content of each report should reflect the process and content of the group work as the authors should describe their main activities and results, including:

- conducting historical interviews to determine the history of the village and the timeline of the main events that affected the life of the villagers
- drawing the social and resource maps indicating the roads and locations of the main structures and institutions such as religious buildings, schools, stores and meeting places
- drawing the Venn and Polarization diagrams that show the interactions within and between organizations, and also the migration movements of the residents
- making a sketch of the “problem tree” by drawing a tree with a trunk representing the

major problem the village encounters, the roots being the causes of the problem, and the branches representing the consequences of the problem.

- The youths, women, and men's "pyramids of needs and priorities" reflect each group's own needs. The shape of the pyramid indicates a rank order of the urgency of those needs.

In order to collect this information, students organize and lead focus groups involving female and male villagers in the group.

BACKGROUND FOR THE CURRENT RESEARCH

Due to the nature of this study, the school and the site for field practice were both taken into consideration since the experiential learning of group work took place in both contexts. A description of each of these two contexts will contribute to a better understanding of this group field practicum methodology.

The National School of Social Work context

The explicit curriculum of the National School of Social Work includes five professional foundation core courses including research and social work with groups. The school's specific vision of group work is reflected in the admission process and in the curriculum. In fact, one important criterion for admission in the program is the candidate's prior involvement in cultural activities, sports, and social organizations. The rationale is that candidates with extensive group participation have greater potential for learning group work and being prepared for the social work profession, which "promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being" (Sewpaul & Jones, 2004). The National School of Social Work recognizes the unique value of group work, and the knowledge and skills necessary for professional practice, which requires academic preparation as well as field practicum. During the three-year program, 720 clock hours are scheduled for field practicum, including 120 hours for a MARP session.

The field practice context

For this MARP session, eight students are scheduled to stay in one Senegalese village for

the entire five days planned. A village is the lowest level of administrative residential community; it is a small cluster of houses with less than five hundred residents. Before leaving for the field, students attend an introductory MARP workshop to learn how to use various instruments needed for data collection and analysis. The objective is to provide students with the opportunity to apply the practice behaviors they acquired from their group work course as well as from their research course. More specifically, during this five-day field practice session, students use their group practice skills to carry out activities with the participation of villagers, representatives of the youths, adults and elderly, and males and females. These residents are involved in most field activities as guides, focus group participants, key informants and consultants; they make available their skills, resources, and local knowledge in particular. For this model of field research, the schedule revolves around five to eight days. This five-day timeline may seem short and unrealistic for carrying out these projects but, because the team members have received prior training and are supervised throughout by experienced faculty members, effective scheduling enables them to complete the planned tasks. Further, at the end of the five days, if additional data is needed, a few members of the team may be assigned to return to the site to collect the complementary information. Furthermore, a "thematic MARP session" focusing on one important theme that warrants a specific study, may be carried out following the initial session. In effect, it has happened that after reports were submitted to not-for-profit or governmental organizations, thematic MARP sessions were implemented to investigate health issues, water provision, or a potential conflict opposing farmers and herdsmen about land use (Report RRA, 1996).

The implementation of the MARP entails three phases. During the planning phase, the field coordinator and faculty liaisons make site visits to make contact with local authorities, village chiefs, and various organizations represented in the area to inform them about the project. An introductory training workshop is also organized. Then, after students' arrival at the site, activities related to data collection, data analysis, and discussion of findings with the stake-

holders during restitution meetings are carried out. The last phase of the MARP takes place after the students return to school. A group session is held as a debriefing activity; students and faculty members discuss their experiences, their findings, unexpected events that occurred, and the unintended consequences of their decisions. Then, each student group produces a collective report.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the reasons foreign engineers were not successful in materializing community development projects in Africa resided in the fact that either they overlooked local residents' knowledge of their environment, or dismissed their points of view and expected needs. Based on this observation, the World Bank (2001) suggested that, because local residents are stakeholders in development plans, they should be enabled to make their own appraisal, analysis, and plans. They should be consulted as experts in their area and integrated as consultants into a multi disciplinary team conducting a MARP (Dunn, 2002; The Montreal Process, 1998); ideally, a MARP group includes specialists with different backgrounds, and from various fields such as sociologists, doctors, nurses, teachers, linguists, agronomists, agricultural economists and engineers, and social workers. The World Bank (2001) considers the involvement of a multidisciplinary team as a triangulation technique, since team members use different perspectives to study the same piece of information or the same question; they use various tools for "comparing and complementing information gathered from different sources or gathered in different ways" (The Montreal Process, 1998). This multidisciplinary team evolves as a group; therefore, it requires that students be knowledgeable in relevant group models, concepts and principles. In fact, for this group model, the students are at times group members and five of them are the leaders. Each of these five leaders are appointed to run the group for a day. At other times, other students are selected as leaders to run specific focus groups involving the villagers as group members. A group implementing a MARP tends to share the same characteristics as a Social Action Group. Its members are dedicated to finding social prob-

lems affecting other people, analyzing them, and suggesting solutions as service to others. Their work ultimately makes it possible to "change policies, practices, and attitudes that are discriminatory or inhibit personal development of community residents" (Brown, 1991, p. 52). In addition, MARP group members aim at strengthening villagers' collaboration in order to enhance their participation and empowering them to work together. Democratic rules are reinforced in a MARP group through the election of a "leader of the day" whose roles are specifically defined for effectiveness. During a MARP session, students are exposed to all phases of group development; this situation offers them a context for experiential learning of the group decision-making process, leadership, power, boundaries, conflicts, and problem-solving. As such, the MARP group is more specifically structured as a task group. The attributes that Toseland and Rivas (2001) underscored regarding task groups could be stated with regard to the MARP group as the latter is also concerned with "creating new ideas, developing plans and programs, solving problems that are external to the group, and making decisions about the organizational environment" (p. 323). Scheduled meetings combined with many unplanned ones may be a source of frustration to members due to the long debates that can take place or the ineffectiveness of the leadership. For Toseland and Rivas (2001), the primary purposes of task groups are problem-solving and decision-making, which seek to keep members informed and involved, empowered, monitored and supervised for better performance. These purposes are shared with the MARP group as members are empowered to make decisions, to collect information with the instruments they deem suited to the tasks, and analyze the data under the supervision of the field coordinator or faculty liaison. For a better communication, the leader makes sure that all members have the same understanding of the assigned roles to be performed and how they should be completed. All these characteristics of the task group reflect those of a MARP group. Therefore, this experiential learning of group work in the field should be enhanced by the offered group course content. This study using data from the field reports and students'

survey responses will examine the effectiveness of these students' experiential learning of group work.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study using an exploratory design. It was authorized by the Institutional Review Board at Cleveland State University (CSU) under the project number 29061-SEC-HS. The protocol included an authorization letter from the Director of the NSSW, consent forms signed by the students before self administering the questionnaire that was handed out by the professor of group work who explained to the students the purpose of the study. The responses were anonymous as no name appeared on any document and confidentiality was ensured as students left their responses on an unattended desk. The researcher did not have any contact with the students but had a close collaboration with the professor who facilitated the data collection.

Participants and data collection

Secondary data was collected from each of the three field practicum reports. Each report was authored by the eight social work students in the group. As a result, the study sample included a total of 24 participants. Another source of secondary data was the students' responses to a survey administered by their professor of social work with groups for the purpose of evaluating his students' knowledge of the course content and the practice behaviors exhibited in the field. Specific group work concepts and principles such as group cohesion, stages of group development, leadership, participation, communication, conflicts and others have been identified in the reports as well as in survey responses at the exception of few group terms.

In each report, the group described the methodology used for the MARP session in the assigned village, the instruments they used for data collection, and their findings. The questionnaire used for the survey included questions adapted from Corey and Corey (2010) that were translated into French. The students' responses were then translated back into English for this paper. For accuracy and dependability of the translation, the researcher who translated the original English version of

Corey and Corey (2010) items was the same one who translated the answers of the students from French to English. All 24 students participated in the survey as the questionnaire was handed out to them during one class period by the professor of group work, when all students who were involved in the MARP were present. The data collection consisted of identifying concepts of group work used and/or illustrated in the reports and in the students' responses to the survey. These group concepts were then coded for match up with other related referred group concepts.

Data analysis

A content analysis of the field reports and students' responses to the questionnaire provided data on the students' experiential learning of group work. The researcher read all three reports, and all survey responses. During this long process, he kept a journal to record group concepts and their location, either in the reports and/or on the questionnaire. This is another process that reinforces the credibility and dependability of the data. The analysis included listing and then sorting all group work concepts used in the documents; then, they were organized in themes or expressions. This methodology facilitated the organization of the data into a format that could be managed in order to match constructs related to group work.

Findings

The analysis of the collected qualitative data resulted in the following findings, which provided information on the level of knowledge and types of practice behaviors these MARP participants exhibited as the outcome of the experiential learning process in which they were immersed.

Group concepts and objectives:

Various themes or expressions related to social work with groups have been identified; they were illustrated in the reports or spelled out in the students' responses to the survey. In effect, the two sources of data were complementary, as responding to the questionnaire was an opportunity to elaborate on their understanding of the concepts they used in the reports. Almost all the concepts listed, except four,

could be found in both sources; two concepts “Conflicts” and “Boundary” were explicitly used in the responses but not in the reports; whereas, “Planning” and “Communication” were identified in the reports but not in the questionnaire responses even though they were implicit in the latter.

Students agreed on the group’s main objective, which was “to assess community resources and potentials for development projects in the villages”. In the introductions of the reports, they noted that the group was set up to train students to use various instruments needed to conduct a MARP study in assigned villages.

Type of group, interactions, and membership

Responses to the question “was the group open or closed?” revealed some discrepancies in the understanding of this group characteristic; either they responded “closed group” or “open group”. Some respondents elaborating on their answers indicated that the group was closed because “no new member was accepted”. Other participants noted the “at times, the group was open because the villagers were asked to join them and were participating as full members”. To illustrate this concept, a few students cited as example the restitution session during which MARP findings were submitted to the residents who, as experts, joined the group to provide feedback confirming or affirming the study results. They reported group members and villagers interactions within the group and between groups. Some students noted the use of Bales’ Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) (Bales, 1950) instrument to assess group interaction and productivity.

Planning, leadership, and power and control

In a MARP group, all activities should be planned. Only in very extraordinary circumstances could non-scheduled activities be carried out. On the first few pages of the reports, were inserted one five-day schedule of activities and five partial schedules, one for each day. The five-day schedule was a comprehensive one; it was more general, as it only showed the day and the timing of the activities. The daily schedules were more detailed as each one indicated all the activities planned for that day, the instruments that were to be used, the site of each specific activity, the target popula-

tion, and the name of the person who would lead the members. All the activities deemed necessary and relevant to be carried out had been selected by the whole group from the list of activities discussed during the introductory workshop. As shown in the reports, leadership was shared within the group. When implementing tasks, the elected “leader of the day” was assisted by selected activity leaders whose role was to oversee how each activity was carried out. Their names were posted on an announcement board so everyone knew who should be contacted to address specific problems. Their main task was to make sure that group decisions were respected and fulfilled.

Decision-making and role distribution

Students reported that the group decision-making process was the result of dialogue and consensus; they noted that when assigning roles to group members, they discussed and privileged “volunteering” and “the skills of the members” over number count or voting. For example, leadership positions and the roles assigned to group members were determined after discussion and agreement. Some students wrote that sometimes they facilitated the decision-making process in their group by understanding and accepting other members’ ideas although they had different ideas they could suggest. They stressed that their listening skills enabled them to understand others and to improve the communication process; this attitude favored the adoption of consensual decisions.

Group norms, cohesion, and conflicts

To the question “how group norms were shaped”, the students responded that group norms were established through discussion and dialogue; they were able to reach consensus on group rules and tasks. The presence of faculty members facilitated the process. While no conflict was noted in the reports, the occurrence of conflicts was stated in the survey responses. Many students indicated they avoided conflicts by accepting other members’ ideas, not opposing them, or confronting them on issues raised. A few others indicated that there were conflicts following the use of profanities by a few members or after disrespectful attitudes shown by others. The survey showed

that group cohesion was attained through listening, understanding and acceptance of others' ideas.

Motivation to participate

Students expressed their motivation to participate in these activities and complete their field practicum not only because of a grade to be earned but mainly to master the practice behaviors expected of them at the end of the field work. Another group indicated they were motivated by their desire to raise residents' awareness of the environmental changes needed to help improve their living conditions. Others noted they were motivated to learn from the residents and were fascinated by the villagers' knowledge of the environment. This motivation helped them to fully participate in the activities when they were supposed to be playing observers' roles. In the reports as well as in the survey responses, students seemed confident about what they learnt. They acknowledged that working in groups was key to their learning, as they reported that leading group discussion gave them the opportunity to "become more aware of the villagers' knowledge of their environment, how to improve it, how they understand their own problems and what they need to do to solve their difficulties".

Stages of group development

The stage of group development of interest to most students was Tuckman's fourth stage of group development, which is "Performing". Illustrating this stage, they referred to the discussions, debates, and brainstorming that took place. They stressed the brainstorming that contributed to their understanding of the new concepts they were gathering and the analysis that followed. They also noted that most relevant information was recorded during that period where they learnt most from each other and from the villagers.

Feeling of belonging to the group

The reports were written in the first person plural "We" and "Our". The use of these illustrates the feeling of belonging to the group; due to the consequences of an "incomplete" as final grade, no student wanted to be excluded from the group for any reason. The report was the result of the work of the group. This feeling of

belonging to the group, although obvious in the report, was not captured in many survey responses.

Personal/group strengths:

Many students reported that listening skills were their most important strength. Others noted that their personal strengths resided in the high motivation they felt in accomplishing their tasks. In general, listening skills and motivation were considered as the most important strengths that contributed to their learning.

Discussions

The content analysis of the reports and survey answers revealed that students went through the four stages of Kolb's Experiential Learning process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. In fact, based on students' responses to the following question "was the group open or closed?", findings showed that there is a need to better explain these concepts to the respondents who should step back from their tasks and reflect on each of the situations to which they were exposed. This is the stage of reflective observation; students reflect on the various group models to which they were exposed so they would be able to distinguish the characteristics of open groups from those of closed groups. In effect, a closed or open group model is linked to the concept of membership in this group. In some groups the status of "student" was a requirement for membership; residents were not members, they were participating as consultants and did not meet this eligibility criterion for membership. Their participation in group activities did not upgrade their status from volunteers to members. In other groups, for example, in the focus groups that determined women's needs, criteria for membership were "being female and villager". It is important to emphasize that this characteristic of open or closed group is related to membership and eligibility criteria set before the group started its activities. Zastrow (2007) suggests that membership should be clearly defined as it is a boundary condition. When implementing MARP group activities, members may request the participation of an expert who would provide them with valuable information on their work. This expert's participation may

be meaningful but does not confer the status of group member to this person. For this MARP group, what was expected of students was different from what the villagers could contribute to the work. The students discussed the “open” or “closed” nature of the MARP group but none of them referred to its similitude with social action or task groups. This seems to reflect a gap in the students’ learning of group models.

When students complete this reflective observation, which allows them to understand the differences between the two different realities, they reach the abstract conceptualization stage where they are expected to attach a “symbolic medium” (LPR, 2010) or a construct to the phenomenon that was observed. Learners who are at this abstract conceptualization stage should be able to identify each group model and describe their differences using specific concepts associated with one or the other model. For example, when using concepts such as membership, boundary, size, termination and cohesion, they should be aware of the differences as they apply these concepts to one model or the other. Applying relevant concept to a model would show that they knew and understood the structure of the group. This ability would lead them to the final stage of the learning experience theory, which is the active experimentation as they successfully distinguish one model from the other. This stage is also illustrated through the students’ use of Bales’ Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) instrument to evaluate group members’ interactions, roles, and reactions to the atmosphere of the social situations they created. They learnt about the instrument, reflected on and understood its value, conceptualized the outcome of its use, and finally completed tasks that allowed them to actively experiment with the instrument. The relevance of the use of the Interaction Process Analysis during these created social situations is with no doubt appropriate; meanwhile how effectively the students used this instrument is questionable; the participants did not mention if their assessment findings were later used to improve their group cohesion.

The principles of electing a leader, rotating leadership, power sharing, and prior definition of the leader’s roles are all aligned with the

concepts of democracy and shared power. Researchers (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2009; Miley, O’Melia, & Dubois, 1998) indicated that these characteristics of the group may contribute to the stability, positive change, and effective functioning of the group but may also be a source of disturbance. Nowhere on the documents had respondents discussed the leaders’ styles (authoritarian, laissez-faire, democratic) which usually have an effect on the group decision-making process. By not confronting others or challenging others’ ideas when they had the opportunity to do so, by bringing up divergent ideas, some group members deemed they opted to maintain the group’s cohesion. As they avoided frustrating others, they reduced the possibility of initiating a conflict. This attitude regarding conflicts is not supported by Zastrow (2007) who stated that “Many people in our society erroneously believe that conflicts only produce negative results and should be avoided” (p. 191). For this author, people should understand that “conflicts are a natural part of any relationship within a group, and are desirable because, when handled effectively, they have a number of payoffs” (p.191). In a MARP as well as in a task group, participants are allowed to “freewheel” as they are encouraged to express all their ideas, no matter what they are. Members should not hold back on ideas that might be considered wild, repetitious, or obvious because criticism is ruled out (Toseland & Rivas, 2001). No group member should feel resentment toward another one who expressed an idea that the group found more effective than theirs because the technique of “hitchhiking” that Toseland and Rivas (2001) defined as “Combining, rearranging, and improving ideas... that have already been expressed” (p. 361) is often used. Unveiling ones’ feeling of resentment could be a source of “affective or social conflicts” (Toseland & Rivas, 2001), which are more difficult to resolve than “substantive conflicts” because they are based on emotional and interpersonal relationships when the others are based on differing opinions about ideas and what needs to be done. Instead, a member who is frustrated should consider this feeling as a source of motivation to come up with better ideas in the future. In fact, many students revealed various factors that motivated them

to complete their work. Not mentioning the passing or failing grade that could sanction their work, they stressed either “learning from the villagers and from their colleagues” when others emphasized “raising villagers’ awareness of needed changes”. These motivations reflect the desire to fulfill personal goals prerequisite for change. Many participants reported a high level of motivation to fully participate in group activities to fulfill their own needs. The group decision-making process may be so rocky at times that group disintegration may occur. However, since in a MARP group, members have the same status and belong to the same cohort, they are supposed to have the same level of knowledge. These factors should facilitate the decision-making process. In fact, Miley, O’Melia, and Dubois (1998) suggest that “Effective group decision-making takes more time, requires a significant level of group development and maturity, and depends on effective and respectful interpersonal communication among members” (p. 272). Indeed, some members did not hesitate to express their thoughts challenging other members’ suggestions; they accepted their classmates’ ideas for reaching a consensus, which was not always possible before the intervention of the faculty members who used the debates as teaching moments for knowledge building. Despite the democratic context, there was no report of decisions made through majority rule, imposed by individuals, or through averaging of opinions of individual group members (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2009). The feeling of belonging to the group expressed through the use of “We” and “Us” in the report did not appear in the survey responses. Meanwhile, the concept of group cohesion was illustrated by the students when responding to the question on the level of group cohesion.

Limitations, future research, and conclusion

The qualitative nature of this study, though relevant due to the type of data and the lack of previous study on the topic, represents a limit for this research; this qualitative nature of the data as well as the use of information provided by one single student cohort represent a limitation for this study since the findings cannot be generalized. Furthermore, the content of the school group work course is partly reflected in this set of data. Therefore, the knowledge and

learning behaviors exhibited by these students can only be considered as those of trainees who need to learn more about group work to expand their abilities to provide services in the context of groups. Despite these limitations, this study provides the National School of Social Workers and the instructors of Social Work with Group course with valuable information on the changes that need to be initiated to raise the level of knowledge on group work and to improve students’ learning behaviors in order to prepare them to become accomplished professional group workers. Further, future research will address these limitations in order to generate generalizable findings either by expanding the sample size, including a larger number of data sources, or replicating the study using a large number of social work schools or student cohorts. A subsequent research paper will address the students’ findings regarding the villagers’ potentials, and the residents’ needs.

Descripteurs :

Apprentissage expérientiel - Sénégal // Service social des groupes - Étude et enseignement - Sénégal // Développement communautaire - Sénégal // Service social - Étude et enseignement - Sénégal // Recherche sur le terrain (Méthode d’enseignement) - Sénégal Sénégal // École nationale des travailleurs sociaux spécialisés (ENTSS) - Sénégal
 Experiential learning - Senegal // Social group work - Study and teaching - Senegal // Community development - Senegal // Social work - Study and teaching - Senegal // Fieldwork (Educational method) - Senegal

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