Process Recording:
A Means for Conceptualizing
and Evaluating Practice

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ABSTRACT. Despite the wide array of advances in recording technology, process recording remains an effective means for enabling students to conceptualize and evaluate their practice and for field instructors to track student progress toward educational goals. This article discusses process recording as both a *product* and a *process* and highlights its enduring importance in social work education as a learning and teaching tool. Building upon previous models, an updated structured outline for recording is offered which goes beyond more familiar traditional formulations to emphasize both the student's conceptualization of practice and the evaluation of student performance throughout the educational process. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678. E-mail address: <getinfo@haworthpressinc.com> Website: <http://www.haworthpressinc.com>]*

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Recording, in general, is a seriously argued issue in social work. Process recording prompts greater controversy and criticism. For social workers this familiar term is likely to elicit a variety of reactions. Most social workers will cringe at the recollection of the hours spent in their student years, laboring over *verbatim* transcripts of their work with clients. Many field instructors will sigh when they think of the student process recordings sitting on their desk, awaiting their atten-

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tive reading and comment. And, many social workers will nod knowingly as they recall the insights and professional growth that resulted from their use of this learning tool.

Although it may seem "old fashioned," process recording develops in students a means to conceptualize their practice with clients as well as their application of theory through what Neuman and Friedman (1997) refer to as the "3 Rs" of process recording: recall, writing, and reflection. As such it can be instrumental in helping students develop into professional social workers (Neuman & Friedman, 1997). Equally crucial is the utilization of process recording for assisting students in the ongoing evaluation of their practice, promoting a "scientific stance" (Bloom & Fischer, 1995). Such recording also facilitates the tracking and assessment of students' performance and professional development by field instructors.

This article presents the history, function, and methods of process recording and celebrates its abiding place in social work education. In a climate of increased public accountability, managed care, and briefer forms of treatment, when pressure is exerted for abbreviated and quicker forms of recording, the contribution of this valuable tool for learning may go by the wayside. More importantly, this article offers an updated structured outline for recording, analyzing, and evaluating contacts with clients, and provides guidelines for its utilization.

One significant impetus for developing this proposed structured outline is the ongoing criticism and critique of process recording (Neuman & Friedman, 1997) with no commensurate revision in its format. In fact, in a recent survey, conducted by the authors, of students' reactions to the field work experience, several students highlighted what they considered to be the central importance of process recording in their supervision as well as in their overall graduate education. They suggested that they would welcome a structured outline for process recording which would have application across their learning experiences both in the field and in the classroom throughout their tenure in school.

WHY PROCESS RECORDING?

Process recording is a special type of recording. Its form and function derive from a specifically educational purpose. It intended principally to enhance learning and to develop a knowledgeable, skilled,

and, ultimately, autonomous, professional social worker who examines his/her practice in a systematic, objective, and critical way. Because of its educational emphasis, the content, form, and structure of process recording differ necessarily from other recording frameworks, including documents normally required by agencies. It is more introspective, analytical, and interpretative.

Urbanowski and Dwyer (1988) define process recording as "the written account of the dynamic interaction that occurs during an interview or in other forms of client contact" (p.53). Graybeal and Ruff (1995) approach the task of definition by positing that process recording be thought of as a continuum of methods that record the process of the work, ranging from a written record, to audio- and videotaping, to observation. While this expanded definition is helpful in a dialogue of a range of learning and teaching styles, for the purposes of this paper, the more traditional definition of process recording as a written, although not necessarily verbatim, account is used. Within the confines of a written document, however, there are many possibilities for creative development.

Process recording, as its name reflects, is a record of the process that plays out between the worker and one or more persons. Generally these other persons are clients. Sometimes, however, they are collateral contacts such as family members or children's teachers, or they may be task group members as when a meeting is processed. They could even be students, as new field instructors may be asked to process a supervisory session during their training.

Process recording has been criticized as frustrating and difficult (Dwyer & Urbanowski, 1965); labor intensive and time consuming for both student and field instructor (Dwyer & Urbanowski, 1965; Hawthorne, 1987; Urdang, 1979); and creating fear and vulnerability in students (Urdang, 1979). The possibilities of distortion (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995) and missing repetitive observational or management errors (Goldberg, 1985) have been noted. In addition, the concern raised over thirty years ago (Dwyer & Urbanowski, 1965) that process recording fails to prepare students for the documentation demands they will face as professionals, is even more compelling in the world of managed care. Process recording does not help students develop the skills they need to do concise, summary recording (Kagle, 1995).

Although there is no empirical evidence which documents either the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of process recording, and given the criticisms and concerns, identified above, about the value and use of

process recording, why do social work educators continue to rely on this tool? For, as Urbanowski and Dwyer (1988) note, process recording, virtually unchanged, remains a central element in many students' field instruction. The answer is that, in spite of its shortcomings, practice experience and tradition point to process recording as one of the best learning and teaching tools social work educators have. It compels students to carefully listen to and concentrate on each interaction between themselves and clients and teaches them to recall what they hear and see (Urdang, 1975), thus helping them become active rather than passive observers (Goldberg, 1985). In addition, process recording promotes organized and disciplined thinking (Urbanowski & Dwyer,1988). It provides students a tool for reviewing and re-experiencing interactions as well as the opportunity to record thoughts, reactions, and analyses on the work as it unfolds. This recording and analysis stimulate learning and theory building, and foster reflection (Neuman & Friedman, 1997; Graybeal & Ruff, 1995; Papal & Schooling, 1992).

In addition to its value as a learning tool for students, process recording is an important teaching tool for field instructors. It aids field instructors in their efforts to individualize students and develop educational plans (Neuman & Friedman, 1997; Urbanowski & Dwyer, 1988). Process recording can help them identify particular techniques a student uses and provides the opportunity to review and comment on each interaction between the student and client (Wilson, 1981). Through the use of process recordings, field instructors have an opportunity to carry on a written as well as verbal dialogue with students. When recordings include annotations by the student, the field instructor is provided information about how students think and feel about the work and the client, as well as their ability to link theory and practice. Audio or videotaping may be initially threatening to beginning students, making it difficult for them to concentrate on what the client is saying because they are so concerned with what they themselves are saying. In contrast, with process recording, students feel less exposed (Wilson, 1981).

Process recording promotes genuine collaboration between the student and field instructor in identifying learning needs and expectations and tracking progress toward achievement of educational objectives. It is conceptualized as a teaching/learning instrument to mobilize the student's resources into self-directed activity determining to a significant degree the content and process of field instruction. It provides a

concrete means for measuring and documenting both client and student progress and performance in relation to goals developed by students and field instructor as well as criteria established by the school for students at a given level. It synchronizes the integration of classroom learning into field practice. Although it has limitations, it is, nevertheless, a practical and cost-effective means for overseeing student/client interaction as well as student progress toward educational goals.

New technologies (audiotape, videotape, live observation) have expanded the variety of ways to record client-social worker interactions (Graybeal and Ruff, 1995), but all have limitations and do not supplant the unique benefits of process recording. In contrast to audio and video tapes which are time consuming to review, the written recording is an efficient document which can be reviewed quickly and annotated. With the entire student-client interaction laid out in written form it is easy to pinpoint quickly specific sequences for review or comparison. The recording permits easy assessment of student learning and client progress both in the immediate exchange recorded, and over time. What both the student and field instructor write on the document is readily available for consideration and becomes part of the documented evaluation of the client's progress and the student's growth. Even though writing a record takes a great deal of the student's time, the exercise of reconsidering, reflecting, and reconstructing the exchange results in considerable learning. In addition, producing a written document demands that the student ''re-think,'' reconsider, and conceptualize the interchange in a way that neither audio or video allow. In writing a process record, the student may recognize client concerns that were missed or interventions that were off target during the actual encounter. More importantly, when used alone or in conjunction with other forms of recording (tape, video, etc.) the outline proposed herein encourages the student to reach beyond literal reporting of information, events or transactions, toward a fuller conceptualization and a more objective evaluation of the entire helping endeavor.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Early social work recording evolved from ledgers that documented resource distribution to narrative reports that explained and evaluated (Kagle, 1995). In 1928, a sociologist (Burgess, 1928) called for verbatim recording of clients' statements, which he believed would result in

objective records. These records would then be of value to researchers as well as practitioners (Kagle, 1991). While this suggestion generated considerable debate, and research never moved into a primary role, by the late 1920s, the process record format did become part of the documentation of some cases (Kagle, 1995). Kagle (1995) notes that this served two purposes: ''to monitor service delivery and to gather information for development of practice theory'' (p. 229).

The way social workers view clients has changed dramatically since earlier in this century, when clients were often considered untrustworthy as sources of information (Wilson, 1980). Today, clients are recognized as the true experts on their lives, and their experiences and perceptions are seen as critical to understanding their situations. As social work practice has changed, so has agency recording. Briefer, more goal oriented documentation has replaced the process record (Wilson, 1980). While no longer a part of agency records, process recording continued to play an important role in social work education. As other methods for examining process, such as audiotaping, videotaping, and direct observation, were introduced, that role did diminish. However, the extent and frequency of the use of these other tools, or the use of process recording itself, is not clearly documented (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995).

MODELS FOR PROCESS RECORDING

Condensed and structured written process recording, using a standardized outline, is a valuable instrument for use by the student and supervisor. Although not discussed at length in this article it can also be productively utilized by the researcher and agency administrator as well as by the classroom teacher. Process recording demonstrates students' conceptualization of their work at all stages of interaction: preparation, assessment, intervention, hypothesis testing, outcome evaluation; in whatever arena of social work they are engaged: casework, case management, family treatment, program development, committee work, advocacy, community organization, supervision, etc. While the six-part framework for process recording proposed later in this article requires time, it is time devoted as much to thinking, reflecting, and conceptualizing, as to writing. For the time spent, an array of benefits accrue not only for the student, but for the field instructor as well. Through the promotion of methodical observation,

analysis of the link between goals with strategies for change, and systematic examination of the student's role in the helping endeavor and evaluation of outcome, process recording develops a reflective practitioner (Schon, 1983).

There is little danger that the process recording outline offered in this article will straightjacket students or stereotype clients. Although the outline may be standardized and structured, uniqueness emerges from the individualized way it is utilized by students with emphasis on their own as well clients' special features and characteristics. In addition, the outline can be adapted to fit the learning needs of undergraduate and graduate students.

The model of process recording proposed in this article is adapted from three previous ones: Wilson (1980), Cohen (1988) and Urbanowski and Dwyer (1988). While each of these was originally intended for one-to-one interaction, the form described here is intended for use by students working with an array of different size and varying client systems.

Wilson (1980) offers a format for recording that was divided students' commentary into three equal columns. Although these columns could vary or be abbreviated, adhering to the general framework was considered important and was strongly encouraged. The recording appeared as follows (Wilson, p. 20):

SUPERVISORY COMMENTS	CONTENT-DIALOGUE	GUT-LEVEL FEELINGS
In this column the supervisor can make remarks right opposite the interaction or gut-level feelings that have been recorded.	Record word for word what happened during the interview, including both verbal and non-verbal communication. Be certain to include third-person participants, interruptions, and other occurrences that were not part of the planned interview.	Right opposite the dialogue, record how *you* were feeling as the activity or verbal interchange was taking place. *Do not use this column to analyze the client's reactions*-use it to identify and look at *your* feelings. Be as open and honest as you can and don't worry about having to use any special professional language-tell it as you feel it.

Cohen (1988) advanced a five step format for process recording including the following dimensions (1) Pre-engagement-the student records affective and cognitive preparation for the interview; (2) Narrative-the student describes the details of what transpired during the interview (not a verbatim reconstruction, but a summary of verbal interaction that will help the student recall the interview); (3) Assessment-the student evaluates what transpired; (4) Plans-the student describes the agreed-upon next steps; and (5) Questions-the student records any questions about the content or process of the interaction.

Urbanowski and Dwyer (1988) offer a six-part "structured" approach to process recording. This method outlines the following content: (1) Purpose of client contact-the student formulates a concise, clear and specific statement of purpose of interview or encounter bridging contact with the previous contact and reflecting the student's awareness of the particular function of the agency and the client's capacity and motivation; (2) Observations-the student describes general impressions of the physical and emotional climate of the meeting and the specific impact on the clients noting significant changes in the client's appearance or surroundings; (3) Content-the student presents a picture of the interaction between the client and the student during the planned contact and describes how the interview or activity began, discusses the responses of both client and student in relation to it, includes facts and feelings revealed by both client and students and what preparation is made for the next contact along with a statement of how the contact ended; (4) Impressions-statement of impressions based on facts with analytical thinking demonstrated as the student integrates course content and comes to better understand the interaction between him/herself and clients; (5) Worker's role-this section highlights the student's activity with clients and reflects use of social work roles, skills, and techniques along with an evaluation of effectiveness as a helping person and (6) Plan-brief statement of plans for the next contact and record thoughts about long-range goals for the client.

While these models evolved from quite different assumptions about what constitutes process recording and, therefore, what content is prioritized, their similarities are the focal point of this new proposed model. Their differences are less substantive and more formative, that is, they stress parallel content but suggest different formats for captur-

ing it. Their similarities are twofold: (1) emphasis on critical thinking and conceptualization of the interaction between students and clients rather than mere literal replay of dialogue and (2) concentration on students' awareness of themselves as they selectively employ skills and theory in their work.

PROPOSED OUTLINE

The proposed outline integrates the components of these three models, but goes beyond them. It adds the component of practice evaluation (Bloom & Fischer, 1995) as a means to increase reflection and conceptualization as well as provide a tangible means for monitoring and evaluating progress. In this respect it looks different from previous more discursive models. The ''process'' or conversation is condensed into a structured format with added attention to critical thinking and analysis. It is a flexible as well as substantive guideline for recording. It is not intended to be a rigid format. Its principal six part components can be adapted to fit the discrete and particular needs of students, clients, field instructor, school and agency. It can also be adjusted at varying junctures to emphasize specific learning and educational purposes and varying dimensions of the interaction considered. Depending upon educational need, the recording may be discursive and narrative in form, at other times it can be in columns (Neuman & Friedman, 1997; Wilson, 1980), at others some parts can be in short-hand while others are elaborated. At no time should it encourage excessive detail or extraneous information. As with most other types of recording, the process recording may document service, identify goals and needs, form a basis for referral and contiguity in service, and present a vehicle for tracking progress and for sharing information with colleagues. Its special and particular focus, however, is educational and evaluative.

The unique feature of this model is that it is both process and product oriented. It provides an instrument to focus and direct students' critical abstract thinking (process) about their interaction (process, again) with clients. In this regard it offers a framework for higher level conceptualization. It is simultaneously an outline for crisply and coherently writing a document (product) that serves as a vital learning tool and as a framework for evaluating both client and student progress. The model, furthermore, integrates previous models into a single

generic framework for an ongoing consideration of the helping process across an array of practice settings-mental health, forensics, family service, child welfare, etc. At the same time it provides a flexible outline for differential application among a range of different practice roles and methods-community organization, casework, case management, supervision, etc. As Neuman and Friedman (1997) point out, process recording "is a powerful tool for helping students mature and develop into professionals" (p. 223). It is important to keep in mind the differential use of the outline as guided by the field instructor, the student's level of knowledge and skill, the focus for the client, and the stage of the educational process.

The proposed outline provides vital feedback on what the student needs to know to enable the client to discover their own resources, to customize their interventions to help the client achieve positive outcomes, and to capitalize on what the helping process has to offer. It simultaneously provides feedback on what the field instructor needs to know to assist the student to advance in parallel directions-to help the student draw upon his or her strengths and resources and support the student in making effective use of the helping process while achieving educational goals. There are four major advantages to using this framework which are adapted from Proctor (1990): (1) it facilitates the assessment of each situation (client as well as student) and monitors changes over time; (2) it indicates whether positive or negative changes have occurred in targeted areas (problem change for clients, learning for students); (3) it assesses whether interventions are causally linked with these changes, and (4) it enables comparison of effectiveness among interventions.

The suggested 6 part outline follows. Its components are not actually discrete entities but they are presented as such for heuristic purposes. Students, with field instructors' input, may integrate the components into one narrative, or separate them out into separate headings. Six critical elements of social work practice-preparation, observation, knowledge, skills, planning, and questioning are integrated into this outline in the form of "Preparation and purpose," "Process and relevant information," "Student thoughts and analyses," "Interventions," "Next steps," and "Questions." These elements are operative at all levels of student practice, from beginning to advanced. However, as students move toward greater competence in their practice, there

should be a parallel growth in their consideration of each of these six elements.

I. Preparation and Purpose (Preparation)

This *preparation* component, capturing baseline information, should be completed prior to contact. Here students record the rationale for the contact, relevant identifying formation, key thoughts, prospective agenda, aims and plans for the contact and potential obstacles or pitfalls. It includes methods to be used, data to be obtained, preliminary assessment formulations, issues for focused attention and possible barriers to be overcome. If the case is ongoing, this section will include the current situation, issues being addressed, and any material from the last meeting with the client(s) that should be revisited. It spells out goals for both students and clients. Some guideline questions include: What are my goals for this contact? For me? For the client? Am I clear about what my role is? Is my role clear to the client(s)? What would the preferred outcome be? Do I have sufficient information and resources? What preliminary arrangements need to be made to enhance the exchange? (For example, should furniture be arranged in a particular way? Should mother and child be seen together at first? etc.)

II. Process and Relevant Information (Observation)

This component describes the ebb and flow of the contact including the verbal and non-verbal activity. It may be verbatim (the preferred form for beginning students) or a paraphrased and summarized description (appropriate for advanced students) of what occurred interpersonally during the contact, noting the responses and activity of both the student and client. This section is compiled of student *observations*. It begins with factual information such as who was present, description of the client(s), unique and unusual factors, and cultural variables. When the interaction is presented in summary form, direct quotes are included, where appropriate, to individualize and highlight significant elements. Some guideline questions are: How did the contact begin and end? Who was present? What changed during the contact? What changed since the last contact? What decisions were made? What tasks were accomplished? What was the structure and direction of the meeting?

III. Student Thoughts and Analyses (Knowledge)

This component articulates students' unspoken thoughts and reactions to clients and examines their own and clients' functioning. It involves consideration of client strengths, capacity, motivation, as well as impressions regarding the nature and quality of the helping endeavor. Assessment refinements and evaluation of the climate of the exchange are also included here. Special attention is given to the identification of significant patterns and themes that emerge. In brief, this component is a critical evaluation of the students' activity and clients' progress toward goals, drawing upon the student's *knowledge* base. Important questions include: What did I learn about myself and my knowledge and skill application? What do I need to know more about in terms of the client(s) and ways of interacting with them? What went particularly well? What was particularly difficult for me or the client(s)? If I were to do it over again what would I do differently? What are alternatives available to me? Was agreement achieved? Why? Why not?

IV. Interventions (Skills)

In this section students identify the *skills* used to reach the stated purpose, to tailor the interaction to clients' expressed and special needs. They reflect on and assess how appropriate, realistic, and effective their strategies for intervention were, with attention to goals, feedback, and contracting. Some guideline questions are: How effective was the joining of method of intervention to the needs of the client(s)? What interventions were successful? Which ones did not work? Why?

V. Next Steps (Planning)

Here students consider the direction for their work with clients in the future. The focus here is on *planning*. Where are the clients heading? What homework for myself would be helpful in better understanding and connecting with the clients? What homework would be instrumental for clients? Are concrete services needed? Collateral contacts indicated? What are the short and long range plans? Are the short and long range plans in need of revision? Are

collateral contacts indicated? With whom? How soon? How is follow-up to be handled?

VI. Questions (Questioning)

The process recording concludes with specific *questions* and issues to be addressed in supervision regarding both students' and clients' needs. These questions may address specific concerns about the client, the student, or the interaction, or may relate to application of theory and special techniques.

The process recording can be supplemented with other written material--genograms, sociograms, eco maps, etc., other supplemental and illuminating material, diagrams, graphs, charts, and other technological audiotapes, videotapes, etc. With this in mind the outline can be utilized, expanded, modified, various parts emphasized more than others to adjust it to the most appropriate ways of determining and responding to the students' assets and learning needs. A computer set-up with a simple program would dramatically shorten the time and improve the clarity of the recording.

WAYS TO USE PROCESS RECORDING

Together, the field instructor and student partialize this potentially overwhelming outline and tailor it to accommodate to the student's learning needs and stage of professional development. In other words, there is no expectation that equal attention be given to all areas, but rather, that the field instructor and student make informed judgments about which ones best address the student's learning requirements.

Although generally associated with student recording of encounters with clients, process recording can be used for a variety of purposes. In addition to recording work with individuals, families, groups, and collateral contacts, this tool can be used to examine task groups such as teams and planning committees, in order to gain a greater understanding of the dynamics of a meeting (Wilson, 1980). Recording that requires increasing assessment, self-reflection and analysis as students proceed through placement can help chart professional growth. Students can use their analysis of process to prepare for supervisory conferences by raising issues, concerns, or questions for the field instructor on the document itself.

In an age of increasing concern with accountability, agencies need to be informed about the practice of their inexperienced workers. Process recording keeps the field instructor apprised of the ongoing details of what occurs between students and clients. This is a safeguard against mishandling of cases and enables the field instructor to recognize when a student is floundering and to intervene if a situation is beyond the student's capacities (Wilson, 1980).

Faculty advisors may use process recordings as a tool to monitor the supervisory process between student and field instructor. By reviewing a student's recording after the field instructor has written comments on it, the faculty advisor is able to assess how the instructor identifies and deals with learning issues or roadblocks.

Process recording can also be used in the classroom to help students learn about practice through an examination of the details of actual practice. Naturally, to preserve confidentiality, it is made certain that all names and identifying information are disguised. When reviewed selectively in the classroom, process recording fosters an appreciation of the relevance of and application of theory. One of the authors routinely uses process recording in the clinical seminar for advanced students as a method for peer review and critical discussion. Each student brings in a process recording of an encounter with a client(s) which is read aloud and examined in depth. Without fail, common problems and pitfalls, such as students following their own agendas, emerge from the various process recordings presented. Students are able to learn from each other's struggles and feel supported because they are not alone in their own struggle. Likewise, it provides actual examples from the field for use in simulation and role play. For the classroom teacher it provides current and pertinent case material that goes beyond the textbook and comes ''alive.''

Not just a tool for student use, process recording can be useful for experienced social workers as well. Field instructors may process a supervisory session to identify patterns in the supervisory process. Experienced workers who find that they are struggling or stuck in the work with a particular client may process an encounter in a effort to identify areas of difficulty. Two eminent social work theoreticians and educators used process recording in their work. William Schwartz (personal communication, June, 1978) process recorded his own classroom interaction for self-reflection and refinement of teaching style.

Florence Hollis (1968) used the systematic study of actual records to establish her typology of treatment.

APPLICATIONS FOR EVALUATING PERFORMANCE

A major feature of this outline for recording is that it introduces genuine collaboration into the field instruction process. It makes possible individualized work and mobilizes ingenuity and energy to perform tasks. It has other advantages as well. It requires focus. It necessitates an explicit identification of goals and process. It gives guidance and cogent direction to both the student and the field instructor and provides concrete means for measuring and documenting performance. Flexible in its utilization, it lends itself to accommodation and different types of emphasis. It provides a sound basis for objectively examining and evaluating student performance and development from beginning to advanced learner and helps to remove some of the subjectivity from the evaluation process.

The proposed model for process recording provides a tool for charting student progress and development throughout the placement experience. It is expected that the beginning student will be able to address three elements of the model: "Preparation and purpose," "Process and relevant information," and "Questions" with some degree of comfort and skill. At their most basic, these three elements draw on abilities that students bring with them to the field. While initially, students may be unclear how to use these elements professionally, as the first placement experience moves along, they should demonstrate increasing ability to do so. Inability to move toward professional use of these elements is cause for concern about a student's aptitude for the field.

The other three elements of the model: "Student thoughts and analyses," "Interventions," and "Next steps," can be added to the beginning student's process recording fairly early in the year. However, these are likely to be more challenging and will not be performed at the same level as the others. As the year progresses, the expectation is that the student will move toward greater proficiency in use of knowledge, skills and planning. Difficulties with any of the elements indicate a learning need that can be highlighted during planning for the advanced year field placement. This information will help advanced

year field instructors anticipate and plan for individual student learning needs.

During the advanced year field experience, emphasis should increasingly move to use of knowledge, skills and planning. While all elements of the model may be employed throughout the practicuum, the focus will shift. For example, students may move from verbatim to summary description in the observations section. The advanced student is expected to demonstrate a well developed ability to draw upon knowledge, critical analysis, a wide range of skills, and highly individualized planning. If a student is unable to move toward more greater proficiency in these areas, the field instructor may question his or her readiness to practice autonomously with minimal supervision.

Because it is comprised of components whose mastery reflects increasing professional development, the model of process recording proposed here becomes a tool for evaluating student growth. Difficulties in any area will highlight learning needs, and inability to progress to more sophisticated use may raise questions about the student's choice of profession.

CONCLUSION

Despite the wide array of technological advances in means of recording, process recording remains an effective means for enabling students to conceptualize and evaluate their practice and for field instructors to track student progress toward educational goals. Building upon previous models, this article presents an updated structured outline for process recording which emphasizes conceptualization and evaluation of practice. This outline is flexible and can be used in conjunction with audio and video taping as well as a written process record. The outline helps students as well as field instructors to track and evaluate students' performance and professional development through use of an ongoing written record which can be accessed easily. This facilitates the process of identifying patterns and pitfalls in student development. Although social work educators who have seen this outline are uniformly enthusiastic about it, research is presently underway to assess the effectiveness of the outline for both students and field instructors.

There are a number of issues related to process recording that are

not considered in this paper and merit further attention. These include the nature and substance of the field instructor/student relationship itself and the importance of developing a safe environment for the student to expose his or her work. In addition, more empirical research needs to be done to support the practice wisdom that process recording is a valued component in field instruction as a tool to help students to conceptualize and evaluate their practice.

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