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(Eds.)

Mentoring and Social Work
Mentoring Handbook

Foreword

During the past fifteen years, Finland and the Republic of Karelia have implemented several joint projects in the social and health sector. Most of these projects have been implemented within the scope of agreements on neighbouring area cooperation signed between Finland and the Russian Federation. In Finland, these bilateral projects have been financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

This publication is one of the outputs of the project "Support to Social Work Addressing Children and Families in the Republic of Karelia" (2007–2009), which was implemented in close collaboration between the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare THL (previously STAKES) and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Karelia. The objectives of the project were to improve the well-being of children, young people and families with children and to enhance family-oriented social work and child protection in the Republic of Karelia.

The project focused on the development of early intervention methods and quality improvement for child protection. During the project, a mentoring system was developed with the Department of Social Work at Petrozavodsk State University, in order to deepen the interaction between theoretical training and practical social work. The Department of Social Work, and especially Docent Olga Zvyagina, Head of the Department, had an important role in promoting the mentoring system. Social institutions and organisations that provide workplaces where students can practise social work also played an active role in mainstreaming the mentoring system.

The Finnish experts participating in the project thought it very important to involve not only teachers or professionals in social work but also students of social work in the mentoring seminars. Students of social work actively participated in the seminars and engaged in group work with teachers and other professionals. This gave the students a good foundation to develop their professional skills further.

The mentoring training was implemented with the guidance of two Finnish experts: Dr Aini Pehkonen from the University of Kuopio, Finland; and Marjut Arola, MSc, from the Regional Council of North Karelia, Joensuu, Finland.

This Mentoring Handbook is intended to strengthen the professionalism of those working in different areas of social work and to improve the quality of social work. The Handbook supports the development of a professional environment of social work and at the same time enables both teachers and students of social work to become stronger resources in social work and in different work communities. An understanding of mentoring processes helps more experienced social workers to transfer their knowledge to those who are only starting their professional careers.

The Handbook presents the basics and models of mentoring practices in the field of social work, where mentoring as a method is used to a lesser extent than in many other fields. The Handbook contains materials produced during the project as well as a number of practical tasks that make it easier to understand the materials covered and how to use the mentoring method.

The authors hope that the Mentoring Handbook will support teachers, students and social workers in their valuable work on behalf of children, young people and families. We also hope that appreciation for social work will develop and increase in step with social workers' professional growth.

Helsinki, 8 May 2009

Anne-Marie Grouev, Project Manager
National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)

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Introduction

The project "Support to Social Work Addressing Families and Children in the Republic of Karelia", implemented during the period 2007 to 2009 became an important platform for improving the training of specialists working in the area of family-oriented social work and child protection in the Republic of Karelia.

One of the project activities was to introduce mentoring processes to the lecturers of the Department of Social Work at Petrozavodsk State University (PSU), to the representatives of different institutions providing social services, and to those providing practical training for students of social work. Alongside the university lecturers, participants included specialists in social work from different institutions in the sector of health care, social protection and social services as well as social pedagogues working at schools, children's homes and teen clubs.

When implementing the project, the seminars on mentoring were organised under the guidance of Dr Aini Pehkonen from the University of Kuopio and Marjut Arola, MSc, from the Regional Council of North Karelia. The issues discussed during the seminars focused on practical training in the social sector.

The students and specialists together actively discussed how to improve the organisation of practical work and the training given through practical work. Their sincere interest and motivation to develop the education process was a great help to us.

An important result of the project is the seminar participants' new understanding of the role played by the person leading the practical work. Another important result is the seminar participants' new insight on the nature of interaction, i.e. the roles of the mentor and the actor.

The Mentoring Handbook includes the main theoretical base of mentoring methodology. The Handbook also describes the experience of perception and application of the theoretical base of mentoring in the process of organising practical work for students specialising in social work.

We hope that the present publication will attract the attention of those interested in improving practical training for students of social work and in strengthening the link between academic theory and practice.

The lecturers at the Department of Social Work of Petrozavodsk State University (PSU) express sincere thanks to their Finnish colleagues – Project Manager Anne-Marie Grouev from the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Dr Aini Pehkonen from the University of Kuopio, and Marjut Arola, MSc, from the Regional Council of North Karelia – for the knowledge and experience obtained through the project. We also thank our Russian partners – the representatives of the Office of the Ombudsman on Child Protection in the Republic of Karelia and the specialists of different institutions of Petrozavodsk, who were the leaders of the students' practical work – for fruitful cooperation. Our special thanks go to the students specialising in social work, whose active participation is appreciated.

Petrozavodsk, Republic of Karelia, 6 June 2009

Assistant Professor Olga Zvyagina
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1 Mentoring and Mentoring Relationship

Aini Pehkonen

This chapter first discusses the concept and aims of mentoring. It then focuses on the knowledge and orientation base of mentoring and on the roles of both the mentor and the actor. Further, it is worth contemplating whether mentoring can improve social workers' well-being at work.

1.1 What is it meant by mentoring?

Task:
How do you understand mentoring?

In spoken language, it has become common for the word "mentor" to mean a trustworthy adviser, a confidant/confidante, a teacher, an educator or a good friend. The aims of mentoring are to motivate beginners for working life and to transfer and share "tacit knowledge" as well as the experience-based skills and knowledge needed in working life. (Juusela et al.2000; Juusela 2005; Miller 2002) In Greek mythology, Odysseus, the military commander and the king of Ithaca, left his son Telemachus under the care of the goddess Athena when he left for the Trojan War. Athena disguised herself in the form of a man called Mentor, who was an old friend of Odysseus. Mentor was charged with helping and guiding the young man and also with educating him for the task he received at birth. The relationship between the young man and his elder was based on the principle that a person learns skills and ways to do things directly from a person he esteems. Mentoring has been in use, whether consciously or unconsciously, throughout time when people cooperate with one another: Attitudes, knowledge and skills have been transferred from an experienced person to an inexperienced person through social interaction.

The concept of mentoring is a broad one; so, too, is its field of application. Now that the word "mentoring" has become common, the concept may have blurred. In addition, the content of the concept varies in different cultures. The mentor's general task is to provide guidance, support and feedback on the actor's career plans and personal development. Traditionally, mentoring has been an interaction relationship between two persons, but mentoring can also be implemented through group work. (Herrera et al. 2002.) In the literature (e.g. Russell & Adams 1997), mentoring is defined as an intense and developing interaction relationship between the senior (the mentor) and the less experienced junior colleague (the actor). The mentor helps an individual to become more developed in his/her work, and he/she is committed to supporting and assisting the actor's professional growth. Characteristics of the process of professional growth are *target orientation, continuity and being systematic.*

The literature (Kram 1985) makes a distinction between career mentoring and psychosocial mentoring. When the actor's progress in his/her career is defined as the basic task of mentoring (Kram & Hall 1996), mentoring includes training, supporting, protecting and bringing out the actor, as well as improving his/her visibility and giving him/her challenging tasks. Psychosocial mentoring, in turn, aims at improving the actor's sense of competence, strengthening his/her self-esteem and identity, and at developing the way the actor works. On one hand, the mentor is considered to be a teacher, an adviser and a trainer, but on the other hand, the mentor is also

a supporter of the individual's development without teaching and giving advice. Psychosocial mentoring is thus defined being close to supervision of work.

Mentoring has been used (Alred et al. 2000) in organisations for the following purposes, among others:

- orientation: new employees are familiarised with the organisation, thereby improving their adaptation to work
- support for development: useful learning from the future point of view is ensured
- career advancement: talented employees are identified and encouraged to advance their careers
- support for learning at work: know-how related to the development of tasks and skills
- support for equality: equal treatment for all is ensured
- facilitation of change: the development of new skills for those made redundant or laid off
- meeting the demands of new tasks and projects: a quick adaptation to work and staff recruitment are ensured
- realisation of a change programme: employees get a better understanding of what the change is all about.

In addition to these, mentoring is significant to the transfer of so-called *tacit knowledge,* which refers to assimilation-based learning from practical incidents. The mentor as an experienced worker transfers his/her own experience, views and know-how, or tacit knowledge, to the actor. Tacit knowledge is associated with the contexts of work and social community. The shared abstract knowledge in the work community is transformed into the individual's own tacit knowledge. Mentoring is based on the sharing and exchange of tacit knowledge from one individual to another.

Internationally, mentoring has been applied not in working life but also in science and working communities among women, among students in support of studies, in welfare for intoxicant and drug abusers, in work with ethnic minorities and in child welfare and upbringing of children and young people, among others. (DuBois & Karcher 2005; Miller 2002) Mentoring between generations is an applied version of mentoring utilised in to cooperation within child welfare. It is based on the idea that children and young people living in circumstances and situations involving risks may make benefit significantly from an advising and supportive relationship with adults other than their own parents. The most typical form of mentoring between generations is pair mentoring, in which the child or the young person works together with a specific adult committed to the work – i.e. his/her personal mentor – for a certain period of time. (Grossman1999; Jekielek et al. 2002) What is common to these applications is that they aim to create a confidential and reciprocal guidance relationship between the mentor and one receiving mentoring.

In mentoring, *planned mentoring* and *natural mentoring* can be discerned. Natural mentoring appears occasionally in people's different life situations, for example in friendships, within teaching or generally in situations where the less experienced, the more experienced and people of various ages meet. Its principles comprise the exchange of experiences, reciprocity and equality. Planned mentoring can be distinguished from many other relationships by the fact that it is a multidimensional learning and development process for both the actor and the mentor. The mentoring relationship makes it possible to take actions, and its basic purpose is to assist the actor to find his/her potential. The basic principles of mentoring are summarised in the international literature (e.g. Galbraith 1992; Lehtinen & Jokinen 1999).

In his/her activities, the mentor strives to:

- develop his/her philosophy and to assimilate the theories influencing on the background of his/her actions

- understand the uniqueness of adult learners
- eliminate external loading factors in mentoring situations wherever possible
- provide the actor with visions
- be genuine and convincing
- encourage experimentation and applications
- follow how adults experience learning
- encourage becoming independent.

The following are typical of mentoring: it's a long duration, contractility, the commitment of both the actor and the mentor, target orientation, and the fact that the mentor is more experienced than the actor. However, there may be considerable differences in the ways mentoring is carried out in practice.

An activity can be called mentoring (Murray 2001) if the following characteristics hold:
1. two people
2. have discussions in confidence
3. and aim at
4. individual development
5. and, during several meetings among themselves
6. discuss down-to-earth
7. subjects that interest the actor
8. and, in the beginning, a contract has been made between the participants
9. where also a third party (organisation) is involved a the contract
10. in which the more experienced or skilled one is the mentor and the less experienced one is the actor.

Mentoring is one of many development methods for working life. In mentoring, a person(s)/mentor is available to the individual/group and presents questions worth considering, gives feedback, shares experiences and provides new perspectives. However, it is noteworthy that mentoring also involves challenges and pressures. Mentoring may take too much time away from other duties, or the mentor may be uncomfortable if expected outcomes are not observed. Moreover, mentoring may cause envy among other employees, or the mentor may experience the relationship as too constrictive. Further, mentoring may end in disappointment and lack of trust between the mentor and the actor. (Scandura et al.1994) Although it is more common that mentoring has a positive effect, it is still wise to view mentoring critically and realistically from different angles.

1.2 Factors that influence becoming a mentor

Task:
> *Describe your own professional history.*
> *Why do you want to act as a mentor in practical teaching within social work?*
> *Which factors motivate you to the work process in question?*
> *What do you expect from the mentoring process?*
> *What should the mentor know about the actor?*

It is important for the mentor to analyse his/her own professional development, orientation basis and the theory used, as these inevitably guide the mentor's thinking and actions. In other words, a mentor's work and educational backgrounds as well as his/her life experiences influence his/her views on work and attitudes. In addition, the mentor's personal capabilities affect his/her ability to analyse the work and possible conflicts inherent in it.

There are three phases distinguished in developing into a mentor: (1) familiarising oneself with different ways of mentoring; (2) acting as a mentor, learning from experience; and (3) professional growth, which means becoming aware of and assimilating the essence of mentoring as well as values and attitudes. The mentor should have a clear view and understanding of his/her role in different arenas. Further, the mentor should have the trust of his/her organisation with regard to the actions taken. In other words, the organisation also accepts his/her saving time normally used for other work obligations to be able to act as a mentor. (Megginson & Clutterbuck 1995)

Research (e.g. Allen, Poteet & Burroughs1997) has identified seven categories describing *self-focused* reasons for becoming a mentor, i.e., the reasons motivating a person to become a mentor for others:

1. the pleasure derived when seeing the actor develop or succeed
2. the mentor's own simultaneous development and learning
3. performance of a task the mentor can be proud of
4. the desire to be able to influence others
5. receiving appreciation from others
6. being able to take time away from other duties, to be used for mentoring
7. a personal willingness to work with others.

Respectively, the following reasons have been identified by Allen, Poteet and Burroughs (1997) as the reasons for focusing on *others*:

1. the desire to transfer knowledge to others
2. the desire to help develop a qualified staff
3. helping others is a common benefit
4. the desire to help others to succeed
5. the desire to assist minorities or women in their career advancement
6. gaining benefits for the organisation.

The actor's characteristics also affect the mentor's decision to start out on the challenging work process. The characteristics of the actor involved here are, among others (Allen, Poteet & Burroughs 1997):

- similarity between the actor and mentor
- the actor's personal traits, such as warmth, honesty, self-confidence, reliability, calmness, flexibility, a sense of humour
- the actor's motivating factors, such as a high work ethic, initiative, achievement orientation, an energetic nature and putting one's heart into the task given
- the actor's competence: capability, good communication skills, supplementing the mentor's fields of know-how
- the actor's need: a sense of being able to help
- the actor's willingness to learn, such as his/her willingness/openness to learn, as well as willingness/openness to receive constructive feedback.

The characteristics that seemed essential to motivate a person to become a mentor were positivism, unselfishness and self-confidence. Characteristics connected with the *willingness* to mentor others were work experience, job satisfaction, communication skills and role conflicts, and respectively, communication skills and role conflicts were connected with the *ability* to mentor another person. (Pullins et al. 1996) Persons who become mentors are often committed, approachable, empathetic and helpful by nature. In addition, they are aware of being a role model to the actor.

The mentor needs skills of active listening, empathy, negotiation, problem-solving, decision-making, reflection, giving constructive feedback and communication (verbal and non-verbal). Aside from professional know-how, other skills required of the mentor are guidance skills (knowledge of human nature, empathy, job training skills), the ability to develop (supporting individual growth, developing one's own field and working life) as well as know-how related to the work community (team work and network skills). Good interaction calls for social contact and mutual trust. It means interaction through which mutual trust and the expression of trust are built up gradually. Trust is constructed step by step, although trust can also be lost very quickly. Factors influencing the early stages of social contacts are experiences and internalised models gained on the basis of earlier interpersonal situations. (Figure 1.)
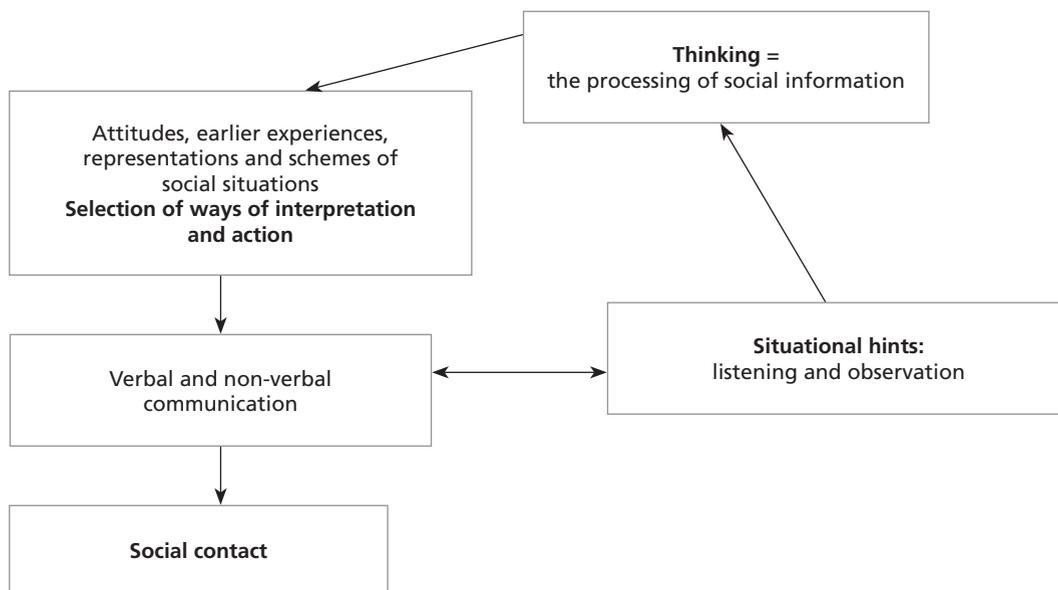
FIGURE 1. The early stages of a social contact (Kauppila 2005, 71).

Social relationships between people, social interaction and earlier experiences direct people in the social environment. A socially experienced mentor is able to hear, observe and listen to the actor in interaction situations.

Mentoring aims at helping the actor to reflect on his/her own actions, to identify his/her resources and limitations, and to determine his/her own professional wishes. In other words, the mentor should be able, through interaction, to challenge the actor to look at and assess his/her own situation from different angles, in which case mentoring helps and supports the actor in self-directed growth.

1.3 Mentoring process and learning

Task:
> *What is your idea of learning?*
> *What preparatory arrangements do you make before the meeting for mentoring?*
> *Where do you direct your conscious thinking and actions during mentoring?*
> *How do you help the actor in his/her learning process?*

The mentoring process can be described in simplified form as a segment in a line with (1) the initial phase, (2) the middle or working phase and (3) the final phase. I Four phases in the mentoring process can be distinguished (e.g. Zachary 2002): *preparation, negotiation, empowering and closure.* However, the phases are not easy to separate from each other. Preparation and negotiation belong to the initial phase of the process, empowering is part of the working phase and closure, for its part, belongs to the final phase. Mentoring means a learning process for both the mentor and the actor.

In the initial phase, it is important to create a positive work atmosphere, to get oriented to cooperation and to form a general idea of the operational culture of the actor's work community. *In the preparation phase*, the mentor contemplates why he/she wants to mentor the actor in question and what his/her expectations of mentoring are. The actor, for his/her part, considers what he/she wants to develop in himself/herself and in his/her work, and on which things he/she wants to gain a new view. In the second phase, the *negotiation phase*, the official mentoring contract is made and agreement is reached on shared objectives and practicalities such as frequency of meetings for mentoring and the duration of these meetings. During the phases of preparation and negotiation, a foundation is laid for a relationship based on trust. Central questions to be highlighted already during the negotiation phase are ethical questions such as trust, power and professional confidentiality between the mentor and the actor, as well has the mentor's willingness and capability to act as the mentor.

During *the empowering phase* of a successful mentoring process, the interaction and learning process become deeper. The mentor's task is to settle open questions as well as to create an atmosphere that supports learning and activates discussion. When questions are expressed as open questions (e.g. "please tell me more about that, it sounds interesting"), the actor has to pay more attention to his/her reply. During the active working phase, the mentoring process is assessed regularly, because assessment is an aspect of part of learning. Assessment can be used as a tool to ensure that mentoring is proceeding in accordance with the actor's objectives. *In the final phase of the mentoring process*, the mentor and the actor together conclude what has been learnt and how the objectives set have been achieved. Figure 2 shows an outline of the different phases of the mentoring process and their basic tasks in general terms.

Preparation and negotiation phase	Working and empowerment phase	Final phase
• motives: why • expectations • objectives • contract	• determining the operational philosophy • developing reflection skills • supporting the change process • supporting professional and personal growth • working through experiences and conceptualising them • building an interaction relationship based on confidence • roles • assessment	• giving and receiving feedback • assessment of the entire process (oral/written) • ending the mentoring relationship

FIGURE 2. Mentoring process (Pehkonen 2009).

The mentoring process is directed primarily by *the actor's and the mentor's ideas of learning and their knowledge bases*. Each person has his/her own way of learning, but learning mostly takes place in a social environment. Learning is a context-bound process. Mentors act in a social context that includes social relationships, social status, work and educational history, etc. In mentoring situations, highlighting the different and alternative ways of proceeding and thinking serve as the mentor's tools. (Peavy 2006) When learning through mentoring is approached from the perspective of ideas of learning, the centre of contemplation are the creation of meanings and refining them through reflection of experiences and conceptions. Reflection of experiences is connected with the creation of new meanings and, respectively, critical reflection of the existing conceptions is connected with developing the existing structures of meaning. (Leskelä 2005, 66)

It is important that the mentor identifies his/her own ideas of learning in order to be able to understand the actor's thinking and learning process. According to *the constructive idea of learning*, functions connected with thinking are interpreted as constructing knowledge. In other words, through his/her own interpretation, a person creates his/her own construction out of the information gained and received. Knowledge cannot be transferred directly from one person to another; instead, the understanding has to be developed in the receiver's thinking and through creating of the meaning generated from it. For the learner, learning means an active process of knowledge construction. This means that the same thing can be interpreted and understood in different ways. (Kolb 1984; Mezirow 1991) It is essential to constructivism that action is highlighted; learning, for its part, is a result of the learner's own processing. What is central to learning is how people interpret their experiences and give things meanings. Meanings can be given either consciously or unconsciously, although the creation of meanings requires understanding.

Learning is also a process in which a new or renewed meaning is constructed. The new meanings direct the individual's consciousness, actions and emotions. Individuals select experiences, though. Commonly, people accept and integrate experiences that are pleasant and fit their own framework, and respectively, people are reserved towards experiences that do not fit their thinking. (Mezirow 1991, 33–36) It is possible for the mentor and the actor to reflect knowledge and experiences through interaction and to find new contents of meaning by integrating new and previous knowledge.

The socio-constructive idea of learning includes a social constructing of knowledge in addition to cognitive elements and the individual's emotions. Knowledge cannot be understood without its socio-cultural background. Thus, learning is also contextual and situational, because the individual combines the new information with his/her previous knowledge. Later on, the learner is directed by the new structure of meaning, which is influenced not only by the new information received but also the learner's earlier experiences, presuppositions, ideas and meta-cognitive capabilities, i.e. consciousness, the idea of thinking and formation of new knowledge. In situational learning, a cognitive view and a social view are combined; thus, knowledge learnt in one environment or situation is necessarily not transferred to other situations. In consequence, the learning process cannot be separated from the situation or actions, context or culture in which the learning takes place. (Billet 1996; Hakkarainen 1996) What results from the situationality of learning is that, for example, each actor approaches what he/she is learning on the basis of the understanding he/she has at the moment. The mentor, too, always approaches the world of the actor on the basis of his/her current understanding. Limon-Lugue (2003) lists three preconditions to be met in order for the learner's target-oriented conceptual change to be made possible. "The preconditions" in question can very well be applied to the target-oriented mentoring process.

1) The individuals have to become aware of their need for change, and they have to know which things are the ones to be changed (the meta-cognitive precondition)
2) The individuals have to be willing to achieve the change, they have to consider the change to be their personal objective (the volitional precondition)
3) The individuals have to be capable of controlling, planning, observing and assessing their own change process (the self-regulatory precondition).

There is some congruence between the constructive and socio-constructive ideas of learning and the theory of *experiential learning* (Kolb 1984). These three ideas of learning stress the role of the individual's self-directedness, and his/her development and growth are considered a target in life. Experience plays a central role in the learning process. Experiential learning includes a principle of a life-long learning. Kolb (1984) describes learning as a four-phased cycle, including the phases of *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimenting.* (Figure 3.) It is noteworthy that learning does not always proceed this distinctively, nor can the model be generalised to cover all learning environments.
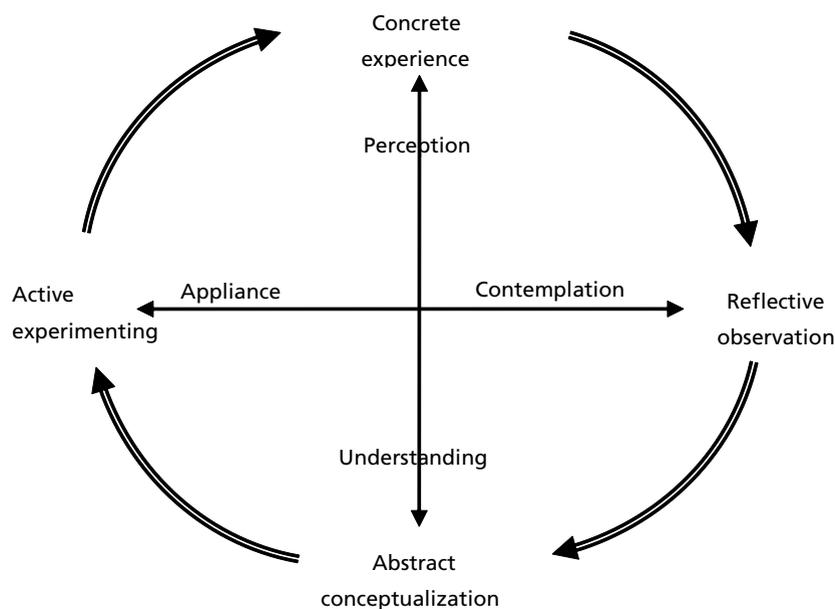
FIGURE 3. The model of experiential learning by Kolb (Kolb 1984, 42).

A continuously developing learning process is formed by subjective experience as well as contemplation, conceptualization and active application. The individual becomes more conscious of his/her experience through reflective observation. The individual's intellectual motivation, for its part, is developed by conceptualizing the experience. Application and experimenting generate a new experience that is can be reflected. The tension maintaining learning is associated with application of the experience and its contemplation. Experiential learning requires openness and the willingness to commit oneself to experiences, as well as reflectivity, i.e. the capability and skills to contemplate the experience from different perspectives. Broadly, reflection means an analytical approach to one's own thinking and to the grounds for actions. The reflection skills of many people are not necessarily highly developed. The mentoring process therefore provides a chance for the development of these skills.

Reflective thinking requires that the individual is being conscious of his/her thinking processes. Reflection is a tool by which, for example in mentoring, the theories used for the background can be made visible. Wellington and Austin (1996) have distinguished five orientations concerning reflection: not using reflection; technical reflection; negotiating reflection; dialectic reflection; and universal reflection. (Figure 4) *Te technical orientation emphasises* giving instructions and following standards. *The negotiating orientation*, for its part, highlights the finding, transferring and assessing of personal meaning. *The dialectic orientation* stresses questioning, open discussion, juxtaposition of views and gaining mutual understanding. *The universal orientation*, for its part, aims at personal emancipation. Wellington and Austin state that the teacher or adviser has to identify his/her own orientation and respect the orientation of others. But it is noteworthy that Wellington and Austin do not take a stance on what the reflection should include.
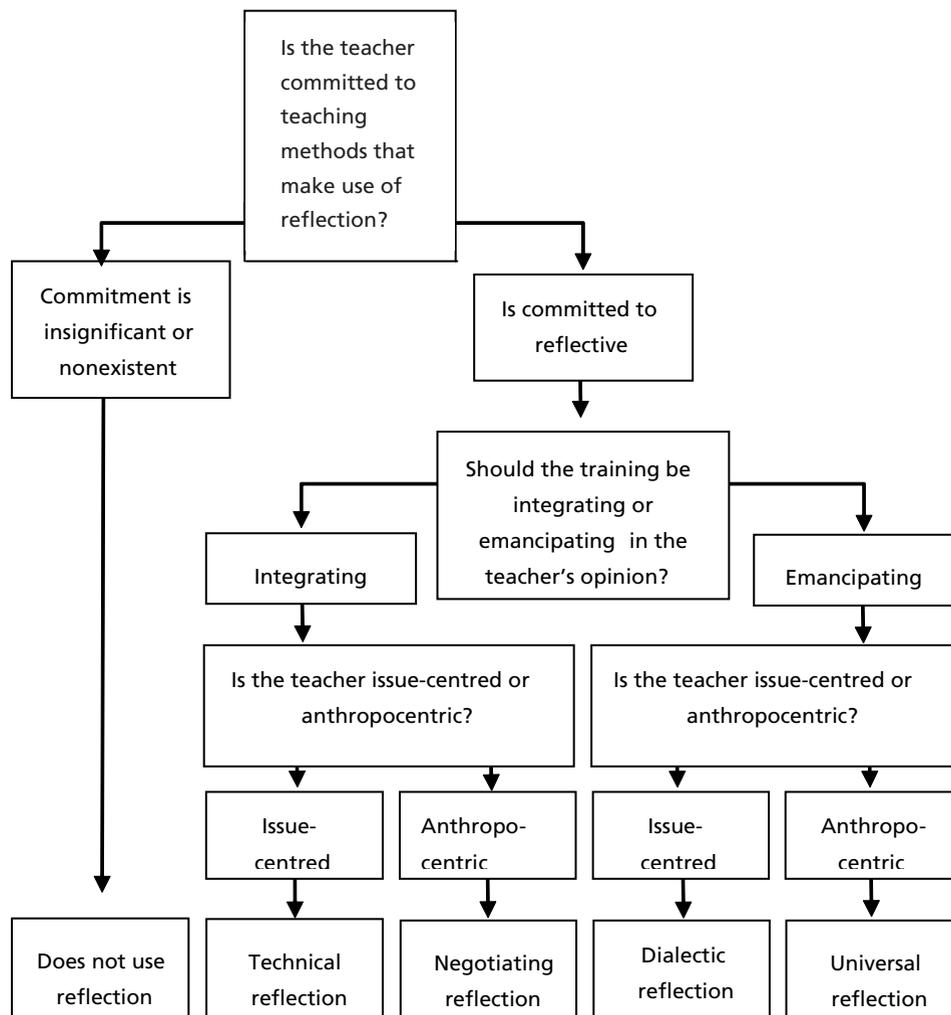
FIGURE 4. Different orientations of reflective actions (Wellington & Austin 1996).

Various studies on dichotomies have described orientations in an interesting way (Marton & Säljö 1976; Bergen- Henegouven 1987; Liljander 1991; Mäkinen & Olkinuora 2002): surface orientation vs. deep orientation; a theoretical approach vs. professionalism; a cultural approach vs. functionality. The opposites describing a feature of an orientation are thus very different. Studies

have divided reflection into five types (Griffiths & Tann 1992; Zeichner 1994) on the grounds of the depth and speed of reflection:

1. immediate reflection: instinctive, quick, takes places within action
2. corrective reflection: observing actions, quick assessment and correction of actions, takes place within action
3. reflection in reassessment: observing, analysing observations and new actions that take place within few hours or days
4. exploring reflection: systematic, precisely focused, takes weeks or months
5. reflection aiming at reformulation and forming a new theory: abstract, exact, clearly formulated, takes months or years.

While the significance of mentoring has previously been focused on transferring knowledge to a less experienced novice, the focus now is on the process itself, the interaction, in which knowledge and experiences are exchanged by critical reflection between the mentor and the actor. This means that reflection is focused not only on the contents of actions or on the process, but also on underlying knowledge structures. In mentoring, the concept of reflection can be understood as a deep contemplation of experiences and as the reconstruction of experiences. Reflection is a process and forms a significant part of learning. Reflection also generates new insights, leading to changes in thinking or actions; the result is that something new is learnt. In the reflective learning process, both theoretical and experience-based knowledge are present at the same time. (Figure 5)
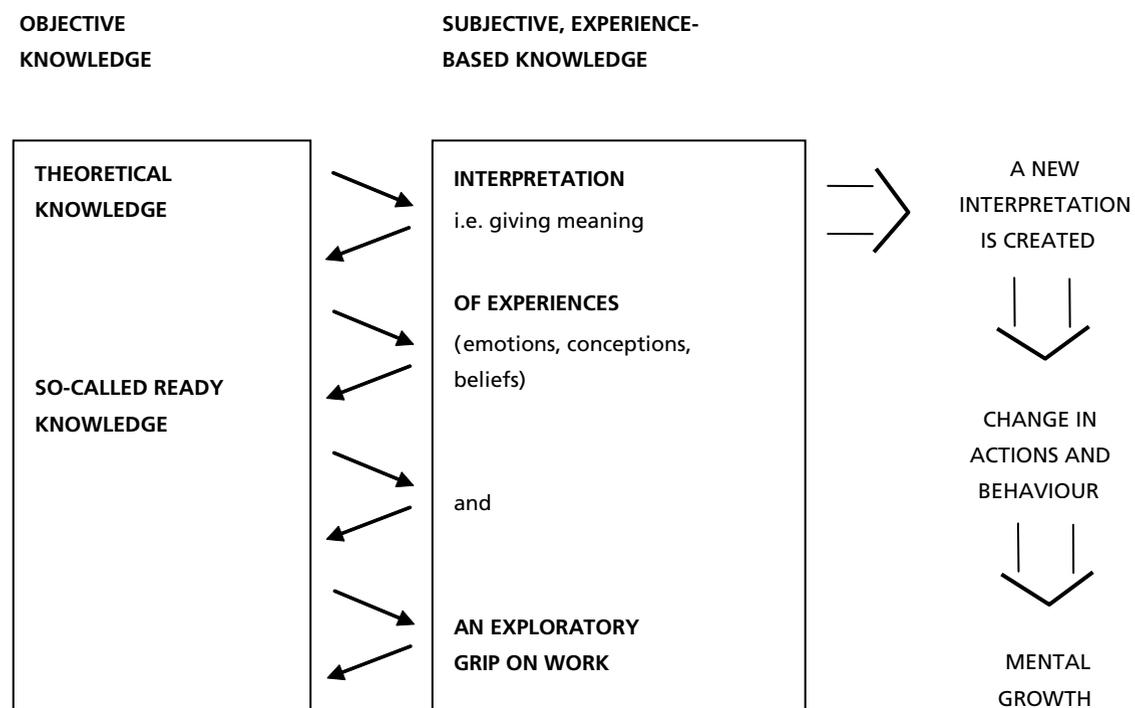
FIGURE 5. Implementation of experiences through reflection (Ojanen 2000, 102).

Mezirow (1996) has stated that reflection can be focused on *the contents of actions, process or the knowledge structures, presuppositions, values and beliefs influencing the background*. By reflecting on the contents of actions, Mezirow means personal thinking about the experience. Reflecting on processes is focused on thinking, how the experience should be contemplated. Reflecting on the knowledge structures influencing on the background, for its part, focuses on contemplating the social structures, beliefs, presuppositions and values connected with the experience. In that case, it means critical and profound reflection. According to Mezirow, regenerative learning requires critical reflection and corresponds to the deepest level of reflection. Learning can be considered to be the result of efficient and conscious reflection. The experience in itself is not enough for affecting change; what is central to learning is mental and intellectual growth. Regenerative learning is carried out by being directed and conscious. (Figure 6.)
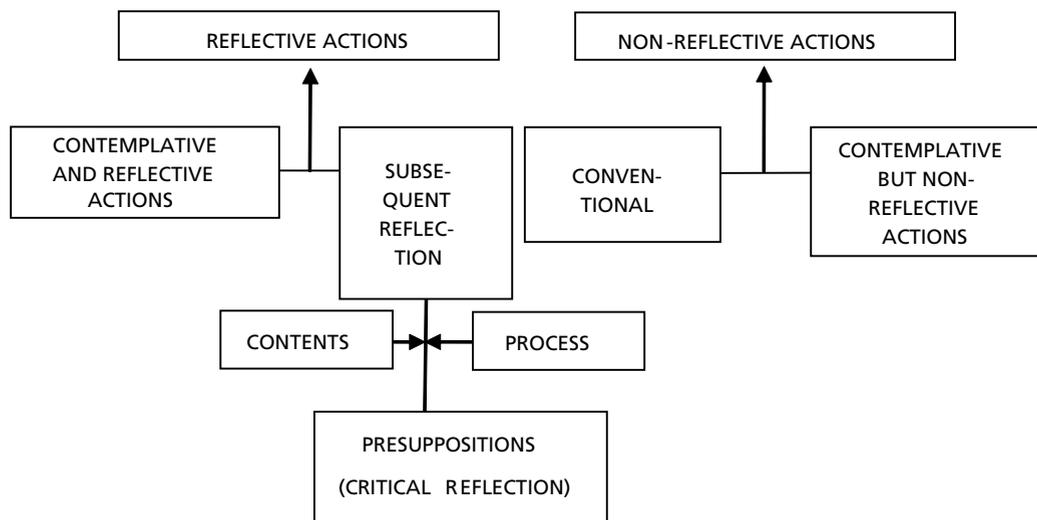
FIGURE 6. Reflection (Mezirow 1996,23).

1.4 The roles of the mentor and the actor in the direction process

Task:
What sort of roles would you like the roles of the actor and the mentor to be? Why?
What is your role as a mentor like?
What are the aims of mentoring?
How do you build interaction with the actor?
How and when do you assess the mentoring process?
How do you build trust within the mentoring relationship?
How do you analyse the working of the actor?
Describe your work as a mentor.

The role of the mentor can be approached through different dimensions – not through one role only. Three dimensions have been distinguished in the mentor's role (Yeomans & Sampson 1994): *a structural dimension, a supportive dimension and a professional dimension*. Respectively,

leaning on Clutterbuck's (1998) thinking, Lillian (2000) has divided the roles of the mentor as follows: *the role of a trainer, the role of a protector, the role of a support person and the role of a contact person.* (Figure 7)

"The trainer" is an active questioner and a critical friend, who challenges the actor intellectually. Training can be directing or based on interactive discussion. The actor does not necessarily control the process, so the process is dependent on the trainer's skills of asking questions and observing. Within training, directing can be seen primarily as a rational activity, as a direct influencing. "The protector" is an active motivator, a guide, a supporter and a role model. In that case, the mentor acts within the dimension of emotional care. "The support person", for his/her part, is one who motivates, spars and supports the learner in identifying his/her own sources of motivation as well as his/her own fears and possible visible and invisible factors preventing development. As the mentor, the support person acts within the dimension of direct influence and emotional care. "The contact person" is an activator and a bridge-builder. The mentor's objective is to be able to help the actor in diversifying information channels both inside the actor's own organisation and outside it. In the role of the contact person, the mentor acts within the dimension of indirect influencing and intellectual challenging.
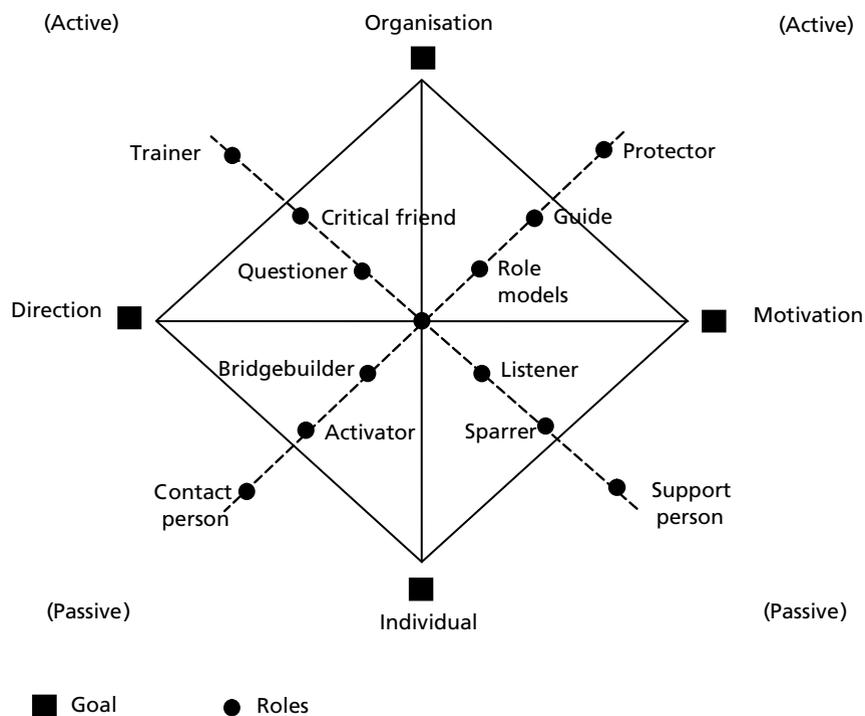
FIGURE 7. Roles of the mentor (Lillian 2000).

The actor's task is to set objectives for mentoring. Thus, the mentor does not set objectives on behalf of the actor, even though the actor's role expectation of the mentor would be a direction-oriented one. Mentoring requires that the mentor understand the actor's learning orientation and the theory used. It is also necessary for the mentor to understand his/her different roles as various dimensions in the direction process. When contemplating the objectives for mentoring, it is important to perceive whether the actor, in his/her professional growth and as an expert of his/her own field, is a novice, an advanced beginner, a qualified professional, a skilled professional

or an expert (see Benner 1989). A tension is introduced to mentoring if the role of the mentor is emphasised too much in the actor's process of professional growth, or if the actor's contacts with other social workers remain small in number.

Clutterbuck (1998) has divided the roles of the actors as following: *a trainee, an assistant, a truth-seeker and a self-directed learner*. The trainee sets objectives, has a constructive attitude towards the feedback received and is committed to the mentoring process. The assistant seeks acceptance, uses the mentor as a role model, needs advice and lets the mentor to choose the things to be discussed. The truth-seeker is ready to express his/her emotions, seeks support, depends on the mentor and shows trust in the mentor. *The self-directed learner* expresses his/her own thoughts openly, gets prepared for the mentoring visit by bringing the matters for contemplation to the discussion and actively seeks new contacts also through mentoring.

Grow (1991) has analysed the different roles of the adviser/mentor as a process that is proceeded in stages through the SSDL model (Staged Self-Directed Learning Model). (Figure 8) In the model, the actor's role is developed, through stages, from dependence on the mentor towards self-directedness. What is essential in the model is that the mentor supports the actor step by step in the process of attaining self-direction. The mentor should meet the actor at exactly the level where the actor currently is. First, a dependent learner needs mentor-directed guidance with the emphasis on contents. Later on, as professional growth proceeds, he/she needs guidance that is motivating and assisting. It is a question of mutual learning, because the mentor has to be able to change his/her role in relation to the actor during the process so that the actor receives space for professional growth. If the actor is a *dependent learner*, then the mentor's role as an assistant or a person who delegates is incompatible with the actor's expectations. What the dependent learner needs is adviser-directed, motivating mentoring. The mentor's roles suited to *the interested actor* are the roles of an authority, a motivator and an assistant, but not the role of a person who delegates. Further, *the committed actor* is not suited to the mentor's role of an authority, but to the roles of a motivator, an assistant and a person who delegates. *The self-directed learner* is the one who can make use of the roles of an assistant and a person who delegates. The self-directed learner wants to take full responsibility for his/her own learning, and he/she is able to assess his/her own learning and is also able to make use of his/her know-how in various ways.
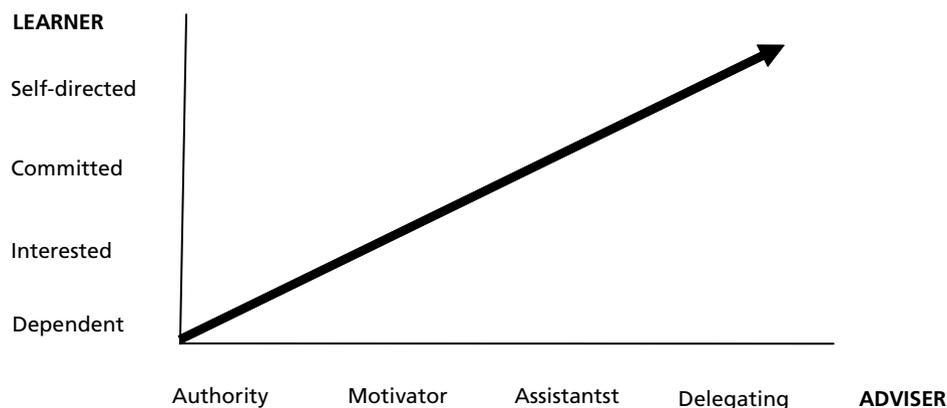

FIGURE 8. The SSDL model related to the adviser and the learner (Grow 1991).

Giving and receiving feedback are part of the learning process in mentoring. Learning through feedback is challenging, because there are different ways to give and receive feedback. On one hand, it may be hard to give corrective feedback; on the other hand, it may be embarrassing to receive even positive feedback.
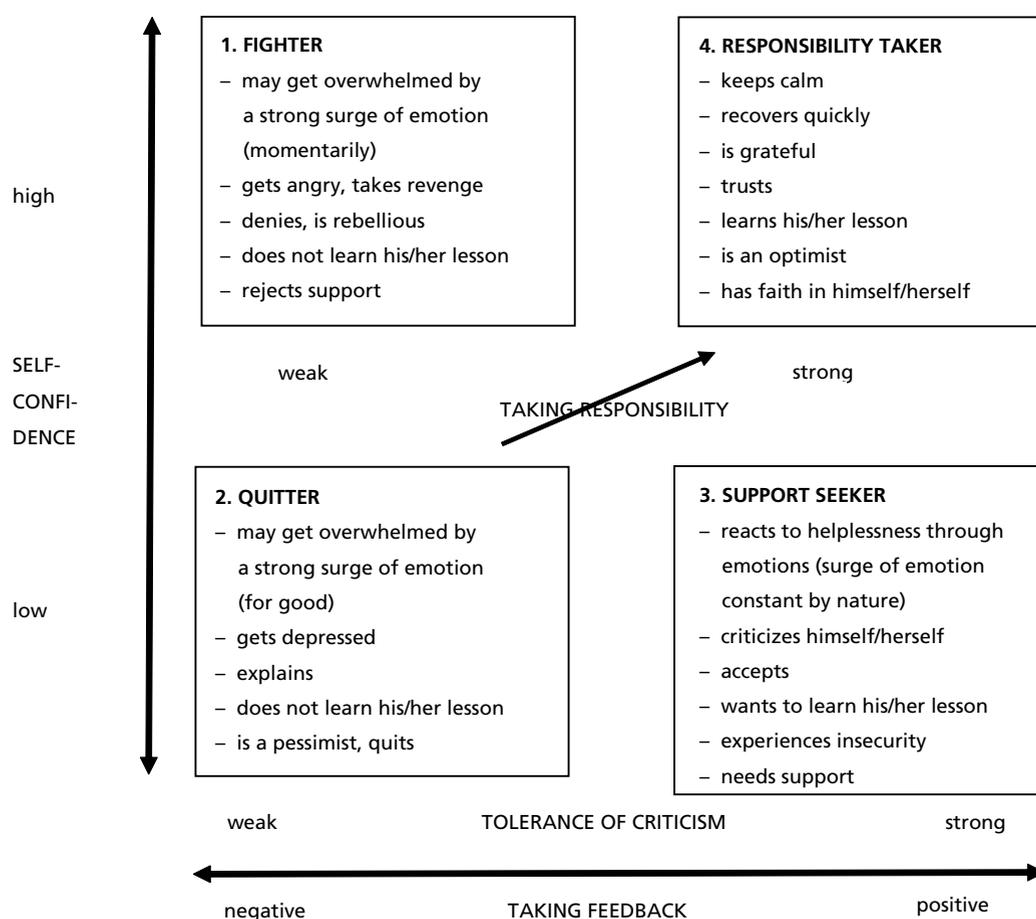
FIGURE 9. Learning through feedback (Pimes 1977).

Ways to learn through feedback are illustrated by a fourfold table (Figure 9, Pirnes 1997) where attention is paid to different kinds of learners. It is characteristic of *the fighter* to deny and reject the corrective feedback received. He/she may overestimate himself/herself and his/her know-how and, respectively, may underestimate other people. After his/her initial anger, he/she may be willing to reconsider the feedback and may opt for change. *The support seeker*, for his/her part, is able to receive corrective feedback but needs strong encouragement and supportive feedback in order to compensate for the critical feedback received so that change in thinking is possible. *The responsibility taker* has a positive attitude towards feedback. He/she is able to identify his/her defects and developmental potential.

Mentoring cannot be defined only on the basis of the roles, styles of giving advice or the tasks of the people involved in giving advice. It is also necessary to add the contents of the advice, the interactive relationship and its duration to the definition of mentoring. (Kram 1983.) Thus, mentoring can be approached both as a form of giving advice and as a developing form of interaction. Giving advice can be referred to either as ongoing professional discussion within education and other fields requiring human relations skills, or as professional, institutional activities. Giving advice can also be interpreted as an operational environment consisting of interventions based on advising. (Nummenmaa 2005, 221–222.) Flexibility is essential and is part of good mentoring. Different ways of acting suit different people. On some occasions, it is good that the mentor is a listener, or a questioner and, on other occasions, it is good that the mentor

is also a competent adviser or supporter. One central aim of mentoring is to give the actor help for exactly the situation where he/she at the moment the advice is given.

1.5 Mentoring as a promoter of occupational welfare within social work

Task:
  What kind of know-how is required in working life?
  What should a student know about social work during a period of practice?
  What factors that weaken occupational welfare within social work?
  What factors are motivating in social work?
  What kind of an influence do you wish mentoring to have on occupational welfare?
  How can mentoring promote occupational welfare?

Well-being is one of the most significant and highly sought matters in the lives of individuals and communities. Work is associated with well-being, and, in the discussion of working life, essential elements are the content and quality of working life as well as occupational welfare: which factors promote, or conversely, which factors diminish the perceived occupational welfare. What connection is there between commitment and resilience at work? Further, how conscious and target-oriented are one's actions at work? An appropriate workload provides the worker with job satisfaction, motivation and self-confidence and improves performance at work.

Professional identity and professional growth are connected with resources and occupational welfare. Professional identity means that the individual recognises that he or she possesses the skills and responsibility required in the profession, is aware of the strengths and possible restrictions concerning his or her know-how and, in addition, is willing to support professional growth and to be committed to the norms and values of the profession. At the same time, professional competence entails the following: formal competence (certificates, education); the competence required (competency requirements); the actual competence (encompassing all know-how, both discernible and potential); and, finally, the competence required for work assignments (used in daily work). (Ruohotie 2002.) Professional growth, in turn, is promoted by a supportive work atmosphere, active management, rewards intensive communication and safety. (e.g. Ruohotie 1996) In other words, professional growth means goal-directed development. The mentor can approach the challenges connected with the actor's professional growth through the following questions:
• Does social work mean a conscious choice of profession for the actor?
• How conscious is the actor of his or her own know-how?
• How does the actor value his or her own profession?
• What kinds of ethical questions has the actor encountered pertaining to social work?
• What kind of method does the actor use at work?
• What is a good working morale like?
• How committed is the actor to his or her work?

In addition, the mentor can further outline the professional identity already adopted by the actor by asking:
• What is the actor's own role and position in the work community?
• What is the significance of the actor and his or her colleagues in the work community?
• How conscious and goal-directed is the actor's own activity in the working community?

Raija Kalimo (1987, 1997) has created a conceptual framework for the connection between the psychological loading and stress factors of the working environment, on the one hand, and the perceived health and illness, on the other hand. A motivated worker with the good work capability experiences joy at work and promotes the well-being of the work community and society. Crucial to the well-being of an individual is the entity formed by work, leisure and family. The individual's work capability is influenced by the physical, mental and social ability to work, education and competence, motivation and job satisfaction, as well as by values and attitudes. In addition, the psychological and physical requirements of the work as well as the working environment and the work community are connected with the worker's resources. Resources define the worker's capability for work. Resource factors, for their part, consist of money (salary), social support, positive attitude towards life and the worker's possibility to have influence on his or her work. Resources play a significant role in the individual's resilience, and they also promote health and prevent the development of work stress caused by pressure at work. (Figure 10)

Many factors connected with the working environment can cause occupational stress and problems relating to resilience at work. For example, being overloaded or underloaded with work can cause psychological and physiological reactions, changes in the way of life and a diminished performance at work. Kalimo (1987, Figure 10) has classified stress factors in the following way: stress factors connected with content and organisation of work, work roles, career development, planning, decision-making, briefing, feedback, cooperation, interaction, connections between work and leisure or the physical working environment.

There are several work-related issues causing the worker to be likely to experience powerlessness concerning resilience at work: if the work contents are too narrow or one-sided; if the worker cannot monitor his or her own work; if time pressure is too common at work; if the worker cannot use extensive know-how and lacks the possibility to develop at work; if decision-making related to the work is either too challenging or there is not enough of it; or if interpersonal loading is too much and too little information is provided. The worker's occupational role comprises other people people's expectations and the expectations and visions of the worker himself or herself. Therefore, if the worker is constantly confused about his or her own role and goals and, at the same time, others have conflicting role expectations, the situation most likely causes the worker to experience stress.

Pressures such as uncertainty related to the continuity of work and career progression, obstacles to development or career advancement that is too slow or too quick can be connected with career development. Uncertainty, in turn, can promote burnout. Psychological and somatic symptoms may emerge, for example, during organisational changes. (Mauno & Virolainen 1996) Research has indicated that factors causing dissatisfaction in the work community are insufficient briefing, receiving too little feedback about one's work and unequal treatment of the staff. (Vartiainen & Pulkkis 2000; Elovainio et al. 2002) Further, in addition to feelings of disappointment, an excessive and long-lasting exposure to stress can cause depression, irritability, anxiety, unease, lack of initiative, a weakened sense of self-confidence, alcohol abuse and excessive smoking. Furthermore, the list can be continued with reduced social activity, absence from work, postponing duties, difficulties in family life and relationships, loneliness, retreating, insomnia and lack of appetite.

Mentoring provides a forum for discussing the occupational welfare experienced in social work and the challenges emerging in it. We already know that the experienced occupational welfare is affected by whether the expectations, potentials, demands and qualifications for the work are in balance or conflicting. Resilience at work and well-being, in turn, are influenced to a great extent by the professional identity experienced by the individual. At its best, mentoring can strengthen the individual's professional identity.
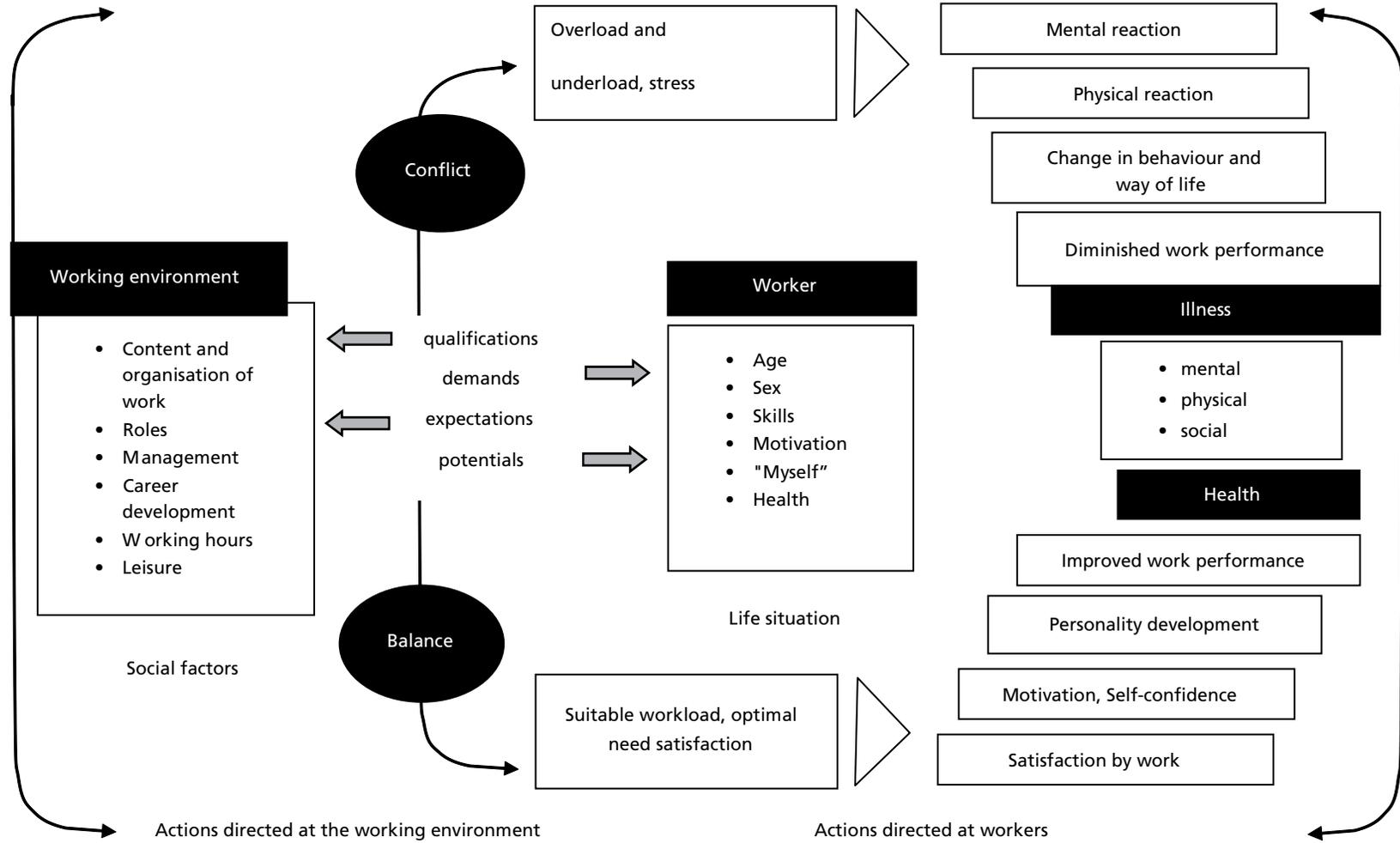
FIGURE 10. Connection between psychological loading and stress factors in the working environment and healt: a conceptual framework (Kalimo 1985)

Juha Hämäläinen and Pauli Niemelä (2006) have classified the loading factors of social work into six categories. In social work, the worker has to tolerate constant uncertainty; ongoing incompleteness is also typical of the work. First, the social worker has great power and responsibility. The loading factors associated with this are caused by the content-related characteristics of the work. Second, loading the demands of social work are loading, because social work covers several fields of knowledge and many tasks are performed simultaneously. In addition, the work is also emotion-loaded. Third, loading is caused by finding oneself perplexed and without means when confronting people in need. The social worker faces many forms of distress and confusing life situations at work; these problems can be addressed through the means of social work only in a limited way. Some social work clients have a tendency to behave in a threatening manner, and the social worker cannot select his or her clients. Fourth, there are loading factors inherent in the organisation of social work, such as the hectic nature of the work and bottlenecks. Fifth, social workers may face unrealistic and conflicting expectations. Finally, social work is not highly valued in society, as indicated by the low salary level.

The factors that cause loading in social work are known and can be located, and it is possible to deal with them through mentoring. Through the conflicts experienced and perceived in social work, we can approach the core of development of the work. In addition, theoretical awareness produces a thorough approach to social work. At the same time, addressing social work processes provides a basis for getting a systematic approach to the work, and mentoring offers a natural forum for this. On the other hand, international research (Ellis & Granville 1999) emphasises that the mentor, too, experiences new vitality for his or her work. The benefit experienced by the mentor is related not only to work satisfaction but also to private and social life. Through mentoring, the mentor reaches a higher status that promotes individual work satisfaction and increases self-confidence and motivation. He or she has also been able to get new ideas and challenges, which help to improve motivation at work.

At its best, mentoring helps the actor to identify and develop his or her skills and potential, in which case mentoring supports the experiencing of occupational welfare. From the perspective of the actor's organization, mentoring has been found to bring the following benefits: increased work efficiency; a decrease in the changing of jobs; increased manager capabilities; promotion of lifetime learning; increased commitment to the organisation; the sharing of tacit knowledge inside the organisation; promotion of the practices of a learning organisation; identification of the actor's abilities within the organisation; and, finally, increased and more diversified interaction between people. (Kram 1983; Scandura & Viator 1994; Baugh et al. 1996) In addition, mentoring has been found to strengthen the continuity of the organisational culture (Wilson & Elman 1990).

2   Social work as a profession

MARJUT AROLA

> *Task:*
>
> *What kind of know-how is needed in social work, in your opinion?*
> *What kind of professional basis as well as knowledge and skills needed in social work are provided in social work education?*
> *How can mentoring further the development of the social worker's professionalism?*

This chapter first discusses the general development of professionalism and expertise within social work. Development within social work is examined through three phases of modernisation. Every phase of development has its own features that can be found in social work practices even today. A short theoretical review of the development phases within social work gives structure to the picture of the historical development of the profession and outlines the know-how required in social work today. A description of the development phases within social work also helps the worker to identify factors influencing the background of the work practices within the work community and, through this, also to identify the background of one's own professional activity.

Next, sections of professionalism in social work are viewed through two divisions. Guttman et al. (1988) divide the professional competence in social work into four sections, i.e. intellectual competence, operational competence, individual competence and assessment competence. The dimensions of the professionalism of Finnish social work are described by two fields of know-how, i.e. know-how about the contents of the work and individual know-how.

2.1   Development of professionalism and expertise within social work

> *Task:*
>
> *What characteristic features of different development phases within social work do you find in your own work community?*
> *How do these characteristics occur in everyday work?*
> *How do these characteristics affect your own professional activity?*

Social work as a profession and a field of science is strongly connected with the system of social activity. By nature, social work is social alteration work with the aim of effecting a change between an individual and his/her environment. Constant change is also a good description of the professionalism of social work and its different development phases.

Social work as a profession has followed the general development phases of society. In the context of the development in social work, there is talk of modernisation development that has revised social work as a profession both in content and operationally. This modernisation development has clarified social work as a professional activity and had secured for social work an institutionalised position of its own, with its own operational tools. (Matthies 1993, 99–100) The development also describes how social work has become professionalised and detached itself from unofficial or layman's assistance work.

The modernisation development of social work can be divided into three phases: premodern altruistic social work, modern institutional social work and postmodern reflective social work. These phases are based on the division of professional development within social work as developed by Bernd Dewe and Wilfried Ferchhoff in 1985. The phases structure the historical development of social work, but current practices can also be described through them. Features of each of the three phases are also found in the social work practices of today. These development phases are often described as simplified ideal types; the work practices in social work have always been much more multidimensional in reality. (Matthies 1993; Raitakari 1992)

The premodern phase of social work dates from the initial stages of the development of the industrial society in the late 19th century characterised, for example, by urbanisation, growing numbers wage earners and the formation of nuclear families as topical universal phenomena. Industrial development, especially the increase in factory work, fuelled the migration of the working population from the countryside to cities. The urban settlements that rapidly formed around industrial communities had abundant social problems, such as criminality, prostitution and use of intoxicants, caused by poor living conditions. (Juhila 2006; Toikko 2005)

As poverty and social problems increased, people began to notice their social connections. This, for its part, contributed to the need for developing professional solutions for social problems and the need to start education in social work. At that time, social work was strongly committed to communities and relatively independent from different institutions. The professionalism of social work clearly diverged from layman's assistance already then, and was strongly based on the trust of citizens and communities. As a professional activity, social work meant cooperation between citizens and social workers that took place in communities. Examples of the communal social work of the premodern phase is Jane Addams'[1] settlement and in slums. (Matthies 1993, 99–101) Characteristic of the premodern phase of social work was autonomy in relation to institutions and the social worker's strong commitment to communities. The characteristics emphasised for the social worker were personal know-how, altruistic (i.e. unselfish) activity and a humane, ethical persuasion (Matthies 1993; Toikko 2005).

Modern institutional, rational social work was created when social work diverged into a profession of its own. Social work gained official status in the social distribution of work; at the same time, it diverged from the communal and autonomous ideals and ways of action originating from the premodern phase. The initial phase of the modern social work dates from the first decades of the 20th century.

Along with professionalisation, the theoretical basis of social work and the content of its professional doctrine were strengthened. Action models based on scientific knowledge and institutional activity displaced the forms of social assistance grounded in individual know-how and communality. The idea of objective and hierarchical knowledge was linked with modern expertise in social work. At that time, expertise leaned on correct knowledge and strong norms, through which it was differentiated both from the layman's knowledge and the clientele (Raitakari 2002, 48). Modern social work has been described as social work carried out by office bureaucrats and emphasising real professionalism and scientific knowledge. In the modern model, the social worker represented society and worked within the authority accepted in the society.

In the phase of modern social work, the social worker's expertise in relation to the client was constructed through a vertical, or top-down, authoritative approach. According to Raitakari (2002, 46–49), this expert status was also connected with the idea that the social worker had the authority of an expert to define the objective of a good life that the client would pursue. In modern social work, the client was defined through specific problems and different classifications by type. For example, social workers could speak of a family with clienthood in child welfare, a

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1 Jane Addams (1860–1935) was an American social politician and a peace movement leader. She founded the Hull House in Chicago, which is one of the first social centers in the United States. The Hull House also served as a sociological institute for women. Jane Addams was a leading character in the women's suffrage and pacifist movements. She received the Nobel Peace Prize for her life's work in 1931.

long-term unemployed person or a client with a deficiency. These descriptions viewed the unique social situation of the individual or family from the perspective of the problem-solving processes within social work. Moreover, the expert was defined as one with the power of diagnosis and the client as a case in danger of marginalisation.

The initial phase of postmodern social work dates from the 1980s and 1990s, at the time of social and cultural change. The phase, defined as *postmodern, late modern or reflexive modern* (e.g. Bauman 2001; Beck 1992), started from philosophic and cultural exploratory contemplations that were gradually formed into a larger knowledge and social theoretical transitional period. With regard to the theories of social sciences and social work, the postmodern discussions were associated, in particular, with knowledge and knowledge formation, discursive power and man as the actor. The postmodern change challenged the traditional expertise based on accurate knowledge and expert status with a new kind of an expertise that was constructed through interaction with the client. Above all, the postmodern transitional change involved redefinition of social work practice and an increased importance of critical reflection within social work practices and research. (Karvinen-Niinikoski 2009, 131–133)

The postmodern phase introduced elements emphasising constructivity and reflexivity to modes of action within social work. Constructivist social work stresses a client-oriented approach, dialogue involving listening and discussion, the aim being for the client to achieve control over his/her life. The constructivist approach involves face-to-face interaction and direct working with clients and service users. Reflective social work practices, in turn, entail a constant critical awareness and assessment of one's own observation, thinking and activity as well as deficiencies in them. Reflectivity means interpreting problems through interaction and developing activities based on experiential learning. It is a learning process where the person consciously goes through his/her experiences in order to achieve a new way to understand things or new ways of action. (Karvinen 1993, 25, 27)

The postmodern view also changes modern social work's conceptions of the social worker–client relationship and expertise in social work. The client is raised to the position of the subject, and the professionalism of social work focuses increasingly on cooperation, for example with local actors, organisations and researchers, and not only cooperation with clients. According to Karvinen-Niinikoski (2009, 136), the challenges of postmodern professionalism are the needs for reform and flexible approaches caused by constant irregularities and uncertainty. To know and to be right were questioned. They were replaced by negotiation-based expertise, diversity in the ways of knowing and the production of knowledge occurring in partnership.

The three development phases of social work can be summarised as follows:
1. Premodern altruistic social work
   Characteristic of this phase was autonomy in relation to institutions, commitment to communities, individual know-how and an altruistic, i.e. unselfish, and humane ethical persuasion.
2. Modern institutional social work
   Along with modern expertise, social work diverged from layman's assistance. It was replaced by social work expertise based n institutional authority and having a clear hierarchical client–expert setup.
3. Postmodern reflective social work
   In postmodern social work, expertise is constructed in interaction with the client. The client is raised from being the objectof social work to the position of the subject. Elements central to postmodern social work are constructivity and reflectivity.

2.2 The elements of professionalism and the professional know-how within social work

The postmodern era described earlier and the constantly changing social situations pose new demands for professionalism and expertise in social work. The diversity and intertwined nature of clients' problems are such that they can no longer be solved only by traditional methods of social work. Social work requires, for example, new types of know-how that enable identification of different society-level and individual-level social problems and promote more effective solution of these problems.

The postmodern era also breaks traditional profession limits and dominating positions between different professions. This means that social work has to be able to convince the various actors of its necessity in a new way. At the same time, the foundation pillars of expertise in social work – i.e. scientific knowledge, professions and institutions, as well as their relationship with each other – are changing and under constant redefinition. (Karvinen-Niinikoski 2005; Lash 2002) Professional development highlights professional skills relating to knowledge production and to a critical and open expertise. Professional expertise within social work in future will be based even more strongly on flexible know-how, methodology and change activity (Dominelli 2004; Parton 2004).

Guttman et al. (1988, 278–288) divide professional competence in social work into four sections: intellectual competence; operational competence; individual competence; and assessment competence.

- *Intellectual competence refers to* the common understanding of social work. It means that the social worker is able to connect theoretical knowledge gained through education with practical work. He/She is able to analyse the individual and social backgrounds of social problems and how they are reflected in the individual client's life and clienthood. The social worker understands social work as a target-oriented activity, and also understands the significance of the idea of man and ethical principles in social work.
- *Operational competence* refers to a situation-specific understanding of social work interventions. In the sphere of operational competence, the social worker possesses interactions skills, is able to act independently and with responsibility, and is able to apply social work legislation. He/She works in multi-professional cooperation context and understands its meaning from the perspective of client work. He/She is able to apply the ethical principles of social work to practice and can analyse the contradictions associated with following them. The worker perceives the duties of social work and the ways of action used in his/her office, and is able to apply the social work methods available.
- *Individual competence* is understanding of the self and a desire to develop one's own professionalism. It means that the social worker identifies the influence of his/her own values and attitudes on social work, is able to analyse his/her own professional growth and understands the meaning of reflection as a tool for this.
- *Assessment competence* is the ability to assess the profitability, consequences and impressiveness of one's own work. This means the capability to assess the usefulness of the modes of action and methods applied in social work. The social worker is competent to perceive development opportunities for social work both in his/her work community and also more broadly, in the field of social work on a whole.

Synnöve Karvinen (1996, 39–40) has summarised these dimensions of professional competence within social work on the basis of Thomas Olkin's (1989) division into three sections: an instrumental-rational competence; a communicative competence; and a self-reflective competence.

Instrumental-rational competence means that the social worker possesses certain instrumental knowledge and skills. He/She knows the principles central to social work and is able to apply the professional methods of social work to his/her work. Communicative competence is connected with interaction skills and understanding people's modes of action.

In addition to these sections of professionalism, there is a need for tools of thinking and ways of action that make it possible to follow and assess the contents of work, one's own actions, the achievement of and impacts of social work interventions. This section of professional competence is called the self-reflective dimension. Karvinen (1996) considers that the social worker's professional skill cannot be based only on mastery and application of the basic knowledge and methods of the profession. In constantly changing social circumstances a central element of the social worker's professional skill is to develop the social work and also to obtain the explorative and evaluative approach to work. Reflective professional practice, in turn, involves constant critical awareness and assessment of one's own observation, thinking, activity and deficiencies in them, as well as the interpretation of problems through interaction and experiential learning.

Furthermore, social work calls for *know-how about the contents of work* and *individual know-how*. These areas of know-how are in constant interaction with each other in everyday work. Know-how about the contents of work within social work is made up of seven segments:

1. Social and social scientific know-how – understanding the social connections of social work regarding economy, culture and changes in the way of life and values.
2. Resource know-how connected with service systems – perceiving and analysing social problems relating to the life situations of people and groups of people, as well as organising the services, benefits and support required to solve these problems. Service system know-how and know-how of the legal system included in it are among the basic preconditions for social work.
3. Knowhow in developing the social work and in using innovations – developing new models for the provision of well-being services and finding cooperation partners for creating services. The requirement for development applies not only to services but also to social work and its knowledge basis.
4. Exploratory know-how – the assessment skills needed for developing social work, based on research knowledge and the related work orientation. Exploratory know-how is linked with the methodological development of social work and development of the exploratory approach to work.
5. Interaction know-how – the ability to make a connection through dialogue and to maintain communication, and the ability to solve dialogue and communication related conflicts in different interactive situations within social work. Social work includes the construction, dissolution and interpreting of various kinds of relationships; this calls for broad, interaction-based know-how.
6. Know-how pertaining to values – bringing ethical principles and values of social work, and questions pertaining to human values, to social discussion and decision-making.
7. Methodological know-how – extensive acquaintance with practical work processes and methods of social work. (STM 2007, 67–70)

Individual know-how in social work, in turn, has the following aspects:
• assessing and directing of one's own learning and know-how
• maintaining an interest in social work
• readiness for the change and development needed in the work
• understanding the connections between theory, research and practice
• understanding one's own professional identity and application of this professional identity at work.

Know-how about the contents of work and individual know-how in social work form the foundation for pursuing expertise based on critical reflectivity. This means acquiring a conscious exploratory approach to work combined with skilful and ethically durable professional activity. (STM 2007)

3   The role of theoretical knowledge in social work practice and in the mentoring process

Aini Pehkonen

> *Task:*
>> *What is the significance of practical teaching within social work to professional and scientific development of the field?*
>> *How can social work theories be analysed in the mentoring process?*
>> *What sort of relationship do you exists between social work theory and practice?*

3.1   The relationship between social work practice and theory

Social work is a discipline, a profession; it also has the to influence society. It is alteration work aiming at reducing obstacles, inequality and injustice in society. Social work is defined as a work requiring extensive know-how, its aim being to prevent and eliminate social problems and to help people, families and communities in situations with social problems. The task of social work is also to support people's capacity and independent initiative in all life situations. Further, social work focuses on the entire gamut of human life and its problems, such as deficiencies in the well-being of children and young people, use of intoxicants, poverty and unemployment. The core of social work know-how in this wide field of activity is made up of diversified analysis and understanding of social situations and the professional activity based on them. (STM 2007, 67–68)

In international definition, social work is given four challenging objectives:
- assisting in the inclusion of marginalised, socially disregarded, excluded and vulnerable people
- questioning obstacles, inequality and injustice in the society
- promoting change in the structures that keep people in marginalised, excluded and vulnerable positions. This should be done either on behalf of people or together with them.
- supporting individuals, families, groups and communities in improving their well-being and problem-solving capabilities. (IASSAW 2002)

Professional social work is target-oriented activity involving social work methods as part of work processes in order to achieve social work objectives. (Satka 2004) Professional social work practice is defined through the object of activity, ways of action, values, and through context and actors. Values important to social work are justice, equality and democracy. By appealing to values, social work explains its own significance as professional activity (Raunio 2004, 77).

Social work is based on scientific knowledge, professional competence and shared ethical principles. Theories of social work are applied to analyse what social work is as well as the social aims, duties and principles of social work. Theories in social work, for their part, explain social work practices and questions about the contents of work, processes, boundary conditions, ethical relations and the meaning of the work. Respectively, theories on the targets of social work go into many-sided social problems, such as the challenges in everyday life faced by citizens. The above theories examine the perspective of social work practice. In addition, the fourth dimension

encompasses theories of social work research emphasising research as an area of its own that analyses practices from outside and also applies and produces theories.

Theories are context-bound, so social work and theories on which it is based are always dependent on the cultural and political context. Different theories provide different kinds of understanding of people's actions and social situations. (Howe 1998) Theories make it possible to try to understand the world in a conscious and systematic way. Social work theories help social workers to understand the complex and difficult situations of human life. Strengthening of the knowledge basis of social work creates the prerequisites for the growth of professional identity in social work.

Jan Fook (2005) has stated that it is justified to assess critically the knowledge applied in the production of social work knowledge and in social work: For whom, and from whose perspective, is the knowledge produced and collected? Who gathers knowledge, how and for what purpose is the gathered knowledge used? What kind of a truth is generated about social problems or desirable life? Concepts and analyses are needed in social work in order to transform the observations and experiences gained from practical social work into a basis for knowledge in social work. Knowledge produced from practical social work helps to understand how phenomena and issues are connected to the surrounding society. In order for the knowledge gained from practical social work to be able to develop further and to reach social work actors for assessment, it must first be theorised.

Pauli Niemelä (2009, 210) states that knowledge has a twofold role in social work. The production of theoretical knowledge is a question of the knowledge itself, i.e. understanding the phenomenon is the goal. Respectively, in producing the practical activity, the knowledge serves as a tool for activity.

Different kinds of knowledge form a solid basis for the professional knowledge of social work. Values and ethics are significant sources of knowledge, because they direct the activity and form the normative knowledge concerning the whole profession. (Raunio 2004.) It is possible to analyse the different kinds of knowledge analytically and separately, but in the professional practice they interlock, forming an interactive entity. Professional problem-solving involves acting through various kinds of knowledge, and in some cases it cannot be strictly said on which the kind of knowledge a right problem-solving is based in that case. (Figure 11.)
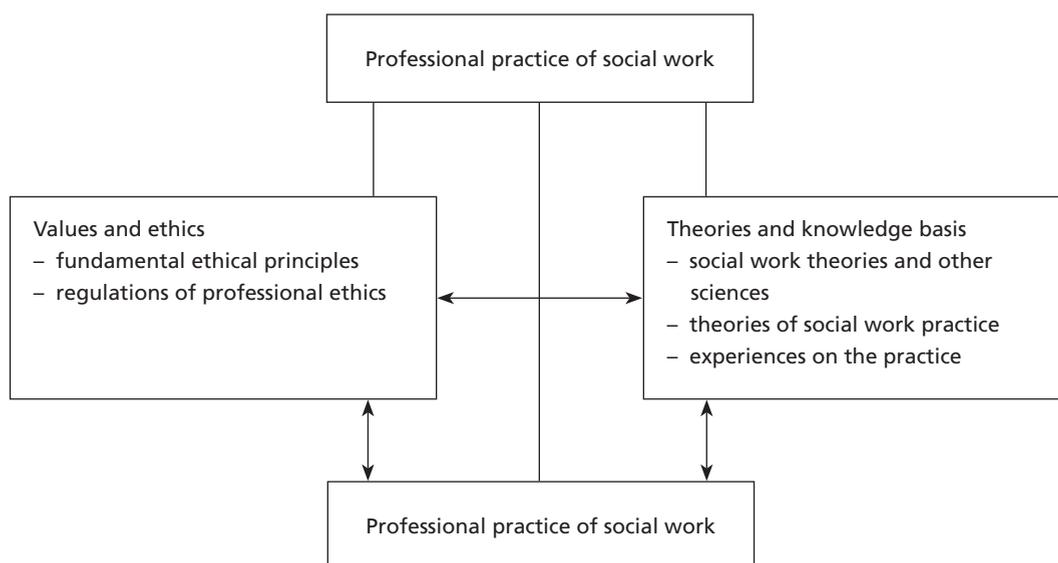
FIGURE 11. The professional practice of social work. (Satka 2004)

Knowledge based on research, as well as knowledge grounded on experiences gained from practice, are basic elements of the professional knowledge in social work. (Raunio 2004.) The following five knowledge types are significant to professional activity in social work (Drury-Hudsonin 1999; Raunio 2004):

- Theoretical knowledge consists of concepts, models or paradigms that organise a phenomenon and make it possible to explain, describe, predict and control the world around the worker. Theoretical knowledge is based on research.
- Empirical knowledge is based on studies where knowledge is gathered and examined systematically. The aim is to document, describe experiences, explain phenomena, predict future events and to assess outcomes. These tasks are traditional tasks for scientific knowledge.
- Procedural knowledge means knowledge of the statutory and operational environment in which social work operates. Procedural knowledge is common, although it may be bound to a specific context.
- Individual knowledge means a spontaneous process in which the social worker is committed to act without conscious forethought. It includes individually adopted common sense as the basis for action. Individual knowledge includes intuition, cultural knowledge and common sense. Thus, individual knowledge is very intuitive and is linked with the worker's individual common sense. It is so-called tacit knowledge, which means that it is difficult to be transformed into formal knowledge.
- Practical wisdom is gained through practical social work. The social worker works at the same time with many cases that have a similar problem, or at the same time he/she is working with different problems that have dimensions in common with the problem being discussed. Practical wisdom is based on the experiences shared by workers.

In social work, it is also important to focus on the knowledge gained through practical work. Jan Fook (2000) has stated that practical knowledge, i.e. implicit knowledge, forms a large part of the knowledge applied by the social worker. The implicitness of practical knowledge is focused on practical wisdom, in which case the social worker transfers knowledge gained through many individual client cases from one problem to another. One concern is that a large share of practical wisdom remains undocumented individual knowledge. In addition, Fook states that workers have a duty to theorise practices in the different. Theorising is needed if the intention is to develop the knowledge within social work. Theorising is also needed to get the knowledge assessed and to respond to the changing and hectic contexts of social work. Further, through reflection, social workers can identify the implicit knowledge or theory existing in the practical work as well as assess it. Social workers are important knowledge producers.

According to Frederic G. Reamer (1993), understanding what is important is wisdom. Thus, it can be claimed that wisdom means the capability to identify facts essential to the activity. Practical wisdom makes it possible to distinguish the alternatives essential to the professional decision from non-essential ones. However, distinguishing the essentials from the non-essentials does not always take place without problems, nor does it take place through practical wisdom only. Renewing experience-based knowledge requires that the social worker once again reviews the knowledge produced through practical work in challenging and systematic discussion. (Pohjola 1993.) Drury-Hudson (1999) used the following figure to summarise the mutual relationships between different types of knowledge:
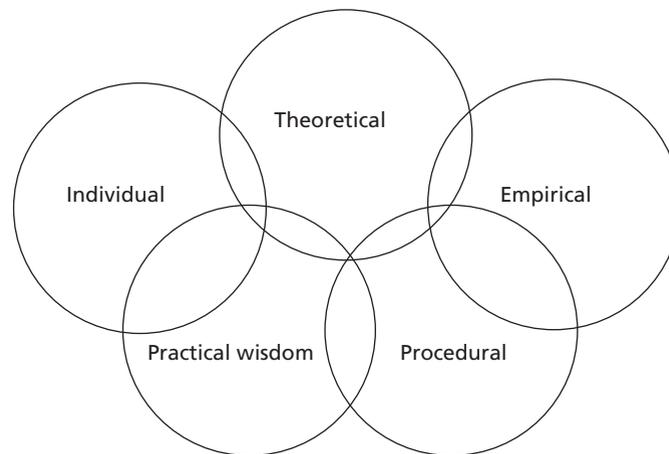
FIGURE 12. The mutual relationships between the different kinds of knowledge. (Drury-Hudson 1999)

Characteristic of social work is the connection between theory and practice. Through theories, one attempts to understand the diversity of the world and phenomena, and also expects that theories would help carry out practical social work. By theory, one commonly means a formal, written and publicly discussed theory. (Payne 1997) Respectively, informal theories consist of knowledge individually adopted and applied by social workers. An informal theory is produced inductively, by generalising individual cases and, based on experiences, it influences actions (tacit knowledge). Formal theory means theory, and correspondingly, informal theory has been spoken of as *knowledge*, in which case a tense relationship prevails between formal and informal theories. Informal knowledge and formal theories, however, can be combined usefully in knowledge production.

In addition to informal and formal theory, there is talk of practice theory and theory for practice. Practice theories are developed by the workers, and they are meaningful to social work practices. Thus, practice theories are implicitly present in the social worker's action. Theories developed for practice are theories, based on scientific research, that are significant to the objectives and goals of social work. (Roberts 1990; Raunio 2004)

Thus, social work activity can be based on the worker´s *informal knowledge and formal theories*. (Table 1.) Conceptions of cultural values and meanings adopted by the social worker influence one's understanding of the client's situation and performance of the social task. Social work has been criticised for the fact that social workers' work with clients is based on approaches and knowledge formed through work experience, but not on theoretical knowledge gained by education nor on methods. (Laurila 1990) Social work is a field of science, so the share of theory should be increased in teaching.

When we analyse the relationship between formal theories and practice, theory can be meaningful to practical social work in many ways. Theory can be targeted to social work activity in general or to the concrete work. From the viewpoint of how theory is related to practical work, social work theories can be spoken of as *perspectives*, *models and explanatory theories*. (Payne 1997.)

Perspectives, i.e. approaches, express world views and values that make it possible for those involved in the activity to analyse their thinking. As a theoretical framework, perspectives include thoughts and questions concerning what social work should be based on. Models, in turn, commonly describe what happens in social work practices. The *models* comprise principles of activity that provide consistency for the activity. An important question is, whether the models of social work are universal and transferable from one culture and one activity environment to another. *The explanatory theory* provides answers as to why a particular activity leads to certain

TABLE 1. Types of social work theories

Types of theory	Formal theory	Informal theory
Theories from social work (theories of what social work is)	Formally written reports defining the nature and meanings of well-being (e.g. liberal, Marxist, feminist, reformist)	The ethical, political and cultural values which the workers lean on in order to define social work functions.
Theories in social work (theories of how social work is done)	Formal written practice theories (e.g. casework, family therapy, group work)	Inductively directed, unwritten practice theories constructed on the basis of experience.
Theories on the targets of social work (theories on the reality of social work clients)	Formally written social scientific theories and empirical knowledge (e.g. about personality, marriage, family, race, social class, gender).	Experience applied by the workers and common cultural meanings (e.g. the family as an institution, normal behaviour, good parenting).

consequences. It also describes the circumstances involved and explains why something happens. At its best, the explanatory theory helps the social worker to understand the mechanisms of the phenomenon that is currently the object of activity and to perceive the causal relations influencing the phenomenon. According to Payne (1997), theory at its best serves as the basis for practice when it includes a normative, descriptive and explanatory element. Theory has to help analyse the phenomena encountered at work, to increase understanding and to open new perspectives to professional activity.

3.2 The exploratory approach to work in the mentoring work process

The basic task of research on social work activity is to produce knowledge for developing social work practices. Activity research focuses on social activity based on interaction. People focus their activity on other individuals and take them into consideration within their activity. Knowledge is produced by means of practice, activity and experience. It is important to remember that learning is characterised as being active and changing. Knowledge is not only the passive examination of facts but also target-oriented actions in situations involving problems. (Dewey 1929/1999) A new kind of a relationship is created between knowledge, knowing and practices when academic knowledge and the professional knowledge gained by experiences in practical work are seen as being equal and interactive.

Activity research aims at gaining practical benefit and development activity through reflective thinking. Activity research also aims to strengthen workers' own abilities and to get them to trust in their own abilities and know-how. In other words, activity research aims at empowering individuals and communities. For these reasons, activity research has attracted interest in social sciences and has much to offer to mentoring, where the aim of the work process is to develop social work practices and strengthen professionalism.

It is characteristic that activity research is commonly a time-limited research and development project where new action modes are planned and tested. According to the extent of activity, activity research is divided into five levels of analysis: *the individual level; the group level; the level of relationships between groups; the organisation level; and the regional network level.* At the individual level, for example, the social worker observes his/her own actions and has discussions with colleagues and other parties involved. The research report then describes the individual's

experiences and the actor's thinking processes and learning. Group level activity research is research involving cooperation. The team has planned meetings, discusses the agreed theme and develops its own activity. This approach has been applied, for example, to peer mentoring. The mentors have met as agreed and have together developed the forms of work in mentoring. When activity research focuses on the relationships between groups, its aim is to solve problems in the cooperation among different groups. The objective of the joint project between school and social work can be the development of an operational model for assisting young people with substance abuse. Organisation-level activity research is applied in order to develop organisations, such as social services, schools and public health care. In these cases the aim is to define long-term operational goals. The whole staff participates in the development work, and effort is made to achieve an open dialogue in mutual discussions. (Heikkinen 2006, 18)

Activity research, at its best, combines theory and practice by building bridge between the university, various actors and society. The goal of universities is to produce knowledge and maintain critical discussion about the knowledge produced. However, the well-grounded comments of actors outside the science community bring significant knowledge to academic knowledge production process. Activity research is a process where understanding and interpretation increase gradually. Understanding the world in a social way is a process in itself, a process in which phenomena are changing constantly.

In the activity research aiming for development of the work community, activity-based tools for development are created. The structural model of the activity system can be applied as a tool for development activity (Figure 13). It can also be applied to analysis of the self-understanding associated with social work in the mentoring process. The elements of activity are *the actor*, i.e. the individual, or the collective, i.e. the profession, social work. The actor's activity is influenced, for example, by self-understanding, identity, ideology, framework and culture. *The objective of the activity* is the prevailing professional practice, which is affected by the understanding of social problems and by the understanding of how to influence them. The tools through which the target is influenced are the traditions concerning science, research and theories, e.g. explanatory models, models of understanding and directing models. *Work distribution* means the division of the work done by actors working on the same target, e.g. in multi-professionalism. *The community* refers to a community of actors and is characterised by *rules,* such as norms, laws, the definition of tasks and limits. (Engeström 1987)
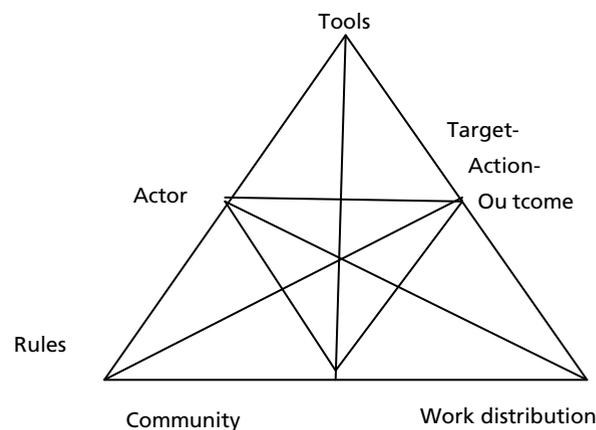

FIGURE 13. The structural model of the activity system (Engeström 1987)

All the phases of the process are handled by the actors during discussions. The most important sources that lead to change are contradictions. It is central to development and learning to locate contradictions. When contradictions are identified, they can be discussed comprehensively with a view to needs for change, and the discussion does not focus only on individual problems.

In mentoring process, too, analyses can apply the cycle of expansive learning (Figure 14). First, the development of work is assessed and current practices and needs for developing the work are pinpointed. The knowledge and material used are determined on the basis of analysis of the development work. The analysis examines interdependencies as well as the possibility to change things. The problems encountered in one's own work are also discussed through the contradictions occurring in the activity system. When contradictions are pinpointed, attention is not focused on a search for conflicts between people, but rather on conflicts between the actor, tools and the target of work.
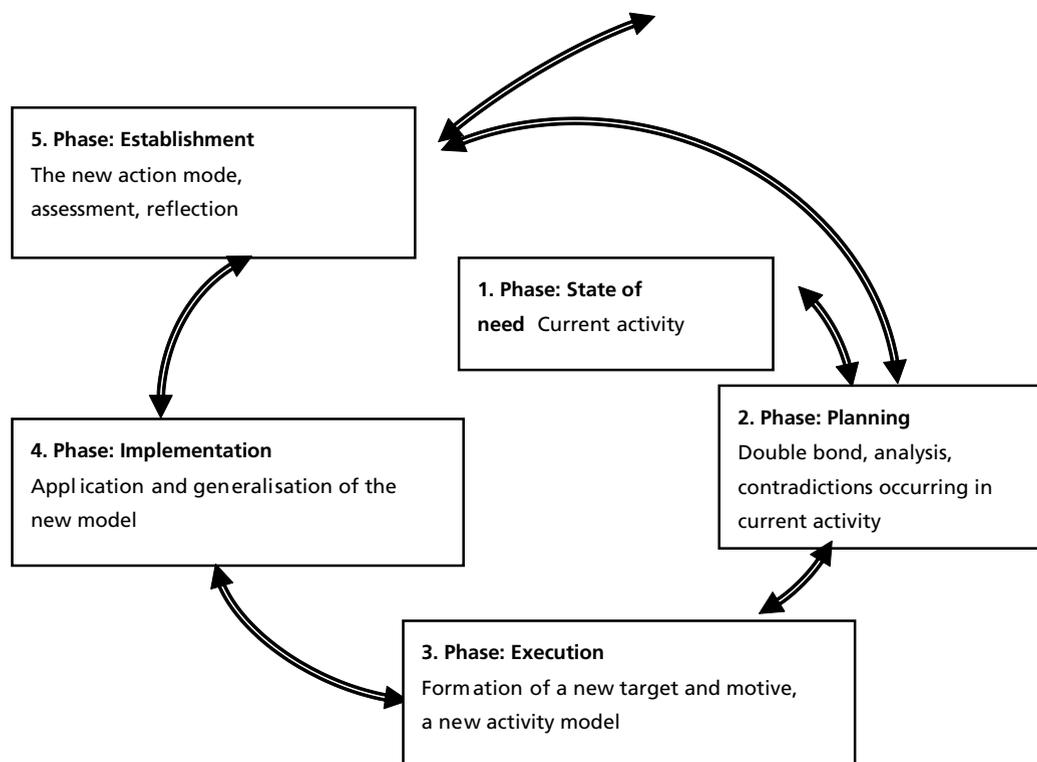
FIGURE 13. The expansive learning cycle (Engeström 1987)

After this, a new activity model, tools and ways to conceptualise the work are developed. Instead of a single social problem, the target of the activity in social work can be conceptualised within the context of the client's comprehensive life situation. Respectively, the actor's burnout can be conceptualised comprehensively in the context of the opportunities and regularities of carrying out social work. The different phases of the learning cycle, one questions, analyzes, develops and introduces new tools. In activity research for development, the analysis stresses the target of activity.

Conceptualising the work process through the expansive learning cycle requires a willing-to-learn type of relation to one's own activity. The exploratory work process in social work and mentoring can be in some extent to describe as the following questions (Howe 1987):

TABLE 2. A questioning attitude to work

1) The surrounding reality:	- What is the question inherent in it?
2) Concrete experience:	- What is going on?
3) Reflective contemplation:	- How did it become real?
	- What should be done?
4) Conceptualisation:	- What does it mean?
5) Practical work experimenting:	- What/how do I act on the basis of it?
6) Assessment of activity:	- Was it finished?
7) Orientation towards the new:	- What comes next?

There is an extensive need for diversified knowledge in social work. An exploratory approach to the work produces knowledge and discussion about the surrounding reality and operational context in order to be able to renew work processes and assess the activity. Social work is always carried out in a local operational context, and knowledge of the surrounding society is required. In practice, the need for knowledge means analysis of local circumstances, problem analysis and charting service needs. Social work expertise includes utilisation of research knowledge, which means taking advantage of the existing knowledge. Along with producing and passing on knowledge, an exploratory approach to the work is needed for analysing and renewing work processes within social work, i.e. for producing new thinking about the work. The activity associated with the assessment of work enables critical discussion about social work methods and practices. The exploratory approach to the work in social work and mentoring produces knowledge and helps to analyse and assess one's own actions as well as identifying the boundary conditions of activity (Pohjola 1993).

3.3 Opportunities in practical teaching within social work opened through mentoring

Practical teaching/training is a significant part of social work education. During practical teaching, the student is socialised into the profession, gets professional readiness and encounters multidimensional questions about practical social work. For the student, practical teaching and guidance play a significant role in constructing the social worker's professional identity. Professional know-how, the knowledge and skills needed for guiding, as well as readiness to research and develop work processes are required of the mentor. This means that, as concerns the competence required of the mentor, it is not enough only to be professionally more experienced or to possess only mentoring skills.

It is important for the mentor to be aware of the power and responsibility involved in the mentor's work. There is reason to remember that power exists everywhere: in the economy, science, education, in family life and so on. Exercise of power and knowledge are intertwined. Knowledge is required in order for the exercise of power to be successful. When the social worker or the mentor examines his/her own actions, he/she produces valuable knowledge on social reality and his/her own professional and scientific understanding. The more confident the person is, and thus the more power based on this confidence, the easier it is for him/her to act in society (Niemelä 2009, 230).

Learning is a continuing process in mentoring. Learning takes place also during intervals between the meetings of the mentor and the actor. During the mentoring process, mentors pose questions and question things. Actors have to reflect, think critically and analyse their activity in order to clear their thoughts. The mentor can direct the actor to apply theoretical knowledge

to practice, which strengthens the relationship between theory and practice. Through mentoring in the practical teaching, one aims at solving different practical problems, improving social work practices and gaining a deeper understanding of them. At its best, the mentoring process opens the opportunity for an individual to develop social work as a profession and a field of science.

In the mentoring process, learning is connected both to professional development and to individual growth and development. Actors work with their thinking processes and practice their reflection skills, as well as assess their work methods. In other words, the focal point in mentoring is the actor's work orientation. Work orientation is the significance of the worker's actions, the target of activity, a conscious changing of the target of activity (tools, methods), and the subject of activity (one's own activity, work distribution and cooperation) as well as the mutual relationships between them. (Arnkil 1986) All this takes place in interaction with the mentor, which means that mentoring is a learning process also for the mentor. Also the theories used by the mentor can be placed under critical contemplation during the process.

Mentoring may change the actor's behaviour, even though he/she does not realise he/she has learnt something new. It can be claimed, however, that if some learning has taken place, it is seen as a change in behaviour. If the concept of learning has included strengthening of the actor's identity and self-respect, so that he/she has the courage to tell his/her opinion in the work community and to bear responsibility, the outcome is that the person has achieved individual growth and development. This learning process can be a slow one, with visible results in the long run. However, mentoring may have strengthened the beginning of this process. Through mentoring, the actor's thinking, actions, self-reflection and personality development can be influenced. Emotions and interaction are very significant factors in mentoring. It is essential to contemplate the significance of emotions and interaction both for facilitating learning and from the perspective of obstacles. In other words, which emotions and interaction facilitate learning and development, or which experiences and emotions are obstacles to them. (Auvinen 1991)

According to research (Leskelä 2005), mentoring has provided many positive things and experiences for the actors. However, little critical research on mentoring is available. Among the positive influences of mentoring cited are the actor's professional development, better resilience, improved work satisfaction, empowerment and enhanced career development. Respectively, the benefits gained by the mentor (Kram 1985), among others, are : gaining appreciation and additional significance for work; the possibility to learn through interaction with the actor; and improved work motivation.

Mentoring can help both the actor and the mentor to become committed to the organisation and to implementing its basic task, to development activity and to adopting an innovative approach to the work. Mentoring makes it possible for the actor to have an individual forum for discussion and learning that responds to his/her development needs. Learning takes place in social interaction, in which case it develops the readiness for perceiving the entity of social work and, for its part, improves the learning results. The benefits gained through mentoring cover, at its best, the micro, meso and macro levels.

4 The Ideas of Mentoring in the Organisation of Practical Work in Social Work

Olga Zvyagina

The organisation of student practical work has always been one of the most important tasks of institutions of higher education in the process of specialist training.

Social work is a rather new specialisation for Russian institutions of higher education, and the profession of "social work" is rather new for Russian society. That is why, in comparison to traditional specialisations, practical work in social work needs to pay more thorough attention to methodical considerations and development. Moreover, signing of the Bologna Declaration and the transition to a two-level education system prompted the search for new approaches to the realisation of this task.

In order to compare the content and organisation of the training of social work specialists, we reviewed the applicable professional standards for higher education in social work in Russia (State educational standard for higher professional education "Social work", 2000), the project for a new Federal state educational standard for higher professional education in training order 42 b "Social work", Bachelor's degree, 2009, and the Global standards for social work education and training, 2004, that were elaborated by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). The purpose of this review was not to conduct a detailed analysis of the standards; instead, the aim was to reveal some differences that are important in terms of the content and organisation of training of personnel.

As is known, the Global standards for social work education and training presuppose the most general issues concerning definition of the mission, aims and tasks of social work. The Global standards also present the main tasks and approaches to the organisation of professional education with regard to various factors (lecturer staff, regulations concerning enrolment and the provision of equal opportunities for student education taking into consideration of ethnic, race and gender aspects, the values of social work and an ethical code of behaviour, etc.). It is obvious that the professional education standards of different countries have to take these Global standards into account. What characteristics are typical of the present Russian standards of professional education in social work?

The project for a new Federal state educational standard of higher professional education for the training of Bachelors in social work (2009) includes the following objectives for the professional activity of Bachelor's degree holders: a) social work and technological activity; b) research; c) organisation and management; d) social work and project activity. With regard to project activity, it is obvious that training in the implementation of projects will become an integral part of higher professional education for social workers. The professional objectives of education for a Bachelor's degree are closely connected with the formation of competences that will become the basis for the qualification. The project on the standard defines competences as "the ability to apply knowledge, skills and personal characteristics for successful activity in the concrete sphere"[2]. It is evident that social and technological, research, organisational, managerial and project competences can be formed only when there is unity of theoretical knowledge and practical activity. At the same time the project for the new Federal state educational standard presupposes 40–42 academic

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2   Project. Federal state standard on higher professional education. Training order 42-6-Social work. Qualification (degree) – Bachelor's degree. – Publishing house RGSU, M., 2009.

points for the organisation of practical work, i.e. one sixth of all the main Bachelor's educational programmes. In European universities this corresponds to approximately one third.

The Global standards consider the essential understanding of social structural, political and economic iniquity and other social phenomena, and their influence on the individual's observance or violation of human rights, to be the foundation of social work. This objective is not set in the current Russian standard or in the project for a new Federal state educational standard of higher professional education on the training of Bachelor's in social work (2009).

International standards outline the necessity of evaluating the results achieved; this evaluation, in turn, requires the skills of analysis, self-analysis and reflection. The current Russian standard does not include these requirements, while in the project for a new standard, the general cultural competences (GCC) include such requirements as the ability to assess one's own advantages and disadvantages as well as the ability to define the ways and to choose the means for the development of advantages and for the removal of disadvantages (GCC-7).

In comparison with international standards, the Russian standards of professional education pay much less attention to the issues of ethics and the formation of professional values of social work. Nonetheless, the list of professional competences (PC) includes indication of the readiness to follow professional ethical requirements in the course of professional activity (PC-12).

On the whole, even a brief comparison of the standards for professional training in social work shows that, in Russian universities, theory prevails over practice. The value base and ethical grounds of specialist activity are still weakly developed, and insufficient attention is paid to the inclusion of students in research activity, development of critical thinking, reflection and to the abilities to asses one's own activity. In order to create a new model of practical work that corresponds to international requirements, it is necessary to take into account all these aspects. The choice of and guidance by certain methodological and theoretical grounds are the crucial points in terms of the planning of practical work in social work.

Thus, to draw some conclusion on the basis of the factors mentioned above, we can outline the most significant issues concerning the organisation of practical work on social work:
1. Guidance by methodology and theory.
2. Unity of theory and practice.
3. Taking account of international experience.

This position makes it possible again to point out the importance of the search for new ideas for the organisation of practical work aiming to create competent specialists. From our point of view, the concept of mentoring, to which the first chapters of this publication are devoted, is this idea. This approach cannot be called absolutely new for Russian education theory and practice. The main points of the concept of mentoring correspond to the personally oriented approach, the personal action approach and the humanistic approach developed in Russian psychological pedagogical science (Sh. A. Amonashvily, I.S.Yakimanskaya , etc). The authors of, perhaps, the only meaningful manual on the organisation of practical work in the social work area, Yu.N. Galaguzova, G.V. Sorvacheva, G.N. Shtinova, also stated that the personal action approach to the process of the professional development of specialists in the social work area should be the methodological basis of practical work planning[3].

Let us present the main ideas of the theory of the personal action approach. First of all, this approach is grounded in respect for human dignity and development of the self-actualizing person. The theory pays attention to the main values of life: "I am a creature of selection that cannot choosing my own way of life; I am an independent person… in terms of determination of the

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3   Galaguzova Yu.N., Sorvacheva G.V., Shtinova G.N. Sotsialnaya pedagogika: Praktika glazami prepodavateley I studentov: Posobie dlya studentov (Social pedagogics: Practice from the position of lecturers and students: Manual for students).- M., Vlados, 2001.

purposes of my own life; I am a person who bears personal responsibility for every act of choice".[4] These points should be considered as the basis for the organisation of practical work in social work. In turn, the personally oriented concept can be applied as the theoretical foundation for the Bachelor's training in social work in the institution of higher education.

In 2007–2009, within the project "Support to Social Work Addressing Children and Families in the Republic of Karelia", the planning of a new model of practical work for students of specialising in "Social work" was organised using mentoring methodology. Here we can present some results of participation in the project and considerations on this point.

Work to create the model began with an analysis of the existing problems. The lecturers working under the Chair of Social Work, the heads of practical institutions who traditionally provide students with places to carry out their practical work, and students themselves answered questions concerning the organisation of practical work. In cooperation, the following main disadvantages were formulated:

1. There is no interaction between the process participants that would contribute to the linking of theory and practice in social work.
2. There is no common understanding of the list of competences, i.e. concrete professional tasks, that the specialist must be able to perform.
3. The process for the formation of the value base of the profession is not being developed.
4. The formation of critical thinking about one's own activity is not being developed.

The general conclusion concerned the necessity to improve the process of practical work, including changes in the ways of interaction between the heads of practical working places and students, between the heads of practical working bases and the lecturers at the institution of higher education responsible for practical work, and changes in the content and form of reporting on practical work.

By the beginning of the project, the model of practical work could be presented as line contacts between the chair and the practical institution that were conducted through students. There was weak interaction between the subjects, and it focused mostly on formal fulfilment of the tasks of practical work (Figure 15).
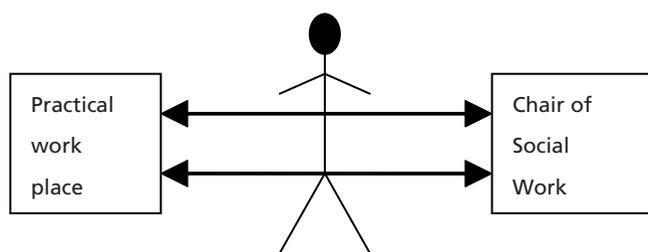

FIGURE 15.

From the position of personally oriented approach and the mentoring concept, the model of practical work should include more various interactions that presuppose activity aiming at formation of the students' key competences. A similar model is presented on Figure 16. The implementation of such model in practice requires close cooperation among all subjects involved in the activity. They must also share a common understanding of the final purposes and ways of to achieve them. In other words, it is necessary to set and discuss the purposes and results together. Joint reflection and critical thinking about the completed tasks are also necessary.

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4   Gusinsky E.N., Turchaninova Yu.I. Sovremennie obrazovatelnie teorii (Modern educational theories).- M.,2004.- P.68
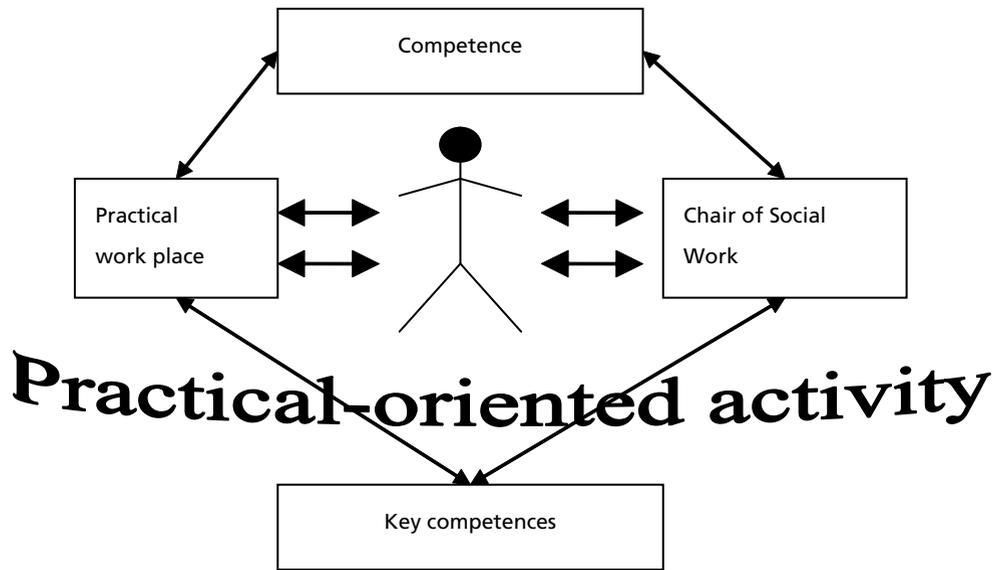
FIGURE 16.

The aforesaid corresponds to E.R. Yarskaya-Smirnova's opinion. Analysing the Western experience of specialists' professional training, she says that successful social work presumes a cycle of practical education that includes concrete experience, reflective observation, theoretical conceptualisation and active experimentation that is susceptible to specific professional situations[5]. Returning to the first part of this publication, let us point out the fact that education is presented by the authors as a cycle consisting of four stages that contain *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.*

From our point of view, the use of mentoring methodology, in particular, can contribute to formation of the link between theory and practice and to the formation of competences necessary for social work.

How have the ideas of mentoring in the organisation of students' practical work changed during the project?

The scheme "Mentoring as a process" presented in the second part of this manual was a specific plan for the development of interaction between all participants. Activity started from the first meeting between the student, the lecturer and the student's supervisor at the practical institution. In this case, the lecturer and the supervisor served as mentors. In the course of the conversation, the motives and expectations were revealed and the tasks of practical work were formulated individually for the student. The tasks for practical work were common to all the students (Appendix1), but at the first meeting they took concrete shape and were specified, taking into account the interests of all participants. On the basis of the conversation, the working plan for the period of practical work was elaborated.

The second stage in the mentoring process was practical activity. There, much attention was paid to the development of reflective skills, the formation of conceptual instruments and support for individual professional growth. Discussions with the mentor were the main tool for this stage. In addition, students had to keep a diary with descriptions and analyses of their impressions, emotions and experience of interaction obtained during the workday.

The last stage involved the final meeting between the mentor and the actor. During this final meeting, the two reflected on the practical work, analysed the results that were achieved, and

5   Yarskaya-Smirnova E.R. Professionalizatsiya sotsialnoy raboti v Rossii (Professionalization of social work in Russia)// Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya (Social research) No5, 2001. P.93

discussed the new competences that the actor had gained in the course of the practical work. The discussion revealed the problems and unfulfilled tasks, and set prospective aims. In addition, the student's activity in practical work was evaluated at this meeting. Appendix 3 presents the evaluation lists of characteristics according to which the mentor assessed the actor's activity. The competences formulated during the project on the new standard were taken as the basis for formulation of the evaluation lists. To conclude the mentoring, a general conference took place where students exchanged their experiences obtained in the course of practical work.

We can now turn our attention to the concrete tasks of practical work, the fulfilment of which the mentor and the actor worked together. The first-year students carried out study practice the main aim of which was to contribute to their professional self-determination as future employees within the system of social protection and social service. The idea then was to form a more complete and consistent notion of practical work. Thus the mentor's task was to assist the student concerning awareness of the mission of social work and its place in society. Regular meetings were held for discussing these issues in order to promote achievement of this goal.

Let us present some examples gathered from the first-year students' reports of their practical work:.

> "During the first year of education I got to know the basis of social work and some theories. In the course of practical work I managed to rethink my understanding of social work. My attitude towards the profession and people changed dramatically. I want to master this specialisation further" (V. Zheltetsky).

> "Frankly speaking, even a year ago when I submitted the documents to enter the specialisation "social work", I did not clearly understand the essence of this profession. Unfortunately, at the present time the specialisations of lawyer and economist are more popular. Even if a small survey would be organised and people would be asked: "Do you know what is social work?", I am sure that half of respondents would answer that this is something like sweeping at retired people's homes or chopping wood for some old lady, or they would not even give a clear answer. This is not their fault. In Russia, social work lacks a proper place; it's not like, for example, the situation in Western countries where there are specialists in social work in almost every institution, company and enterprise. Now I can say that I am completely satisfied with my choice and in future I would like to work in accordance with my specialisation, which attracts my interest more and more." (S. Zavoloko)

> "Now I have a clear enough understanding of the mission of my profession. I have understood it thanks to practical work. Of course, at university we study theory more, but practice is the most useful experience" (A. Fedorov)

The tasks of practical work become increasingly more complicated from one year to the next. By the third year of their education, students should master some professional competences, know "the main concepts and theories in the field of social work", and should be able "to correlate scientific paradigms with the existing concepts and theories of social work"[6].

During the third year of education, the correlation and description of the theories of social work applied in the practical activity of the institution have become important tasks of practical work. From our point of view, this task helps to focus the conceptual instrument more precisely and contributes to awareness of the practical activity. Here, the role of mentor is very important. The activity carried out through this project showed that many students had difficulty with the correlation of theory and practice, and it was hard for students to make correct conclusions

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6   Project. Federal state standard of higher professional education. Training direction 42-6-Social work. Qualification (degree) - Bachelor. – Publishing house RGSU, M., 2009.

without discussing this issue with the mentoris of practical work. Some extracts from the essays of third-year students are presented below.

> "Have you ever thought about your actions? You will exclaim: "What a silly question! But have you ever thought about how scientific theories elaborated by scientists describe your behaviour? Most likely, you have not. This is because man usually acts by intuition and does not work out a precise plan, supporting its points with scientific grounds of activity. But all these facts do not mean that it is not necessary to know theory. Let us imagine that a someone faces a difficult choice: what should he/she do in the existing situation? Going over all the possible variants of behaviour in his/her mind, he/she considers the most effective variant. But it does not mean that the result will be ideal and everything will be better. Man thinks from the position of his/her own perception of a problem, the very situation and personal experience. This could be the theoretical knowledge that is worth using to solve this problem.
>
> This is the approach manner that specialists use at work. In their mind they do not go though the titles of theories and their content in brief, and they do not choose the optimal theory in accordance with which they start to act. No, everything is in the same manner – spontaneously but also professionally…" (E. Busigina)

> "Will you be my mother?" a 6–year-old girl asked me, looking at me with naivety and childishness…Oh, my God… What a heartache it was…Of course, I should understand that this is the profession I have chosen myself but I cannot…my heart is bleeding… What bad thing did this little girl do? For what or for whom does she have to pay? This is sad… It is necessary to get up steam since this is just the first day and a month is before me. But then when we met senior groups it became easier. We worked mostly with a psychologist. I was very glad about this because I think that in the children's house the work of a psychologist is very interesting. That is why in my essay I will describe psychological theories and their practical application." (K. Fokina)

During the fourth year of education, the professional competences involved in the use of social pedagogical methods and technologies in practical social work were built up in the course of the practical work. The abilities to communicate with client were also strengthened in the course of the practical work. In this connection, one of the tasks was to learn. The following extracts of their reports are examples of how O. Dolmatova, N. Kovalevskaya and Yu.Panova, three students who did their practical work in the Office of the Ombudsman for Child Protection in the Republic of Karelia, described the use of technology, the "network of close people".

> "The notion of a "network of close people" means the whole surrounding of the client, people with whom he/she communicates, people who are dear to him/her and who can influence child. It is very important to reveal people who are significant to child and to work with them. How does the work with child start? The difficulties that a child has should be defined. In the first stage it is necessary to achieve confidential contact and to get family members to believe that they will be assisted. The aim of this is to make them feel comfortably. If family members do not trust specialists, that is counter to effective work, since all the actions taken to overcome difficulties will be completed without interest or will not be completed at all. In the current state of affairs Russian citizens are not used to turning to social services for help. They do not believe that they will receive effective help since the client's needs are not always taken into account. Often the specialist even does not listen to the client and immediately seeks to make "a diagnosis." The client's needs are not revealed. Thus the main point at work is to achieve confidential relations with the client and to enter into dialogue to determine the real needs. Dialogue develops bilateral understanding and leads to open joint activity…"

Since tutors were also included in the target group together with students, their assessment of the usefulness and reality of the mentoring concept also played an important role. A questionnaire was organised to evaluate the results of the project. One of the questions was about the practical use of the knowledge obtained. In response to this question, half of the respondents said that they had started to apply the experience gained in their organisation of practical work: in the joint planning of results, in communication with students and as assistance in understanding the activity. They also said they used the experience gained when organising cooperation with lecturers. The rest of the respondents mentioned the usefulness of the gained knowledge and said that they now see students' practical work in a new perspective, and also that they now realise their role as mentors in organising students' practical work.

In drawing intermediate conclusions on the project, the use of mentoring methodology was found to contribute to the development of key competences among students, to foster their professional growth and to promote the formation of professional identity. In addition, mentoring allows rethinking the work of mentors together with students and helps mentors in their own professional development.

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Appendix 1. Tasks

1. How do you understand mentoring?
2. Describe your own professional history.
3. Why do you want to act as a mentor in practical teaching within social work?
4. What factors motivate you to do the work process in question?
5. What do you expect from the mentoring process?
6. What should the mentor know about the actor?
7. What is your idea of learning?
8. What preparatory arrangements do you make before the mentoring meeting?
9. Where do you direct your conscious thinking and actions during mentoring?
10. How do you help the actor in his/her learning process?
11. What sorts of the roles would you like for the actor and the mentor? Why?
12. What is your role as a mentor like?
13. What are the aims of mentoring?
14. How do you build interaction with the actor?
15. How and when do you assess the mentoring process?
16. How do you build trust within the mentoring relationship?
17. How do you analyse the working of the actor?
18. Describe your work as a mentor.
19. What kind of know-how is required in working life?
20. What should a student know about social work during a practice period?
21. What factors weaken work welfare within social work?
22. Which factors are the ones that motivate in social work?
23. What kind of an influence do you wish mentoring to have on work welfare?
24. How can mentoring promote work welfare?
25. Does social work mean a conscious choice of profession for the actor?
26. How conscious is the actor of his or her own know-how?
27. How does the actor value his or her own profession?
28. What kind of ethical questions has the actor found relating to social work?
29. What kind of method does the actor use at work?
30. What is a good working morale like?
31. How committed is the actor to his or her work?
32. What is the actor's own role and position in the work community?
33. What is the significance of the actor and his or her colleagues in the work community?
34. How conscious and goal-directed is the actor's own activity in the working community?
35. What features, characteristic of different development phases within social work, do you find in your own work community?
36. How do these characteristics appear in everyday work?
37. How do these characteristics affect your own professional activity?
38. What kind of know-how is needed in social work, in your opinion?
39. What kind of professional knowledge and skills needed in social work are provided in social work education?
40. How can mentoring further the development of the social worker's professionalism?
41. What is the significance of practical teaching within social work to professional and scientific developing of the field?
42. How can social work theories be analysed in the mentoring process?
43. What kind of a relationship do you think there is between social work theory and practice?