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Integrating learning community principles and strategies for enhancing academic and social agency partnerships in social work education

Pamela Johansen, Philip M. Ouellette

Abstract

Social work education has a long history of placing emphasis on experiential learning through required field experiences. There is, however, considerable concern regarding the fragmentation in social- work education programs between what is taught in the classroom versus what is taught in internship programs by field instructors. New ways to conceptualize and enhance the coordination gap between academia and field agencies are needed. This article provides an overviw of the concept of a learning community, its relevancy to social work education, and provides examples of learning community strategies that have the potential of enhancing better linkages between faculty and field instructors. Specific suggestions for the development of learning communities are included. Learning community principles and its accompanying strategies may be one way to better conceptualize and bridge the coordination gap that is frequently confronted by the conflicting realities of dual training systems in social work education.

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TO CONTACT OUR MAIN CAMPUS: Indiana University School of Social Work 902 West New York Street Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, 46202 Voice: 317.274.6705

FAX: 317.274.8630 TDD/TTY: 317.278-2050

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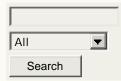
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