

Submission by

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Submission to Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry

Response to 7.1.3: What workforce development and retention strategies are required to meet the needs of the child and family welfare sector in the future?

Child Protection across Australia and abroad has been plagued by workforce challenges, public tragedy and media scandal. (Brouwer 2009, Kelly and Jackson 2010). Child Protection practitioners engaged in this field of practice are required to make critical and complex decisions with limited, sometimes contradictory information and limited professional experience. When considered in the context of reportedly high staff turnover and high caseloads, (Brouwer, 2009) social work practitioners require nothing short of a magic wand.

The degree of expertise required by child protection practitioners to be effective is extremely high. A child protection practitioner works within an environment which is complex, frequently conflictual, highly emotionally charged and one in which the consequences of intervention has major impact on the safety of vulnerable children. The knowledge, skill and analytic ability required cannot be overestimated. Munro (2008) suggests that child protection practitioners require development to strengthen their critical reasoning skills in order to effectively draw upon both analytic and intuitive processes. Generic professional training in disciplines such as social work can give a sound foundation for child protection practice. However more specialist education is required. This education should include a contemporary understanding of the neurobiology of child trauma, and implications for assessment and intervention (Kletzka and Siegfried 2008, Perry 2009).

The need for this education was recognised by the Dept of Human services and in 2009 the Department funded the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice and the Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership. Improving outcomes for children and young people is the ultimate aim of this education program for the child protection, placement and family services workforce. Based on the findings of a systematic review of the literature pertaining to the retention of child welfare workers, (De Panfilis, McDermott Lane, Daining, Summers, Wechsler. and Zlotnik, 2005) the courses were described by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a component of a wider retention strategy. An anticipated outcome of the implementation of the courses was that staff retention would improve and that work in the Victorian community services sector will become a career of choice.

The courses seek to improve outcomes for children and young people through addressing the legislative reforms of Child Youth and Families Act (2005), the Child Safety Act and Wellbeing Act(2005) and the key features policy which are developed in the Best Interests Series.(Miller 2007) They focus on knowledge, practice and skills and provide access to current research and evidenced informed practice focusing on a holistic perspective promoting effective decisions in relation to the safety, development and stability for the child. Several of the workshops include live case discussions with Dr Bruce Perry, founder and Senior Fellow of the Child Trauma Academy in Houston, Texas. The mission of the Child Trauma Academy is to improve the systems that educate, nurture, protect and enrich the lives of children traumatised through experiences of abuse and neglect. (<http://www.childtrauma.org>).

The sessions with Dr Perry provide an overview of the neurobiology of trauma and include thematic presentation by participants and discussion regarding complex practice in leadership, assessment, understanding meanings behind presentation and plans for the future.

The program is an example of close collaboration between workforce needs and strategy and research and conceptually development knowledge from academe. The consortium selected to deliver the program combines academe in social work and family therapy disciplines, a specialist program with a mainstream child welfare organisation and an Aboriginal community controlled organisation. The consortium reflects the areas of knowledge and skill required for effective work in child protection. The curriculum is informed by recent research in relevant areas and builds upon the work undertaken in the development of leadership capabilities (Atkinson Consulting 2008) and the in-house training for child protection provided by the Department of Human Services. Both the Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma incorporate policy reforms which aim to strengthen Victoria's

capacity to protect children and support families, and enhance partnerships between Department of Human services and community organisations.

The ability to develop and implement a curriculum which integrates specialist knowledge, research and skills is an innovative phenomenon of the curriculum.

The Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice and the Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership provide the opportunity for the child protection and family services workforce to upgrade skills, enhance reflective practice, prevent burnout and further develop a professional career. The Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma seek to broaden exposure of the child protection, placement and family services workforce to a range of knowledge areas: substance abuse, social work, family therapy, trauma, attachment, developmental psychopathology, and neuropsychology. Engagement of a broad partnership facilitates the development of innovative practices, cross-sectorial partnerships and research from a variety of perspectives and provides an ongoing interface between research and practice through dissemination of research findings and training.

This submission will summarise the development and delivery of a Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership, and the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice. Initial implementation of the strategy will be described, before presenting the findings of an interim evaluation which highlights the early experience of students undertaking the course, and implications for their practice as leaders.

As at April 2011, the initial, two year Graduate Diploma is nearing completion. A second, one year Graduate Certificate course is also due to conclude in June 2011. Student retention rates have been extraordinarily encouraging. A copy of the interim evaluation report outlines the achievements to date, and is attached. Graduate Certificate students routinely reported a greater confidence to practice, enhanced satisfaction in the work that they were doing in the frontline, and a sense that 'management' valued them by supporting them to undertake this course of study. These beliefs, along with their responses to direct questions about intent to stay are good proxy indicators of a stronger and more sustainable workforce.

Students clearly and consistently indicate making a difference in their work with children and families, their membership of a team including their role as mentor to less experienced practitioners, and their role as a subordinate contributing to supervision. Confidence to engage families who were reluctant to accept a service, to work with children and to explain to families the rationale for decisions drawing upon relevant theoretical models and to share their newly acquired knowledge in their workplace are common examples given.

Graduate Diploma students are all in leadership positions across child protection and family services agencies, and are responsible for staff supervision. The most consistent theme emerging was a positive change in their capacity to purposefully supervise staff, to actively engage in reflective supervision and to proactively use supervision to retain staff and to build well being and satisfaction. Student voices are validated by external stakeholders, including their managers, senior managers across the sector and the consortium themselves.

The evaluation report makes a compelling case for workforce retention and workforce stabilisation.

The provision of these post graduate learning opportunities by the Department of Human Services, can be seen to be associated with an experience of support, development and sense of being 'valued' as an employee.

The courses highlight the importance of an advanced academic program which offers professionals an opportunity to enhance their critical reasoning skills and apply research findings to their practice as caseworkers, middle managers and leaders.

Attachment : Evaluation Report October 2010. Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership and Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice.

References

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1. Executive Summary.

Background

The Department of Human Services contracted a Victorian consortium, (the Consortium), led by the La Trobe University School of Social Work and Social Policy and including La Trobe University the Bouverie Centre, University of Melbourne School of Social Work, Berry Street Take Two and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) in January 2009. The contract requirement was to develop and deliver a Graduate Certificate in Child Protection Practice and a Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership.

These courses were described by the Department of Human Services as a component of a wider retention strategy for experienced practitioners and managers. The contract funded 30 students to undertake each course. The consortium elected to 'over-enrol' and carry the costs in the Graduate Diploma to allow for anticipated inevitable movement over a two year program, although this has, in fact been minimal. Students were fully funded by the Department of Human Services to undertake these programs. A minimum of two places per course were to be offered to Aboriginal Practitioners and Managers employed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, with an additional two places per course for Aboriginal students sponsored by Berry Street and McKillop Family Services

The first four units on each course were delivered in Semester two, 2009, and semester one 2010, following a six month development period. An initial cohort of 30 experienced child and family services practitioners were enrolled in the Graduate Certificate, 35 experienced supervisors and managers from this sector were enrolled in the Graduate Diploma.

The initial cohort of Graduate Certificate students successfully completed their course in June 2010, with 27 of the initial 30 enrolled students scheduled to graduate in October 2010. Seventeen of these graduates are child protection practitioners, the remaining nine are from family services with one graduate from an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. This is a remarkable student retention rate and a noteworthy achievement for post graduate students who also have demanding case practice positions in child protection and family services agencies.

The initial cohort of 35 Graduate Diploma students has been maintained at 30 for the past semester, with a small number of students withdrawing last year as a result of health and family issues. It should be noted that of the 30 students, 20 are child protection team leaders and unit managers with the remaining 10 from family services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's.

Evaluation

This evaluation report builds a strong case for retention, both of the students within the courses, but also of practitioners and leaders who express a commitment to remain within the child and family sector. The evidence for this case will be outlined in the body of the report, and is supported by the data and contemporary literature.

The evaluation report builds upon the Interim Evaluation Report (March 2010) and outlines the first 12 months of course delivery. The report has a dual purpose:

- (a) To provide timely advice to key stakeholders in relation to the early implementation of the course, in light of the course goals identified by Department of Human Services (DHS).
- (b) To offer an opportunity for the consortium to consider critical feedback from students and their supervisors, and to consider the goal attainment of students undertaking the course to date.

In seeking to achieve the identified purpose, the evaluation has addressed three questions:

- Did participation in the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma enhance the quality of the students' practice? (as a practitioner or supervisor/manager)
- Are there improvements or refinements to the courses that could be made?
- Is there evidence of enhanced retention and sustainability of the workforce, and within Child Protection in particular?

Methodology

A 'mixed method' approach to the evaluation has been utilised (Yin 1989) which has included independently analysed quality assurance questionnaires, a mid course semi-structured survey seeking Graduate Diploma student feedback. Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) has been undertaken by the students themselves, and has been independently analysed and summarised in this report. In addition a focus group consultation with Graduate Certificate students' on their final day of study provided rich information. A focus group with Student's supervisors and managers provided their perspectives and senior child protection managers provided feedback on two occasions at meetings. Finally, reflections from Consortium members themselves are incorporated.

The findings of this evaluation are both validating, and extremely positive. Students, their managers and key stakeholders report a strengthened capacity to practice, lead others and to sustain themselves and others in the work.

Findings and implications are summarised below in response to the three evaluation questions.

Question 1. Did participation in the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma enhance the quality of the students' practice? (As a practitioner or supervisor/manager)

Four core themes were noted across the two groups in response to this question as follows:

1. Enhanced confidence and greater competence to operate as a front line case practitioner in child protection or family services.

Students clearly and consistently indicated difference in their work with children and families, their membership of a team including their role as mentor to less experienced practitioners, and their role as a subordinate contributing to supervision. These reflections were supported by other stakeholders. In particular, senior managers across the sector noted a proactive sharing of new knowledge within teams and work units, and a developing culture of information and learning exchange, initiated and led by students within the workplace.

2. Reflective Practice and Decision Making

Promotion of the capacity to lead a reflective culture which promoted an integration of intuitive and analytical reasoning processes is a core component of both courses. It is validating therefore to see that students identify these skills as strengthened in their work practice, as a result of undertaking the courses. Students described themselves as more reflective and analytical, and Graduate Diploma students described a greater capacity to promote this behaviour in the staff that they managed.

3. Enhanced confidence and competence as a leader, including as a leader of organisational culture

It is validating to note that Graduate Diploma students report both a greater sense of confidence in their capacity to lead and greater initiative in leadership practice. Tangible examples in these outcomes are offered in the classroom and validated by external stakeholders. In relation to leading culture within the organisation, students report a far greater awareness of the power of a reflective learning culture within an organisation, with a number reporting that they had initiated structured opportunities for this to occur in the workplace.

4. Stronger capacity for cross sector networks and interagency collaboration

For both the case practitioners in the Graduate Certificate and leaders in the Graduate Diploma, the opportunity to reflect on current(de-identified) case examples, to respectfully challenge each other and to learn together, has led to a much greater appreciation of respective roles and responsibilities and a sense of enhanced mutual respect. It could reasonably be anticipated that this stronger sense of both one's own professional identity and that of others across the sector will enhance collaborative working relationships and support the best interests of children.

Question 2. Are there improvements or refinements to the courses that could be made?

Consistent with the interim evaluation, students did not make any significant recommendations for change to the curriculum content, nor the learning approach. The Enquiry Based Learning method is consistently identified by students as a tangible source of support for their learning.

In accordance with the contract requirement, the Consortium has reviewed the curriculum at the completion of the initial Graduate Certificate and the first four units of the Graduate Diploma. Some minor refinements are recommended by the

academics responsible for development and delivery of curriculum within the consortium and are outlined at Attachment 4.

Question 3. Is there evidence of enhanced retention and sustainability of the workforce and within Child Protection in particular?

The three core themes emerging from the evaluation in response to this question include:

1. For the Graduate Certificate group: Achievement of a stronger more sustainable cohort of practitioners who are motivated to remain in the sector.

That 27 of 30 initially enrolled practitioners completed the course successfully is a remarkable achievement, both for the Consortium and the students themselves. In response to direct questions about intent to stay, each of these students expressed an intent to remain in the child and family practice sector.

2. For the Graduate Diploma group: (i) Enhanced capacity to support and sustain case practitioners via supervision.

Graduate Diploma students are all in leadership positions, responsible for supervision of staff. The most consistent theme emerging was a positive change in their capacity to purposefully supervise staff, to actively engage in reflective supervision, to proactively use supervision to retain staff and to build well being and satisfaction.

3. For the Graduate Diploma group: (ii) Planning to retain practitioners

Graduate Diploma students also referred to the successful completion of an assessment requirement where they were required to establish a Business Plan to retain their staff, which was evidence based and locally responsive. Students completed this as an assignment activity and reported that they were actively implementing their plans in the workplace.

2. The Context for the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma

The Department of Human Services called for prospective providers of two post graduate programs to respond to a Public Tender process in June 2008. A Victorian consortium, led by e La Trobe University School of Social Work and Social Policy and comprising La Trobe University the Bouverie Centre, University of Melbourne School of Social Work, Berry Street Take Two and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), referred to as the Consortium, were awarded the contract over an initial three year period. The contract requirement was to develop and deliver a Graduate Certificate in Child Protection Practice, and a Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership. These courses were described by the Department of Human Services as a component of a wider retention strategy for experienced practitioners and managers.

The contract to develop the programs commenced in January 2009, with the first two units on each course being taught in Semester two, 2009. An initial cohort of 30 experienced child and family services practitioners were enrolled in the Graduate Certificate, 35 experienced supervisors and managers from this sector were enrolled

in the Graduate Diploma. Whilst the contract funded 30 places for each course, the consortium elected to 'over-enrol' in the Graduate Diploma in anticipation of some movement of students of the two year course. Students were fully funded by the Department of Human Services to undertake these programs. A minimum of two places per course were to be offered to Aboriginal Practitioners and Managers employed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, with an additional two places per course for Aboriginal students sponsored by Berry Street and McKillop Family Services.

Course Goals

The goals of the courses as identified by DHS were to:

- Enhance the quality of practice with vulnerable children and families by offering enrichment development programs based on the every child, every chance reforms.
- Further develop the professionalism of the workforce by integrating relevant theoretical frameworks and contemporary research findings into child and family practice.

An anticipated outcome of the project was that staff retention will improve and that work in the Victorian community services sector will become a career of choice. (DHS, 2008)

3. Evaluation Purpose

Principles Underpinning Evaluation Design.

Unrua and Gabor identify three principles that are likely to affect the design and implementation of evaluations: (1) feedback, (2) development and (3) integration. Feedback is described as critical in that it provides the potential basis for future decisions. Similarly, evaluations that are primarily developmental, or formative in design, enable timely information to guide future development. Finally, the integration principle is one that builds into the program design opportunities for continuous improvement, where evaluation data is collected at critical steps of service delivery. (Unrua, and Gabor, cited in Grinnell, 1997).

The evaluation of the Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma courses has been designed with these principles in mind and should enable timely and critical feedback to influence their on-going development. The evaluation model selected is consistent with what Shadish describes as the 'stakeholder service model', in that it has been tailored to the stakeholder's data needs' (Shadish, cited in Grinnell, 1997)

It is recognised that these courses represent a significant investment in the Victorian Child Protection and Family Services workforce. Any future decision about an on-going investment of this kind will be informed by the outcomes of the evaluation.

Evaluation Purpose

The plan for the overall evaluation incorporates both formative and summative elements. Formative elements will address critical questions to assist in curriculum refinement both throughout implementation and on completion of the current contract,

and are required as a component of the DHS/La Trobe University contract. Additionally the wider evaluation will have a distinctly summative flavour (Grinnell, 1997). In seeking to achieve the purpose, the wider evaluation will address three questions:

- Did participation in the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma enhance the quality of the students' practice? (as a practitioner or supervisor/manager)
- Are there improvements or refinements to the courses that could be made?
- Is there evidence of enhanced retention and sustainability of the workforce, and within Child Protection in particular?

4. Course Overview.

The Program Handbook describes the Graduate Certificate as aiming to prepare students to be practitioners who are able to respond to the complexity of human need and integrate the different areas and skills of practice in the challenging and changing organisational settings of contemporary child and family practice (La Trobe University, 2009).

Units offered enable students to integrate theory and practice and to develop an in-depth appreciation of the context of practice. They include theories of development and trauma and research into decision making as well as the skills needed for practice. The Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership is described as aiming to build leadership capability in the sector. It aims to enhance the quality of practice with vulnerable children and families by preparing managers and supervisors to provide leadership which promotes enhanced practice by integrating relevant theoretical frameworks and contemporary research findings into child and family practice.

Units offered seek to operationalise the Leadership Capabilities Framework and bring research and leadership frameworks to the students. The course seeks to achieve attainment of core knowledge and skill with human resource functions including recruitment, supervision, career progression and performance appraisal (La Trobe University, 2009).

Detailed unit descriptions are included as Attachment 1.

Course Content and Delivery

The following features of the course are described in the course handbook (La Trobe University 2009).

- All units in the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice and the Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership were 'workshopped' with Consortium members and representatives of the Department of Human Service to ensure that they provide an integrated 'lens' through which students can focus on the complexity of practice and management issues.

- All units are taught by experienced academics and practitioners. All Consortium members have undertaken Aboriginal cultural awareness training that provides understanding of working with Aboriginal children and families in this sector.
- The development and delivery of the curriculum has been and will continue to be informed by the active participation of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).
- Ecological, developmental and trauma theories within a framework of Best Interests (DHS2007) and social justice will provide an overarching framework to embed both theoretical and practical elements. This approach aims to ensure the integrity of both programs and avoid a fragmented ‘shopping list’ approach.
- Teaching modalities include web based teaching in some units allowing student the opportunity to undertake work in units at their desk or elsewhere in the workplace.
- The courses address the concept of risk and the complex characteristics of clients, as well as the complexity of the service system.
- The teaching and educational philosophy is guided by adult learning principles and facilitates action learning.
- La Trobe University’s urban and regional campuses provide local centres to support students and provide direct access to library and other academic facilities.

Cultural Awareness and Understanding

- All units are continually reviewed for their cultural appropriateness by representatives from VACCA.

Student Assessment

- Assessment tasks require students to demonstrate the practical application of knowledge and skills in their region. Assessments are primarily work related to facilitate students applying and testing their new knowledge and skills in work related topics and activities.
- There is a diversity of assessment tasks in each unit. (La Trobe University, 2009).

Principles of Teaching Approach

The Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice and the Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership have been designed to promote learning that will be useful for students “on the ground” in their work of upholding the best interests of the child, whether that be in front line work or in leadership and support roles.

In order to promote the ideal work culture as described in the *Development Framework for Child Protection Frontline Managers*, (DHS 2008), teaching follows a set of core principles:

- Knowledge with understanding, based in practice, focussed on integration.
- All teaching processes to parallel the desired outcomes.
- The courses are based on adult learning principles.

- Culturally competent teaching.
- Assessment in the service of learning (La Trobe University 2009).

A more detailed description of these teaching principles is at Attachment 2.

5. Evaluation

This report is drafted following an initial twelve months of teaching, at the completion of Semester one, 2010. Eight units have been taught, as follows:

Graduate Certificate: (one complete course)

- Working with Families, Theory and Practice
- Relationship based practice with children and families.
- Collaborative Practice, Decision Making and Best Interests
- Reflective Practice: Use of self and Self Care

Graduate Diploma: (four units delivered from a total of 8 for the course)

- Power of Relationships: Engaging Others
- Decision Making: Thinking Clearly and Reflective Insight.
- Mastering Oneself - Leadership in Reflection and Action
- Delivering Results and Outcome Focus

Evaluation Design and Process

This evaluation report has been prepared with a dual purpose:

- (a) To provide timely advice to key stakeholders in relation to the early implementation of the course, in light of the course goals identified by Department of Human Services (DHS).
- (b) To offer an opportunity for the consortium to consider critical feedback from students and their supervisors and to consider the goal attainment of students undertaking the course to date.

The elements of the design for the evaluation report include:

1. Student participation in the evaluation, including confidential quality assurance questionnaires, goal attainment scaling and critical reflection on course participation and transfer of learning to the workplace.
2. Feedback from key stakeholders, including student supervisors, managers, course lecturers, co-ordinators and course advisors.

These elements are outlined in further detail below.

There are four components of the evaluation design which directly engage students, as outlined in the following section:

- (a) **Quality assurance questionnaire.** This questionnaire is administered in all La Trobe University courses. It is designed by La Trobe University's Curriculum and Learning and Teaching Centre (CLTC). The questions are selected by the CLTC and

cover content and teaching methods. This questionnaire has been distributed to students for each unit of the course taught and independently analysed by the CTLC.

(b) **Modified form of goal attainment scaling (GAS).** In this tool of evaluation students identify goals and realistic outcome measures for each of the core areas of the course, taking into account the four domains of skills, knowledge, culture and self knowledge and their nexus with practice.

There are two groups of goals which students identified and reviewed, these are:

- Enquiry group goals identified by each EBL group for the course as a whole, reviewed and group self-assessed at the end of each semester.
- Unit goals identified by individual students for each Unit, within the scope of the Key Learning Outcomes for the unit, reviewed and self assessed at unit completion.

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) is a tool for identifying outcomes of educational programs or clinical interventions. The tool was first developed by Kiresuk & Sherman (1968) to address the demand for accountability in use of resources in mental health and to improve the evaluation of outcomes of interventions. Since then GAS has been utilised in a range of education, health and community service evaluation and program development processes.

(c) **Mid course survey** for Graduate Diploma students. A semi-structured questionnaire was prepared seeking responses the student's perceptions of the impact on their practice as a result of their participation in the course.

(d) **Focus group consultation session** with Graduate Certificate students held on the final day of their course.

Key Stakeholder Feedback

The evaluation has endeavoured to gain the perspectives of those supervisors and managers of current students undertaking the courses via an initial focus group meeting opportunity in December 2009. Regional Child Protection Managers have also been consulted as to their early reflection on the courses. Consortium members' observations and feedback have also been summarised in this report.

Limitation of Design

A possible limitation is that some of the the data collected from the 'end of year' focus group, mid course survey and stakeholder meetings has been analysed and reported on by a member of the consortium.

This limitation will be offset by the use of a 'mixed method' design (Yin 1989) where other components of the evaluation will be independently analysed. Student feedback in relation to the attainment of DHS identified goals, in particular changes to student's practice and intention to remain in the child and family practice sector, will be collected and analysed by consortium members. Student feedback in relation to the quality of teaching and learning and goal attainment will be independently collected and analysed. An additional possible limitation is that the survey approach itself has been the source of some criticism. Yin argues that surveys may adequately investigate

phenomenon, but ‘their ability to investigate context is extremely limited’ (Yin, 1989, p.23).

What the survey method will provide in this interim evaluation is an opportunity to make a set of observations (De Vaus, 1995) and to begin to develop theories based on these observations. These findings can then be tested in longer term follow up studies.

6. Summary of Findings

6.1 The Quality Assurance Questionnaire has again produced promising results.

The standard La Trobe University Curriculum Teaching and Learning Centre questionnaire was distributed on the final day of each subject to all students, who were given an opportunity to voluntarily complete as anonymous respondents.

Nineteen questions were clustered in the following four areas:

- ‘feedback about your learning’ (4 questions)
- ‘feedback about this subject’ (7 questions)
- ‘additional feedback about this subject’ (4 questions)
- ‘summary feedback about this subject’ (4 questions).

This was then independently analysed and a report developed by the Curriculum Teaching and Learning Centre summarising the results. The report summarises student’s responses, providing frequencies, simple means and standard deviations, and medians for each fixed response question posed. Opportunities to respond via 1-5 Likert style scale gave the following possible responses to questions, in addition to a ‘not applicable’ option:

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Usually
5. Always.

Overwhelmingly students responded very positively about their learning experience and the relevance and value of the subjects. The majority of responses to the questions related to the subjects undertaken attracted mean scores of between 4 (usually) and 5 (always). The reports indicate a high level of student satisfaction with the subject material, their learning in this subject and the relevance of the subjects to the student’s educational goals.

A summary of the Quality Assurance feedback by Course across each of the four subjects taught in 2009 was reported on in the initial, interim evaluation. What follows is an updated report in relation to the four subjects taught in 2010.

Graduate Certificate:

UNIT 3: SWP5CPD COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE, DECISION MAKING AND BEST INTERESTS

24 of the 27 enrolled students (88.8%) for this subject completed the questionnaire.

In response to the first cluster of questions: 'feedback about your learning in this subject', the mean results ranged from 4.0 ('I invest enough time and effort to meet/exceed subject requirements') and 4.8 ('I see the relevance of this subject to my educational goals'). This slightly lower rating in response to a question about the student's own investment in their learning is expected where all students are also full time employees in the demanding child and family services sector.

In response to the second cluster of questions, 'feedback about this subject', the mean results ranged from 4.4 to 4.6. (Assessments are clearly connected to the learning objectives). Of interest, those questions rating slightly lower (4.4) related to the student's understanding of learning objectives, feedback provided, marking and grading criteria.

This feedback has been carefully considered by Consortium members, and implications for teaching will be discussed later in this report.. It may be, however, in part an indicator of the number of students who were unaccustomed to Higher Education requirements, or who had not studied at a tertiary level for some considerable time.

The third cluster of questions inviting 'other feedback' rated relatively poorly, from 2.4 to 2.9. These questions focussed on the usefulness of 'other' technologies in the subject, including online technologies, video conferencing etc. A decision had been taken by the Consortium in consultation with DHS, that these technologies would not be utilised at all in these subjects, and may be in part introduced to students in 2010. It does appear then, that they were responded to incorrectly by a small group of students, and should have been rated by students as 'not applicable.' This pattern was consistent across all four subjects.

The fourth and final cluster of questions sought summary feedback about the subject. The mean response ranged from 4.0 to 4.4, indicating a high level of satisfaction as to the amount learned, the value of the learning, the quality of the subject and the level of intellectual challenge.

Graduate Certificate:

UNIT 4 SWP5RPS REFLECTIVE PRACTICE: USE OF SELF AND SELF CARE

26 of the 27 enrolled students (96.2%) for this subject completed the questionnaire

In response to the first cluster of questions: 'Feedback about your learning in this subject', the mean results ranged from 4.1 (I invest enough time and effort to

meet/exceed subject requirements) to 4.5 (I see the relevance of this subject to my educational goals).

In response to the second cluster of questions: 'Feedback about this subject' the mean results ranged from 3.5 (Feedback provided contributes to my learning) to 4.2 (The amount of work required is appropriate to the learning objectives).

Issues in relation to the third cluster of questions are described above and are consistent across all four subjects.

In response to the fourth cluster of questions, 'Summary feedback about this subject', mean response ranges from: 3.3 (Overall, the level of intellectual challenge) to 3.9 (Overall, the value of what I have learned).

Graduate Diploma:

UNIT 3 SWP5/6 MASTERING ONESELF - LEADERSHIP IN REFLECTION AND ACTION

All of the 28 students for this subject completed the questionnaire (100%).

In response to the first cluster of questions, 'Feedback about your learning' the mean ranged from 4.1 (I invest enough time and effort to meet/exceed subject requirements) to 4.8 (I am interested in learning about this subject material and I see the relevance of this subject to my educational goals).

In response to the second cluster of subjects: 'Feedback about this subject' the mean scores ranged from 4.3 (related to material being organised, feedback contributing to learning, and the amount of work required) to 4.8 (The work assigned contributes to my learning).

The third cluster of questions has been described above. (See Graduate Certificate).

In the fourth and final cluster of questions: 'Summary feedback about this subject', the mean response ranged from 4.1 to 4.4.

UNIT4 SWP5/6 DELIVERING RESULTS AND OUTCOME FOCUS

24 out of the 27 enrolled students for this unit completed this questionnaire (88.8%).

In response to the first cluster of questions, 'feedback about your learning' the mean ranged from 3.8 (I invest enough time and effort to meet/exceed subject requirements) to 4.5 (I see the relevance of this subject to my educational goals).

In response to the second cluster of questions: 'feedback about this subject' the mean results ranged from 3.9 (The amount of work required is appropriate to the learning objectives) to 4.5 (which covered organised material, assigned work contributes to learning, assessments are connected to objectives, the marking and grading criteria is clear)

The third cluster of questions have been discussed earlier.

The fourth and final cluster saw a mean range of 4.1 (Overall, the amount I have learned) to 4.3 (Overall, the value of what I have learned, and the quality).

In summary, whilst there are some issues that have been identified for further reflection and consideration, the overwhelming response to the quality assurance questionnaire is extremely positive.

6.2 Goal Attainment Scaling

Group Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) responses from the enquiry based learning (EBL) groups in each course and individual student responses for the four units undertaken in each program during 2009/2010 have been analysed by an independent consultant (Sirius Associates).

Data sources

One or more goals with realistic outcome measures are set by students at the commencement of each unit, within the scope of the key learning outcomes for the unit. At completion of the unit the students review their goals and self-assess their level of goal attainment, using the outcome measures established. Each EBL group also sets collective goals for the group and course as a whole, with outcome measures, and then reviews and 'scales' these at the end of each semester.

GAS outcome measures are indicators developed to identify five possible levels of outcome, namely: 'Much more than expected', 'More than expected', 'Most likely outcome', 'Less than expected' and 'Much less than expected'. (A five-point GAS scale.)

In view of the individuality of the goals set, variable use of the four domains (Skills, Knowledge, Culture and Self Knowledge) and sometimes number of goals set by the EBL groups and individual students, the analysis of the findings is based on the range of scaling used in each response and in aggregate.

Examples of goals, outcome measures and scaling responses can be seen in Attachment 3.

Response Rates

Response rates for the five EBL groups and individual responses for each unit in the Graduate Certificate were extremely high (100 percent and 99 percent respectively). The response rate for the five Graduate Diploma EBL groups was also 100 percent. Puzzlingly, the response rate for the 4 units in the Graduate Diploma varied from 81 percent to a low 52 percent. Six (19 percent) of the 31 students did not return GAS rating responses on the goals and outcome measures they had identified for any of the four units.

Overview of findings

Overall GAS responses show the students report that they have attained their goals at a very high level in this first year of both programs, significantly exceeding

expectations in most instances. In this summary, findings are presented in relation to the EBL groups, GAS responses across the four units in the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma, a discussion of GAS responses to the four units in each of the two courses and some general comments about GAS in these programs.

EBL groups

The following table shows the extremely high level of EBL group goal attainment reported in both courses, including the high number where students report that their expectations have been exceeded or met at an expected level. It is noted that the Graduate Diploma groups generally used higher ratings in their final responses at the conclusion of their course. It is also noted that none of the EBL groups in either course used the negative scale points ('Much less' or 'Less than expected') in any of their group responses.

Graduate Certificate Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership Summary of EBL Group Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses		
Range of GAS outcome levels reported by EBL Groups	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma
All goals 'Much more than expected'	3	
Included 'Much more' & 'More than expected'	1	3
All goals attained at 'More than expected' level		1
Included 'Much more', 'More than expected' & 'Most likely outcome'	1	
Included 'More than expected' & 'Most likely outcome'		1
All goals 'Much less' or 'Less than expected'	nil	nil
Total number of groups:	5	5

Student GAS responses across all units

The range of individual student GAS responses across the four units presented in each course in 2009/2010 is summarised in the following table. This shows the high number of individual students who reported that their goal attainment levels exceeded their expectations, with 9 (34 percent) of Graduate Certificate and 7 (23 percent) of Graduate Diploma students reporting all goals attained at 'Much more' or 'More than expected' levels. A further fourteen (52 percent) of Graduate Certificate and 16 (52 percent) of Graduate Diploma students reported all goals attained at 'Most likely outcome' levels or above.

In contrast, there were a very small number of instances where one or more individual goals have not been attained, four (15 percent) in the Graduate Certificate and two (6 percent) of the Graduate Diploma students. It is noted that in all these instances these students attained other goals at a 'More than expected' or 'Most likely outcome' level.

Graduate Certificate Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership Summary of Student Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses Across all Units		
Range of GAS outcome levels reported by individual students	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma

All goals 'Much more than expected'	1 (4%)	
Range 'Much more' to 'More than expected'	8 (30%)	4 (13%)
Range 'Much more' to 'Most likely outcome'	7 (26%)	7 (23%)
All goals 'More than expected'		3 (10%)
Range 'More than expected' to 'Most likely outcome'	6 (22%)	9 (29%)
All goals 'Most likely outcome'	1 (4%)	
Range 'More than expected' to 'Less than expected'	4 (15%)	
Range 'More than expected' to 'Much less than expected'		2 (6%)
All goals 'Much less' or 'Less than expected'	nil	nil
No response:		6 (19%)
Total number of students:	27	31

Student GAS responses related to individual units

The range of GAS responses in relation to the four units in each of the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma are presented detail in the Attachment 3. The low numbers make comparison between student responses to the units indicative only. It is noted, however, that the number of high ratings in the Graduate Certificate Unit 1: Theory & practice in child and family practice and Unit 3: Collaborative practice, decision making and best interests, together with the highest number of 'More than expected' ratings for Unit 1, indicate a particularly strong level of goal attainment for these units. Negative responses occur in the GAS responses for all Graduate Certificate units.

With regard to the four Graduate Diploma units delivered in 2009/2010, student GAS responses again show the high proportion of goal attainment that exceeded expectations across each of the units. Responses are clustered in the 'More than expected' and 'Most likely outcome' points of the GAS scale in all four units. Low numbers and the incidence of 'No responses' again make comparison between the units indicative only. It is noted that the only negative responses from the Graduate Diploma group occurred in Unit 2: Decision making, thinking clearly and reflective insight.

General Comment

The student perspectives on their level of attainment of self-identified goals make an independent contribution to the evaluation and development of these new programs in conjunction with other evaluation measures. With very few exceptions the students have reported that they have attained their goals for core course components and have exceeded these in the majority of instances. The response from EBL groups in both the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma courses has been particularly strong.

The modified GAS approach adopted in this program has the potential to encourage critical self reflection and self assessment as part of the GAS process and this appears to be supported by the addition of the four domains (Skills, Knowledge, Culture and Self Knowledge) to the GAS response matrix. It is considered, also, that the GAS evaluation process makes an additional contribution to student learning in the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child and

Family Practice Leadership as it introduces a valuable practice tool for supervision, management and program evaluation, including goal setting & outcome measurement.

For a detailed view of the Goal Attainment Scaling Report with examples of student goals, outcome measures and student GAS responses, please see Attachment 3.

6.3 Focus Group Consultation with Graduate Certificate Group on completion of the course.

Themes emerging from focus group consultation with graduate certificate students on the final day of the course.

Five focus groups were formed comprising the existing EBL group, facilitated by a consortium member. Initial discussion prompts included:

- How has the course impacted on practice?
- What has been the benefits for them personally?
- Is there something that they have used in practice?

A selection of comments made in response to a question in relation to the impact on practice includes:

Decision making theory and frameworks. Makes us stop and think more about impact of decisions.

Assessments relating to case work were very relevant and useful.

Greater awareness and implementation of self care principles ...

Reflective practice increasing professional growth .

*Increase understanding of DHS (supervision now useful and purposeful).
Implementing group/peer supervision to discuss cases.*

Increased awareness of impact of trauma understanding and measuring 'behind behaviour'.

Value in all units: collaborative practice, family systems, decision tree, concrete examples of framework and models.

I speak up in our team when discussing issues. I now feel like 'I know it' when talking with less experienced staff – I am more grounded – have more in depth knowledge.

CONFIDENCE. eg: yesterday consult with principal- she asked what I thought – and I didn't hold back.

Readings are very useful – a great resource – easier to keep fresh.

I now use decision making theory with clients.

I have presented to a unit meeting on trauma. I have passed on to my colleagues material that I enjoyed and found useful.

Collaborative practice has been modelled and practiced – our EBL group has been a rich collaborative experience. This course makes me take time out to reflect.

*NETWORKS!! Relationships across the state across the sector.
Lecturers prepared to make themselves available*

A selection of comments about the benefits for students personally included:

Closer look at supervision and benefits of it.

Put more in perspective a framework of working in complex families and issues.

Able to turn intuitive feelings into practice.

Finding opportunities for reflection. Less knee jerk reaction.

More articulate in consultations with other professionals.

Increased confidence. Can support point of view with reference to theory.

Thinking about own background and how to influence work.

Being able to say time is needed for reflection on dynamics.

Everyone can do self-care. Being able to support others to do self-care.

Other comments included:

Time away from office has been difficult to manage workload

Hard to feel others resent the time off. But also supportive colleagues.

Impinge on personal time because we can't get study leave.

EBL group has facilitated strength of relationships – yet we have also made connections with others in other groups.

I have a far better understanding of the way groups work. Some of the subject matter has been personally challenging – better facilitated by small groups.

6.4 Graduate Diploma mid course survey

A semi structured survey sought information about the changes to student's practice and leadership in the workplace. A selection of comments follows:

The course has enabled me to apply theoretical frameworks in my leadership.

As a manager, it's important to encourage and set up reflective s/v processes as well as reflect on my own leadership practice.

I feel more confident in my leadership role.

Forced me to consider theoretical framework, particularly leadership, emotional intelligence, and reflection.

This unit in the grad diploma has encouraged me to pursue and advocate for a reflective culture in my organisation.

I am more actively engaged and aware of workplace culture and how I can influence team dynamics and culture.

Strengthened my team, focus on dynamics and the need to value staff – focused more on succession planning and development workers.

‘Development of positive team and unit culture. Examples – ‘master chef luncheons’, ‘charity fundraisers’, ‘quiz lunchtimes’, and ‘shared work between unit members.’

Ensuring that good work is recognised by email.

I now lead by example

Course has been extremely beneficial highly recommended as an ongoing investment I now go into supervision with a purpose and am actively engaged in reflective supervision. Even when workers attempt to avoid exploring their own biases and responses, I am now conscious of how to listen deeply and pull out and explore their personal feelings and responses in relation to decision making and relationship based practice.

Using various types of supervision to retain staff and build wellbeing and satisfaction.

Much better team leader in terms of preparedness, supervision, leadership and court.

As a team leader I have identified that the focus on team cohesiveness is not just about the team, it is about the needs of each individual which makes up the team.

Creates focus on staff care and ensuring that I am meeting the needs of my team through support, guidance, strength –based supervision.

Recognising the importance of this given the difficulties of the role and in order to retain and develop staff.

‘Supervision is more reflective and developmental. Whilst I always realised the importance the course has reinforced this and made me more committed to it. It has also helped me attempt to make it more reflectful rather than task focussed. I have also broadened it to peer supervision/reflection sessions as well as individual.

The course has challenged my decision making and helped me to think more about how my decision will positively impact on outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

The assessments throughout the Grad Dip have been relevant to my role within my organisation. I have particularly enjoyed the assessments that prompted me to link my decision making and actions to literature and various frameworks.

Provided broader management related frameworks and language. Enables better conversations at a sector and central office level.

I have developed a mutual mentoring relationship with a child protection peer which has provided both emotional support and challenged and enhanced thinking in practice.

Reflective in practice and bringing this into supervision for staff to become reflective.

Reflection on how I make decisions, the influences and how I can work towards identifying the influences/impacts a way forward to bring about change.

The academic learning has improved my decision making, and ability to rationalise and justify my case direction recommendations using theory and research relevant to child protection.

This is the only space I get to reflect on my leadership role, capability and style.

Much more reflective and analytical in my care practice. Has given myself and my staff permission to take the time to reflect and analyse care practice, our own roles and influences, perceptions and what we could do better.

Increased ability to make decisions within the workplace. Definite ability to provide clear rationales and voice my points of view. Ability to engage staff in decision making exploring best interest practice principles.

I have developed skills to improve my relationships with other agencies/ management.

My self care has improved; these have caused my teammates to seek opportunities for professional development themselves, academically. I believe I am a good role model to my workers.

Enhanced understanding of emotional intelligence has strengthened my work both internally and with partner agencies.

It has given me an understanding and appreciation of the work demands in family support services – it has broken down true “silo” mentality of work in this field.

An opportunity to explore aspects of practice in an external setting, with a view to progressing these in work context. E.g. focus on fathers.

Reinforced the importance of relationships – this was intuitively important but the course has given me confidence to put it right on the agenda and to build further.’

7. Emerging Themes/Discussion

Themes arising from the evaluation findings in relation to both the courses are discussed below, in the context of the initial evaluation questions and relevant literature. Themes emerging for each course are discussed separately.

7.1 Graduate Certificate.

Three core themes have been identified:

Retention: a stronger more sustainable cohort of practitioners who are motivated to remain in the sector.

Of the 30 students who commenced the Graduate Certificate, 27 have successfully completed the course, and are due to graduate in October 2010. Seventeen of the 19 child protection practitioners enrolled successfully completed the course, as did 10 of the 11 family services practitioners/ Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation practitioners. All of the three students who withdrew from the Graduate certificate did so for health or personal/family reasons.

These results are outstanding when compared to other groups of enrolled tertiary students who are engaged in full or part time employment, where it is expected that a proportion will fail to complete the course, or will not pass the course work requirements.

Students routinely spoke about a greater confidence to practice, and enhanced satisfaction in the work that they were doing in the frontline, and a sense that 'management' valued them by supporting them to undertake this course of study (see also below). These beliefs, along with their responses to direct questions about intent to stay are good proxy indicators of a stronger and more sustainable workforce. (Zlotnik, J, De Panfilis D, Daining C, and McDermott Lane, M. 2005)

Enhanced confidence and greater competence to operate as a front line case practitioner in child protection or family services.

Students clearly and consistently indicate making a difference in their work with children and families, their membership of a team including their role as mentor to less experienced practitioners, and their role as a subordinate contributing to supervision. Confidence to engage families who were reluctant to accept a service, to work with children and to explain to families the rationale for decisions drawing upon relevant theoretical models and to share their newly acquired knowledge in their workplace are common examples given by students, supported by comments from their managers and other stakeholders.

Stronger capacity for cross sector networks and interagency collaboration

One student reported on the final day of the course that whilst before, it was 'us and them, now it is just us'. This was a powerful remark that was echoed by others in writing and in small focus group discussion. The opportunity to reflect on current

(de-identified) case examples, to respectfully challenge each other and to learn together, has led to a much greater appreciation of respective roles and responsibilities, and a sense of enhanced mutual respect. It could reasonably be anticipated that this stronger sense of both one's own professional identity and that of others across the sector will enhance collaborative working relationships and support the best interests of children. A greater sense of co-operation and professional 'good will' was consistently observed by lecturers delivering later units, in particular Units 3 and 4 of the Graduate Certificate.

7.2 Graduate Diploma

Four core themes have been identified:

Enhanced capacity to support and sustain case practitioners through supervision

This dominant theme is one which is entirely consistent with the prevailing literature in relation to retention of child welfare workers (Mor Barak, M., Travis D., Pyun H., and Xie B., 2009). A recent meta analysis of 27 qualified research articles, which included a combined sample of 10, 867 workers in child welfare, social work and mental health found that the 'supervisory dimensions of task assistance, social and emotional support and supervisory interpersonal interaction are positively and statistically significantly related to beneficial outcomes for workers' (Mor Barak, M., Travis D., Pyun H., and Xie B., 2009, p.3.) These authors highlight the importance of this analysis, in that it is the first time that two decades of research in the area of supervision has been assembled and analysed.

Graduate Diploma students are all in leadership positions and are responsible for staff supervision. The most consistent theme emerging was a positive change in their capacity to purposefully supervise staff, to actively engage in reflective supervision and to proactively use supervision to retain staff and to build well being and satisfaction.

Enhanced confidence and competence as a leader, including as a leader of organisational culture

This theme does not surprise the Consortium in light of the weighting given to aspects of leadership by the child protection capabilities document, and as a result the core curriculum. It is validating to note that students report both a greater sense of confidence in their capacity to lead, but they are bringing to the classroom tangible examples of greater initiative in leadership practice and this is also validated by external stakeholders. Examples include the successful completion of an assessment requirement where they were required to establish a Business Plan to retain their staff, which was evidence based and locally responsive. Students completed this as an assignment activity, however also reported that they were actively implementing their plans in the workplace. In relation to leading culture within the organisation, students report a far greater awareness of the power of a reflective learning culture within an organisation, with a number reporting that they had initiated structured opportunities for this to occur in the workplace.

Reflective Practice and Decision Making

Decision making is at the core of child and family practice leadership, however this can be governed by reliance on intuitive practices according to the literature, in particular in a complex and at times chaotic environment. (Munro, E. 2008). Promotion of the capacity to lead a reflective culture which promoted an integration of intuitive and analytical reasoning processes is a core component of the course. It is validating therefore to see that students identify these skills as strengthened in their work practice as a result of undertaking the course. Students described themselves as more reflective and analytical with a greater capacity to promote this behaviour in the staff they manage.

Strengthened relationships with other agencies

As with the Graduate Certificate group, this cohort commonly described enhanced skills to build and maintain relationships across the professional network and the capacity to implement this as a result of better self care practices. Students typically described having had an awareness of the importance of cross sector relationship, but that the course had enabled them to prioritise the issue for action and improvement.

8. Conclusion

The first year of delivery of these courses has seen a group of 27 experienced practitioners in child and family practice successfully complete the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice. 19 of these students are child protection practitioners, the remaining 8 are from family services agencies or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This group consistently indicate a greater depth of knowledge underpinning their practice, enhanced confidence in their work and a commitment to remaining in the sector.

A group of 30 committed front line managers and practice leaders have now reached the 'half way mark' in the Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership. They too speak consistently of greater confidence, with strong reference to their leadership and management competencies.

Student voices are validated by external stakeholders, including their managers, senior managers across the sector and the consortium themselves.

This report makes a compelling case for workforce retention and workforce stabilisation. The provision of these post graduate learning opportunities, by the Department of Human Services, can be seen to be associated with an experience of support, development and sense of being 'valued' as an employee. Both the literature in relation to retention, (Mor Barak, Levin, Nissly, and Lane, 2006) and the students' themselves have spoken about an enhanced motivation to 'stay'.

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Attachments

Attachment 1 Detailed Unit Outlines

Attachment 2 Principles of Teaching Approach

Attachment 3 GAS Independent Evaluation Report

Attachment 4 Proposed refinements to courses proposed by the Consortium.

Attachment 1 Detailed Unit Outlines

Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice

This course is offered jointly by La Trobe University, School of Social Work and Social Policy and the Bouverie Centre and the Department of Human Services, in partnership with the University of Melbourne School of Social Work, Berry Street Take Two and The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

The Graduate Certificate builds on the requirements for working in child protection, placement and family services sectors in Victoria. Qualified students will be more confident in working with children and families through the development of a broader knowledge base and more effective direct practice skills and competencies.

Areas of study include:- relationship based practice with children and families in the statutory child protection system, collaborative practice, decision-making and planning for children's best interest: reflective practice, use of self and self care, theory and advanced practice in working with children and families where there has been abuse and neglect.

Study comprises four subjects over one year on a part-time basis (60 credit points). Subjects are delivered in block mode in the Melbourne CBD.

Course Structure of Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice

Study comprises four subjects over one year on a part-time basis. Subjects are delivered in block mode in the Melbourne CBD. The course comprises 60 credit points in total.

Subject Code	Teaching Period	Subject Title	Cps
Year One (Offered in 2009)			
SWP5TPC	TE-W32-38	Working with children and families: Theory and Practice	15
SWP5RCF	TE-W38-44	Relationship based practice with children and families	15
Year Two (Offered in 2010)			
SWP5CPD	TE-SEM-1	Collaborative practice, decision making and best interests	15

Subject Code	Teaching Period	Subject Title	Cps
SWP5RPS	TE-SEM-1	Reflective practice: use of self and self care	15
TOTAL CREDIT POINTS FOR COURSE			60

Subject Descriptions

Subject 1: Working with children and families: Theory and Practice

As the first of four units in the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice, this unit establishes the importance of theory for sound practice and builds foundational knowledge for other units. The Unit provides the context for practice informed by international and local policy initiatives. It explicitly addresses the gendered nature of work with children and families and promotes anti-oppressive practice with diverse populations.

Subject 2: Relationship based practice with children and families

Primarily a practice based unit designed to enable participants to engage with vulnerable children, adolescents and families in ways that, building on the theoretical foundations from unit one, promote relationship building, and balances respect and empowerment with forensic astuteness

Subject 3: Collaborative practice, decision making and best interests

This unit is designed to enable participants to implement the Best Interests case practice model through facilitating the integration of theory, practice and active implementation and apply in all areas.

Subject 4: Reflective practice: use of self and self care

A critical reflective practice framework will support students to examine the impact of the personal and professional factors that influence their practice. Focus is on self-awareness and the development and exercise of self-management strategies to enhance mental agility and facilitate more effective and creative decision making and relationship building.

Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership

This course is offered jointly by La Trobe University, School of Social Work and Social Policy and the Bouverie Centre and the Department of Human Services, in partnership with the University of Melbourne School of Social Work, Berry Street Take Two and The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

The Graduate Diploma builds on the requirements for working in child protection, placement and family services sectors in Victoria. Qualified students will be a more

responsive and dynamic leader with advanced management skills in the child and family sector.

Areas of study include: - contemporary research and skill development in relation to leadership and supervision in child and family practice; supporting and promoting best interests with a rights and social justice perspective; guest lecturers and teachers including international guest presenter Dr Bruce Perry.

Course Structure of Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership

Study comprises eight subjects over two years on a part-time basis (120 credit points). Subjects are delivered in block mode in the Melbourne CBD.

Subject Code	Teaching Period	Subject Title	Cps
Year One (Offered in 2009)			
SWP5TPC	TE-W32-38	Working with children and families; Theory and Practice	15
SWP5RCF	TE-W38-44	Relationship based practice with children and families	15
Year Two (Offered in 2010)			
SWP5CPD	TE-SEM-1	Collaborative practice, decision making and best interests	15
SWP5RPS	TE-SEM-1	Reflective practice; use of self and self care	15
TOTAL CREDIT POINTS FOR COURSE			60

Subject Descriptions

Subject 1: Power of Relationships: Engaging Others

- Theory and practice are integrated to guide the students' exploration and development in key factors and processes that impact on the quality and depth of their engagement with the range of individuals and groups encountered within CP leadership roles.
- A key focus is on facilitating students' capacities to contribute to the development of an empowered and empowering organisational culture conducive to continued improvement in achieving the best outcomes for children and families.

Subject 2: Decision making: thinking clearly and reflective insight

This unit focuses on building knowledge and skills for effective decision-making in relation to safety, development and stability for the child. Upon successful completion participants should be able to identify and reflect upon core assumptions and values that impact on themselves and others in decision-making. A critical awareness of culturally and ethnically diverse perspectives used in reflective enquiry, analysis and decision-making is central to this unit. Participants who complete this unit successfully should be ethical, effective and confident decision-makers in contexts of high emotion and professional pressure.

Subject 3: Mastering Oneself - Leadership in Reflection and Action

The discussion of knowledge and skills needed for self-management and mental agility will be developed in relation to the complexity and risks involved in several key areas of practice content, including family violence, parental substance misuse, and excluded families whose children suffer cumulative harm. At the completion of this unit, participants will be able to develop a workable plan to enhance their own and the supervisees' self reflection, self-discipline and flexible response to such complex and risk-laden situations.

Subject 4: Professional Care and Growth

This unit situates worker care and wellbeing as a central aspect of workplace management. The systemic framework, which attends to 'seeing the whole', recognises that workplace culture can replicate and reflect patterns of work which occur with children and their families.

The unit explores the processes through which positive safety and wellbeing are promoted and recognizes the critical role of leadership in creating a highly effective, sustainable workplace culture.

Subject 5: Delivering Results and Achieving Outcomes

Building on the earlier units, this unit focuses on another aspect in the Best Interests Framework, that is, enacting and reviewing decisions and outcomes from a leadership perspective. This unit combines the leadership capabilities of 'delivering results' along with the workplace culture dimension of being 'outcome focused'. This unit

will highlight ‘making it happen’ and explore potential constraints to effective practice in leadership. In particular it explores how the Best Interests Case Practice model is applied in a leadership context, with a focus on intervention, action and co-creating success with others. This includes how these skills and capabilities apply to different aspects of leadership, such as implementing and reviewing Best Interests plans, ensuring that interventions planned are put in operation effectively, supervision, team leadership and middle and senior management functions. This unit will expand on strategies for problem solving and troubleshooting in complex client, staff and organization situations. The unit will integrate organizational, professional and personal values along with theories, skills and knowledge including self awareness and self-management to support and develop a healthy, learning, positive organizational culture and being outcome-focused in order to co-create sustained, successful outcomes.

Subject 6 Leading, inspiring and clarity of purpose

Leadership in child and family practice is constructed in relation to environmental and organisational contexts. This unit focuses upon the role of a leader in child and family practice. The unit is an extension of learning from the previous units and will build upon students’ knowledge and skill and awareness of use of self, self management and mental agility, engaging others, cultural awareness and effective decision making. Types of leadership will be addressed and the students will be encouraged to identify their leadership approach and the impact their behaviour has on others. Leading and managing change and working in complex situations which are highly emotionally charged will be addressed. The role of leadership in creating and maintaining a positive organisational culture will be highlighted.

Subject 7: Advanced Practice Management

This unit is in the final semester of the Graduate Diploma and integrates and expands on the knowledge developed in the Graduate Diploma regarding the capabilities identified in the Capabilities for Child Protection Frontline Managers document (Atkinson, 2008), particularly pertaining to practice in a complex field.

Subject 8: Advanced Reflective Leadership

This unit is the capstone unit of the program and will integrate learning from the earlier units. The aim of the unit is to engage students in developing confidence in an effective leadership style and developing an ability to impact on the culture of their organisation and demonstrate effective leadership.

Attachment 2

Principles of Teaching and Learning adopted by the Consortium.

Knowledge with understanding, based in practice, focussed on integration.

A range of relevant theoretical and conceptual approaches is offered in both courses to promote not only a thorough understanding of the *complexity* of Child Protection and Family Services work and leadership, but also to provide participants with frameworks from which to think critically about the information they are gathering and the decisions they (and their staff are making). This understanding will be further promoted by integrating theory with opportunities in practice and personal experience and then structuring reflection on these experiences. The result will be learning that is practical, accessible, experiential and integrated.

All processes to parallel the desired outcomes of the courses

The Consortium is committed to underpinning the aims and objectives of the course, and the outcomes the course seeks for children and families, with processes that are consistent, and which reflect these aims and objectives. Commencing with the Consortium partnership, and flowing on to course content, structure and relationships with participants, all processes aim to be respectful and collaborative, seeking after and building on strengths while maintaining bottom lines, that demonstrate developmental, attachment, trauma, gender and ecological awareness within a framework of cultural competence.

Based on adult learning principles

Teaching will be based on principles and practices suited to adult learning namely:

- Attention to a positive and safe learning environment
- Collaboration about learning needs
- Making use of and building on existing knowledge and experience
- Experiential
- Clarity about learning outcomes and requirements
- Attention to all relevant aspects of participant experience - intellectual, emotional, and social
- Utilisation of self-evaluation and peer feedback as well as formal assessment
- Attention to sequencing of learning
- Provision of a range of learning and assessment modes to take individual learning styles into account.

In particular, these principles and practices are supported by use of an inquiry based learning approach and also by utilising small groups as a mode, particularly for experiential work.

Culturally competent teaching

Course curriculum and processes will be designed, developed and delivered in consultation with VACCA. This will ensure that key cultural practice, knowledge with understanding and skills are incorporated.

Respectful relationships

Respectful relationships are at the core of all effective practice. They require the worker to be culturally competent and gender aware. They are honest, genuine, clear of the bottom line required by the Act and for the safety of the child and are based on a platform of knowledge and skill. These relationships include relationships within organisations and within the service system.

Developing Cultural Competence

Consideration of cultural needs is important for all children. Understanding and respecting the right of all people to the protection of their culture and spirituality is essential to effective practice. Aboriginal peoples, as First Peoples, have particular cultural needs and rights. Colonisation has impacted negatively on the culture of Aboriginal peoples and this has implications for Aboriginal children and families. Developing cultural competence in relation to working with Aboriginal children and families will ensure our practice is respectful and effective.

Supporting and promoting best interests with a rights and social justice perspective

This principle seeks to put into practice the Best Interest principles and the three concepts of safety stability and development in a useable approach which informs decision making.

Human Rights laws take a comprehensive, holistic view of the person. Human rights deal not only with civil and political life but also with economic, social and cultural life. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the rights of children and provides a guide to decision making.

Child focused and family centred

Shonkoff and Meisles (2000 p397)¹ draw upon the principles of family centred practice. (1995/8). These are responding to family priorities; empowering family members; employing a holistic (ecological) approach to the family and demonstrating insight and sensitivity to families.

Dynamic and responsive

This principle recognises that the child who is the central focus of intervention is growing and developing and that practice which impacts on their life must be responsive to their needs.

Organisationally and legislatively aware.

The Developmental Framework for Child Protection Frontline Managers addresses work culture and the importance of this both for outcomes for the child and for attracting, growing and retaining talented professionals. Organisational systems and dynamics can promote or create barriers for best practice and efficient delivery. Organisations' policies and practices are the implementation of legislation. Thus, a curriculum will address decision making within the context of the Act.

¹ Shonkoff JP & Meisels SJ (2000) Handbook of Early childhood Intervention Cambridge University Press UK

Knowledge and evidenced informed

The knowledge theories and evidence to inform the operation of these principles include an ecological perspective developmental, attachment, trauma and gender awareness, strengths-based structural and systems perspectives.

Hope

The Curriculum has been planned as strengths-based and will be presented through a lens of hope and aspiration. This principle embeds the notion that hope is a key to intervention and change, in particular to counteract the pervasive impacts of despair and demoralisation. An intervention without hope has little chance of bringing about change for the child and family. Moreover a worker without hope that their intervention will make a difference will become demoralised and vulnerable to burn out.

Teaching and Learning Framework

The main teaching/learning approach will be enquiry based learning (EBL) which utilizes an adult learning approach. Enquiry based learning describes an environment in which learning is driven by a process of enquiry owned by the student. (Manchester University Centre for Excellence in Enquiry Based learning).

The teaching approach will utilise both individual and group learning processes. Group processes will promote action learning and reflection. The group will also be used to develop ongoing support in the workplace with self directed learning, through contact with small groups of colleagues to promote ongoing learning closely related to the workplace.

Attachment 3 GAS report.

Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice (2009/2010) Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership (Year 1, 2009/2010)

Goal Attainment Analysis for Program Evaluation

Goal Attainment Analysis Report

1. Introduction

The Department of Human Services have funded a Consortium of La Trobe University School of Social Work and Social Policy and the Bouverie Centre, University of Melbourne School of Social Work, Berry Street Take Two and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) to develop and deliver a Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership as a component of their workforce development strategy. Both courses commenced in mid 2009.

Sirius Associates has been appointed by the Consortium to undertake an independent analysis of the perspectives of students in the Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership, as reported in goal statements and goal attainment scaling (GAS) responses completed by all students in the two courses. This analysis forms part of the overall evaluation of the two courses, reported separately.

This report presents a summary of the independent analysis of student GAS responses for the first delivery of the Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice program and the first of two years of the Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership, from August 2009 to May 2010.

Group responses from the enquiry based learning (EBL) groups in each course and individual student responses for the four units undertaken in each program have been analysed. These show overall an extremely high level of goal attainment during the first year for both courses, including a significantly high number where students report that their expectations have been exceeded or met as expected and a very small number of instances where goals have not been attained as expected. Examples of students' goals across these different levels of attainment are presented and discussed in the report.

A brief introduction to the use of GAS in the evaluation of services and programs in education health and human services, and its modification for use in evaluation of the Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership, is presented in the following section.

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) methodology

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) is a tool for identifying outcomes of educational programs or clinical interventions. The tool was first developed by Kiresuk & Sherman (1968) to address the demand for accountability in use of resources in mental health and to improve the evaluation of outcomes of interventions. Since then GAS has been utilised in a range of education, health and community service evaluation and program development processes and is particularly valuable in focusing intervention by clearly articulating goals which mobilise energy into a coherent pursuit of relevant, feasible outcomes. (Kiresuk, Smith & Cardillo, 1994).

A modified form of goal attainment scaling (GAS) is used as a tool in the evaluation of the Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership. Students identify group and individual goals and outcome measures for each of the core areas of the course, taking into account the course or unit objectives, the GAS scale with five possible outcome measure levels and the four domains of skills, knowledge, culture and self knowledge and their nexus with practice.

There are two groups of goals which students identified and reviewed, these are:

- Enquiry group goals identified by each EBL group for the course as a whole, reviewed and group self-assessed at the end of each semester.
- Unit goals identified by individual students for each of the four units undertaken in a year, within the scope of the Key Learning Outcomes for the unit, reviewed and self assessed at unit completion.

Groups or individual students document their goals and identify possible outcome levels at the commencement of the course or unit, using a five point GAS scale ranging from +2 ('Much more than expected') to -2 ('Much less than expected') with the mid point 0 (Most likely or expected outcome). The goals and outcome measures are reviewed periodically and students self assess (scale) their levels of attainment. In these programs GAS is not part of student assessment but forms part of the course emphasis on individual and group responsibility for learning, self assessment and reflective practice in addition to its role in evaluation.

GAS responses for EBL groups and all units delivered in the Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership in 2009/2010 were reviewed again and finalised in May 2010.

This analysis of uses the range of GAS outcome levels identified by students for goals and components of goals to reconcile multiple goals and the use of the 4 domains of GAS scores in some responses.

Data sources

One or more goals with realistic outcome measures are set by students at the commencement of each unit, within the scope of the key learning outcomes for the unit. At completion of the unit the students review their goals and self-assess their level of goal attainment, using the outcome measures established. Each EBL group also sets collective goals for the group and course as a whole, with outcome measures, and then reviews and 'scales' these at the end of each semester.

GAS outcome measures are indicators developed to identify five possible levels of outcome, namely: 'Much more than expected', 'More than expected', 'Most likely outcome', 'Less than expected' and 'Much less than expected'. (A five point GAS scale.)

In view of the individuality of the goals set, variable use of the four domains (Skills, Knowledge, Culture and Self Knowledge) and sometimes number of goals set by the EBL groups and individual students, the analysis of the findings is based on the range of scaling used in each response and in aggregate.

Response Rates

Response rates for the five EBL groups and individual responses for each unit in the Graduate Certificate were extremely high (100% and 99% respectively). The response rate for the five Graduate Diploma EBL groups was also 100%. Puzzlingly, the response rate for the 4 units in the Graduate Diploma varied from 81 percent to a low 52 percent. Six (19 percent) of the 31 students did not return GAS rating responses on the goals and outcome measures they had identified for any of the four units.

2. Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice

Overview of GAS responses

The 27 students who completed the Graduate Certificate in Child & Family Practice in May 2010 have provided some thoughtful goals and review comments, both collectively in their EBL groups and individually with regard to each unit of study.

The majority of students reported that their individual level of goal attainment either exceeded their expectations in all or some of the units. One student reported all attainment at the expected, 'Most likely outcome' level. Four students reported that one or more of their goals were not attained ('Less than expected') but that other goals were attained as expected or at a 'More than expected' level. The students' individual response data and examples of the goals set, including the small number of goals that were not attained, are presented in a later section of this report.

The group findings from the five enquiry based learning (EBL) groups were particularly positive, with four of the five groups responding that they attained all goals identified at a level that exceeded their expectations and with no group reporting a 'Less than expected' level of

attainment for any goal. These findings are outlined in the following section.

EBL Group goals & scaling

The 27 students who completed the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice in May 2010 worked in Enquiry Based Learning groups throughout the course to support their learning. The GAS responses provided by all groups at their final review show an extremely high level of group goal attainment. Three of the groups reported that all their goals were attained at a 'Much more than expected' level, one group reported a combination of 'Much more' and 'More than expected' and one group reported a combination of 'Much more', 'More than expected' and 'Most likely outcome' scaling responses. None of the five groups used either of the negative 'Less than' or 'Much less than expected' categories from the GAS scale.

The responses from the five EBL groups are summarised in the following table.

Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice Summary of EBL Group Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses	
Range of GAS levels reported	Number of EBL Groups
All goals 'Much more than expected'	3
Included 'Much more' & 'More than expected'	1
Included 'Much more', 'More than expected' & 'Most likely outcome'	1
'Much less' or 'Less than expected'	nil

The goals identified by each group, together with some of their review comments and the group GAS responses are presented in the following box.

Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice EBL Group Goals and Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses
GOAL/S: We were able to participate as a group. (i) We shared information & were inclusive & communicated well during class & via email outside class time. (ii) Provided feedback to each other as each member spoke about their de-identified case & ideas for assignment. (iii) Catered for individual support needs by communicating with each other regularly & openly discussing not only education work but personal circumstances & workplace constraints. FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: All 3 goals attained at a 'Much more than expected' level.
GOAL/S: Ability to effectively work together & to share our own personal work knowledge & experiences to inform other members' knowledge & practice. FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Goal attained at 'Much more than expected' level.
GOAL/S: For each member of the group to be able to participate in discussions & to share their knowledge with each other, given everyone is from different areas, enhance the learning experience of the group. FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Goal attained at 'Much more than expected' level in each of the 4 domains (Skills, Knowledge, Culture & Self Knowledge).
GOAL/S As a group (our) focus was to develop skills & knowledge based around trauma,

<p>attachment & sexual abuse. . . . (i) Assignments would reflect what we learnt in our reading. (ii) We will feel more confident in completing the ABT approach. (iii) Interventions will be more informed from our knowledge about trauma.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Knowledge domain – Goal attained at ‘Much more than expected’ level (Around trauma & attachment & sexual abuse). Skills domain – Goal attained at ‘More than expected’ level (We have improved in dealing with trauma & attachment).</p>
<p>GOAL/S: To expand our knowledge base, incorporating individual knowledge & experience, diversity of organisations & work areas, together with supportive networking, sharing & open listening to improve work practice.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Self knowledge domain – Goal attained at ‘Much more than expected’ level. Knowledge domain – Goal attained at ‘More than expected’ level. Skills & Culture domains: Goal attained at ‘Most likely outcome’ level.</p>

The goals identified were relevant to the EBL component of the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice, were achievable, reasonably measurable, achieved in all five groups and exceeded in most instances. It is noted that the only group responses that showed expectations not exceeded were in one group in relation to the Skills and Culture domains of their goal where GAS responses were at the midpoint ‘Most likely outcome’ level, indicating that expectations had been met.

These extremely positive GAS responses and comments about attainment of EBL group goals at the end of this one year program show a collective student perspective of exceeded expectations in the EBL group component of this program.

Graduate Certificate Units 1 – 4: Individual goals & scaling

The 27 students in the Graduate Certificate identified one or more goals relevant to key learning objectives at commencement of each of the four units in the course. This section examines the range of GAS responses provided by the students to the independent consultant in May 2010. The report initially considers the student’s responses across all four of the units, then differences between GAS responses within the units, and finally the goals set by the students and a closer examination of the small number of negative responses.

The individual responses across all units convey the high level of achievement of goals reported by the students. Twenty three (85 percent) reported attaining all goals set. Of these, nine students (34 percent) reported they had attained all goals in all four units at levels that exceeded their expectations, for a further thirteen (48 percent) at least some of their goals had been attained above expectations in combination with some at the ‘Most likely outcome’ level, one student scaled goal attainment in all four units at the ‘Most likely outcome’ (mid point) level and whilst the remaining four students (15 percent) identified one or more goals that had not been attained as expected, they had attained their other goals at a ‘Most expected outcome’ level or higher.

The next table shows the summarised individual GAS responses of the 27 students across all four units. Percentages are included for comparison purposes.

Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice Individual Student Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses Across All 4 Units		
Range of GAS levels reported	Students	Percent
All goals 'Much more than expected' (+2)	1	4
Range 'Much more' to 'More than expected' (+2 to +1)	8	30
Range 'Much more' to 'Most likely outcome' (+2 to 0)	7	26
All goals 'More than expected' (+1)		
Range 'More than expected' to 'Most likely outcome' (+1 to 0)	6	22
All goals 'Most likely outcome' (0)	1	4
Range 'More than expected' to 'Less than expected' (+1 to -1)	4	15
All goals 'Less than expected' (-1)		
Total (n=)	27	
Total negative responses - goals (Number of students)	8 (4 students)	(15)

It is noted that four (15 percent) of the students identified 8 instances of goals that were attained at 'Less than expected' levels. In one case the goal was not specified.

The following table shows the range of student GAS responses disaggregated for each of the units (see footnotes for unit titles), and again shows the high level of goal attainment reported by the students. Although the low numbers make comparison between student responses to the four units indicative only, the number of high ratings in Units 1 and 3 and highest number of 'More than expected' ratings for Unit 1 indicate a particularly high level of goal attainment for these units.

Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice Individual Student Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses for Units 1 – 4				
Range of GAS levels reported	Unit 1 ²	Unit 2 ³	Unit 3 ⁴	Unit 4 ⁵
All goals 'Much more than expected' (+2)	7	4	7	4
Range 'Much more' to 'More than expected' (+2 to +1)	2	2	3	3
All goals 'More than expected' (+1)	11	9	7	6
Range 'Much more' to 'Most likely outcome' (+2 to 0)	1	2	1	3
Range 'More than expected' to 'Most likely outcome' (+1 to 0)	2	3	2	3

² Unit 1: Theory & practice in child & family practice.

³ Unit 2: Relationship based practice with children & families.

⁴ Unit 3: Collaborative practice, decision making & best interests.

⁵ Unit 4: Reflective practice – Reviewing our use of self & self care.

All goals 'Most likely outcome' (0)	1	6	6	5
Range 'More than expected' to 'Less than expected' (+1 to -1)	2		1	3
All goals 'Less than expected' (-1)		1		
No response:	1			
Total (n=)	27	27	27	27
Total negative responses - goals (Number of students)	2 (2 students)	1	1	4 (3 students)

It is noted that the number of negative responses was particularly low in Units 2 & 3. With one exception, students who identified one or more goals not attained (attained at a 'Less than expected' level) also responded that they had attained other goals in the unit at a 'Most likely outcome' or 'More than expected' level.

Graduate Certificate individual student goals

The examples of goals and GAS responses are presented in the next two boxes bring life to these figures. The first box includes examples from all four units to show the ranges of goals identified and of student GAS responses. The goals are considered reasonably representative individual examples and relate to one or more key learning outcomes for the unit. As with the EBL groups, the individually identified goals for each unit seem reasonably achievable and measurable. They also provide examples of the increasing use of the four domain areas in setting up goals and structuring GAS responses by some of the students.

Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice Examples of Individual Student Goals and Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses
GOAL/S: To be able to articulate theoretical perspectives in safety statements & case summaries to evidence decision-making. COMMENT: This course has assisted me in taking on more responsibility at work . . . through increased confidence. FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: 'Much more than expected' (2+)
GOAL/S: To further understand the role of theory in informing my practice & to use theories along with current legislation to inform my practice. FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge & Self Knowledge domains – 'More than expected' (+1). Culture – 'Most likely outcome' (0).
COMMENT ON GOAL: I have been actively implementing theories into my practice, engaging with new interview techniques & re-visiting aspects of previously utilised theory. (The course has refreshed me.) I have presented to my team (& at other meetings) about my experience of the course. Thanks for the opportunity FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge, Culture & Self Knowledge – 'Much more than expected' in all domains (2+).
GOAL/S: To gain a further understanding & knowledge to integrate into practice & to have better outcomes for the clients & families that I work with. FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Knowledge & Self Knowledge – 'Much more than expected' (+2). Skills & Culture – 'More than expected' (+1).
GOAL/S: To have insight into my own & others cultural influence & values & how these

<p>impact on my decision-making.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: 'Much more than expected' (+2).</p>
<p>GOAL/S: Skills domain – To articulate skills & knowledge learned & use it in court reports & decision making. Knowledge – To be confident in teaching other workers. Culture – Identify use of culture in decision making. Self knowledge – Using what is learned in decision making.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge & Self Knowledge – 'More than expected' (+1). Culture – 'Most likely outcome' (O).</p>
<p>GOAL/S: To continue to develop skills that will enable me to be reflective in my practice & give me the skills to influence team members to be reflective in their own & in team practices.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge, Culture & Self Knowledge – All 'Much more than expected' (+2).</p>
<p>GOAL/S: The knowledge, understanding & ability to see how my team & I interact & operate as a team so that I am more able to ensure my team works effectively. Understanding who I am will help me to see how I impact on others.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: 'Most likely outcome' (O).</p>

In contrast to the above goals, all reported as attained at one of the three positive GAS levels, the following box contains the seven individual goals identified as not attained. In an eighth instance the goal was not specified. As with the earlier examples, these goals were drawn from all four of the course units. They do not differ markedly from other goals identified, and again seem reasonably achievable and measurable. In some instances the students' comments contribute to our understanding of why these goals were not achieved as expected.

<p>Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice Individual student goals⁶ with 'Less than expected' (GAS) ratings</p>
<p>GOAL/S: To improve my practice in understanding theory as applied in practice & then determine intervention.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge & Self Knowledge – 'More than expected' (+1) Culture – 'Less than expected' (-1).</p>
<p>GOAL/S: To be able to understand the theories behind offending behaviours in sexual abuse.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Knowledge – 'More than expected' (+1). Culture & Self Knowledge – 'Most likely outcome' (O). Skills – 'Less than expected' (-1)</p>
<p>GOAL/S: Skills – Increased speed & ability to come to sound decisions. Knowledge – Increased knowledge of theory of critical enquiry. Culture – Awareness of impact of culture on individual decision making. Self Knowledge – Calm approach & quicker reflective practice.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge & Self Knowledge – 'More than expected' (+1). Culture – 'Less than expected' (-1)</p>
<p>GOAL/S: . . . Ensuring I have adequate supervision – making this part of the culture of the workplace.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills & Knowledge – 'More than expected' (+1). Self Knowledge – 'Most likely outcome' (O). Culture – 'Less than expected' (-1) ('Hard to see any role of culture in the unit.')</p>
<p>GOAL/S: . . . Awareness of how to engage or promote reflective practice in workers of different culture.</p>

⁶ Seven goals identified by 4 of the students. One of the students did not specify an additional unattained goal.

FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge & Self Knowledge – ‘More than expected’ (+1). Culture – ‘Less than expected’ (-1).
GOAL/S: Skills – To develop ability to implement & lead team reflection at team meetings. Knowledge – To develop the knowledge on how to do this & share this. Culture – to have an impact on team meetings & an ongoing impact on reflective culture. FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Knowledge – ‘More than expected’ (+1). Skills & Culture – Both ‘Less than expected’ (-1). COMMENT: ‘No change’ in skills & culture domains.

The Graduate Certificate student GAS responses have not been analysed in relation to the 4 domains (Skills, Knowledge, Culture and Self Knowledge) at this stage. It is noted however, that in instances where GAS ratings include the 4 domains, the Culture dimension of goals has been less highly attained than the 3 other dimensions. This shows throughout the students’ GAS responses as a whole and most clearly in five of the seven negative ratings listed above.

3. Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership

Overview of GAS responses

The 31 students who completed the first year of the two year Graduate Diploma in Child & Family Practice Leadership in May 2010 have provided some thoughtful goals and review comments both collectively in their EBL groups and individually with regard to each unit of study.

The majority of students reported that their individual level of goal attainment exceeded their expectations in all or some of the units. Fourteen students (45 percent) reported they had attained all goals in all four units at levels that exceeded their expectations. For a further nine of the students (29 percent) at least some of their goals had been attained at or above expectations. Two students reported that one or more of their goals were not attained (‘Much less than expected’) but had attained other goals as expected or at a ‘More than expected’ level.

The group responses from the five enquiry based learning (EBL) groups were particularly positive, with four of the five groups responding that they attained all goals identified at a level that exceeded their expectations and with no group reporting a ‘Less than expected’ level of attainment for any goal, as outlined in the following section.

EBL group goals & scaling

The 31 students who completed the first year of the Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership in May 2010 worked in five Enquiry Based Learning groups to support their learning and will continue in these groups throughout the second year of the course. The GAS responses provided by all groups at their May 2010 review session show an extremely high level of group goal attainment. Three of the groups reported that all their goals were attained at a combination of ‘Much more than expected’ and ‘More than expected’ levels, one group reported their goal/s attained ‘More than expected’ and one group reported a combination of ‘More than expected’ and ‘Most likely outcome’ scaling

responses. As with the Graduate Certificate student group, none of the five groups in the Graduate Diploma used either of the negative 'Less than' or 'Much less than expected' categories from the GAS scale.

The responses from the five EBL groups are summarised in the following table.

Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership Summary of EBL Group Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses	
Range of GAS levels reported	Number of EBL Groups
All goals 'Much more than expected'	3
Included 'Much more' & 'More than expected'	1
Included 'Much more', 'More than expected' & 'Most likely outcome'	1
'Much less' or 'Less than expected'	nil

These group goals, together with some of the group review comments and collective GAS responses are presented in the following box.

Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership EBL Group Goals and Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses
<p>GOAL/S: Completion of group assessment: Skills: Present a cohesive, well balanced, integrated group presentation, Knowledge: Understanding group process dynamics & group performance. Culture: Recognition of DHS culture & its influence on our capacity as a group. Self Knowledge: Knowledge of what we each bring to the group. Self awareness of strengths & weaknesses.</p> <p>GOAL ATTAINMENT (MAY 2010): Skills: More than expected. Knowledge: Most likely outcome. Culture: Most likely outcome. Self Knowledge: More than expected.</p>
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Ability to mentor staff in understanding advanced / complex decision making. Knowledge: Comprehensive understanding of factors which impact on staff recruitment & retention. Culture: Demonstrate leadership in developing a (positive) work culture. Self Knowledge: To ultimately become complex & critical thinking in a complex & challenging environment.</p> <p>GOAL ATTAINMENT (MAY 2010): Skills: To develop enhanced skills in audit processes, program review & supervision (critical reflection) More than expected. Knowledge: Build a greater understanding of ways to respond to staff in relation to vicarious trauma, attachment, anxiety & enquiry/review. More than expected. Culture: Enhanced understanding of Aboriginal Cultural Competency Framework. More than expected. Self Knowledge: To effectively process our own individual professional aspirations. To consolidate our analytical & intuitive decision making. More than expected.</p>
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Ability to work collaboratively. Knowledge: Understanding of theory re collaborative practice & partnerships. Culture: Collaborative practice is the norm. Self Knowledge: Using EBL group as a learning lab in collaborative practice.</p> <p>GOAL ATTAINMENT (MAY 2010): Skills: Continued enhancement of communication between group members. Much more than expected. Knowledge: Understanding of self influence/management within the group dynamics. Much more than expected. Culture: To consider & explore culture more broadly -- a diversified view of culture. More than expected. Self Knowledge: Awareness of impact of individual role/s on whole group. More than expected.</p>
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: To develop our skills to support each other in completing the course. Knowledge: To develop & use our knowledge to support each other to complete the course. Culture: To support each other in new learning to transform organisation & culture. Self</p>

<p>Knowledge: Group members to share professional & personal expertise for the benefit of the group in course & their workplace.</p> <p>GOAL ATTAINMENT (MAY 2010): Skills: More than expected. Knowledge: Much more than expected. Culture: More than expected. Self Knowledge: Much more than expected.</p>
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Communication to achieve learning outcomes. Knowledge: Expand knowledge base through group reflective practice. Culture: To create a safe & positive culture within the group. Self Knowledge: Manage anxiety within the group to harness high emotions, stress & energy in the group, to become confident that this can be managed to achieve positive outcomes.</p> <p>GOAL ATTAINMENT (MAY 2010): Skills: More than expected. Knowledge: More than expected. Culture: Much more than expected. Self Knowledge: More than expected.</p>

The goals identified were extremely relevant to the EBL component of the Graduate Diploma, were achievable, reasonably measurable, well achieved in all five groups and exceeded in four of the groups. It is noted that the only group responses that showed expectations not exceeded were in one group in relation to the Knowledge and Culture domains of their goal where GAS responses were at the midpoint 'Most likely outcome' level, indicating that expectations had been met and where Skills and Self Knowledge goals were attained at a 'More than expected' level.

As with the Graduate Certificate, these extremely positive GAS responses and comments about attainment of EBL group goals at the end of the first year of the program show a collective student perspective of exceeded expectations in the EBL group component of this program.

The EBL group goals, outcome measures and attainment scaling responses from the Graduate Diploma students demonstrate that they understand and can use the GAS system as a contribution to program evaluation. This contrasts with the lower than expected response rate from individual students in relation to each of the units studied, as discussed in the following section.

Graduate Diploma Units 1 – 4: Individual goals & scaling

The 31 students who completed the first year of the Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership identified goals relevant to key learning objectives at commencement of each of the four units undertaken to date. This section examines the range of GAS responses provided by the students to the independent consultant in May 2010. We will initially consider the student's responses across all four of the units, then differences between GAS responses within the units, and finally examine the goals and attainment scaling presented by the students and consider the two negative responses from this group.

The individual responses across all units convey the high level of achievement of goals reported by the students. Twenty nine (94 percent) reported attaining all components of all goals set. Of these, fourteen students (45 percent) reported they had attained all goals in all four units at levels that exceeded their expectations. For a further nine (29 percent) at least some of their goals had been attained above expectations in combination with some at the 'Most likely outcome' level and only two (6

percent) identified one goal each that had not been fully attained as expected.

The next table shows the summarised GAS responses of the 31 students across all four units. Percentages are included for comparison purposes. The high rate of 'No response' is disappointing. Six of the students (19 percent) did not hand in GAS rating responses in any of the four units. It is noted, however, that some of these students had handed in thoughtful goals and outcome measures, but had then failed to 'scale' their level of attainment using the measures designed. The contrast with the highly effective collective response by all five EBL groups makes it unlikely that this non response was due to lack of understanding of the GAS process.

Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership Individual Student Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses Across All 4 Units		
Range of GAS levels reported	Students	Percent
All goals 'Much more than expected' (+2)		
Range 'Much more' to 'More than expected' (+2 to +1)	4	13
Range 'Much more' to 'Most likely outcome' (+2 to 0)	7	23
All goals 'More than expected' (+1)	3	10
Range 'More than expected' to 'Most likely outcome' (+1 to 0)	9	29
All goals 'Most likely outcome' (0)		
'More than expected' to 'Much less than expected' (+1 to -2)	2	6
All goals 'Less than (-1) or 'Much less than expected' (-2)		
No GAS response:	6	19
Total (n=)	31	100
Total negative responses - goals (Number of students)	2 (2 students)	(6%)

It is noted that two (6 percent) of the students identified a single component of a goal that was attained at 'Much less than expected' level, and that each of them had attained their other goals or components at a range including 'Most likely outcome' and 'More than expected' levels. The two negative responses will be examined further below.

The following table shows the range of student GAS responses disaggregated for each of the four Graduate Diploma units delivered in 2009/2010. (See footnotes for unit titles.) Again the high proportion of reported goal attainment that exceeded expectations is noted.

Responses are clustered in the 'More than expected' and 'Most likely outcome' points of the scale. Low numbers and the incidence of 'No responses' make comparison between the four units indicative only.

Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership Individual Student Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses for Units 1 – 4				
Range of GAS levels reported	Unit 1⁷	Unit 2⁸	Unit 3⁹	Unit 4¹⁰
All goals 'Much more than expected' (+2)	1	1		1
Range 'Much more' to 'More than expected' (+2 to +1)	2	4	3	5
All goals 'More than expected' (+1)	4	5	2	
Range 'Much more' to 'Most likely outcome' (+2 to 0)	1	3	6	6
Range 'More than expected' to 'Most likely outcome' (+1 to 0)	6	7	8	8
All goals 'Most likely outcome' (0)	2	3	3	2
Range 'More than expected' to 'Less than expected' (+1 to -2)		1		
Range 'Most likely outcome' to 'Less than expected'		1		
No response:	15	6	9	9
Total (n=)	31	31	31	27
Total negative responses - goals (Number of students)		2 (2 students)		

It is noted, also, that the only negative responses occurred Unit 2, and that the two students who identified goals not attained (at a 'Much less than expected' level) also responded that they had attained other goals in the same unit at a 'Most likely outcome' or 'More than expected' level.

Graduate Diploma individual student goals

The examples of goals and GAS responses from the Graduate Diploma students are presented in the next two boxes, including the two goals which were attained at a 'Less than expected' level. Examples from all four units to show the ranges of goals identified and of student GAS responses. The goals are considered representative individual examples, they relate to one or more key learning outcomes for the unit and are achievable and measurable. As with the Graduate Certificate group, they provide examples of the increasingly sophisticated use of the four domain areas in setting up goals and structuring GAS responses by some of the students.

⁷ Unit 1: Power of relationships – Engaging others.

⁸ Unit 2: Decision making – Thinking clearly & reflective insight.

⁹ Unit 3: Managing oneself – Leadership in reflection and action.

¹⁰ Unit 4: Delivering results & achieving outcomes.

Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership Examples of Individual Student Goals and Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Responses	
<p>GOAL/S: Having (i) an improved knowledge & skills of effective engagement, (ii) better understanding of meaningful & purposeful relationships & the dynamics involved & (iii) improved understanding of cultural competence.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: 'Most likely outcome' – achieved as expected.</p>	
<p>GOAL/S: To improve my skills & capacity as a relationships builder. To develop the confidence & skills to work with a range of stakeholder relationships. To be able to self-reflect on my own thoughts, feelings, behaviours . .</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge, Culture & Self Knowledge: All rated 'Much more than expected'</p>	
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Improved skill in utilising critical reflection in supervising staff. Knowledge: Increased knowledge of theories re critical reflection practice. Culture: For awareness of culture, both big 'C' and small 'c' to be integrated into practice. Self Knowledge: To have increased capacity to 'reflect in action' & not to run with an anxious response.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills: 'Most likely outcome'. Knowledge: 'More than expected'. Culture: 'Most likely outcome'. Self Knowledge: 'Most likely outcome'.</p>	
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Integration of theory into practice across all levels within my leadership. Knowledge: Integrate learning into my practice. Culture: Greater engagement & understanding with the Child Protection Program to make culturally aware decisions in practice & also with staff for better outcomes for children & families. Self Knowledge: Critical reflection & development of my own capacity in fostering engagement, thinking clearly & reflective insight.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge, Culture & Self Knowledge: All rated 'Much more than expected'.</p>	
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Increased skill in reflecting on action, not just in action. Knowledge: Increased understanding & capacity to articulate complex family situations. Culture: Increased self awareness of impact of my own culture . . . Self Knowledge: Increased awareness of my own anxiety & its impact.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Knowledge & Self Knowledge: 'More than expected'.</p>	
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Awareness of use of self in interactions with both staff & clients & enhanced levels of reflection both on & in action. Knowledge: Apply self awareness to raise knowledge by reflective practice & self assessment. Culture: Apply self awareness & self management in a culturally appropriate way to ensure the fostering of culturally competent practice. Self Knowledge: Awareness of self-reflection in action & on action.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills: 'More than expected'. Knowledge & Culture: 'Most likely outcome. Self Knowledge: 'Much more than expected'.</p>	
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Use tools & analysis strategies & collaboration to achieve better outcomes. Knowledge: BIP. Build on previous knowledge & skills . . . Culture: Create work environment frameworks with a diversity of cultures. Self Knowledge: Develop awareness of biases & family of origin.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills: 'More than expected'. Knowledge & Culture: 'Most likely outcome. Self Knowledge: 'More than expected'.</p>	
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: To be able to demonstrate my level of case practice to others. Knowledge: High level of understanding of BICPM & essential expert knowledge. Culture: To be able to create & maintain a reflective positive culture within my Unit. Self Knowledge: To be reflective of my own practice and analysis of areas of challenge.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills, Knowledge, Culture & Self Knowledge: All 'Much more than expected'.</p>	

The following box contains the two individual goals identified as not attained. These responses were both from the second of the four units in the Graduate Diploma and do not differ markedly from other goals identified. It is noted that in both instances one component of the goal is not attained, in contrast to the other aspects which were attained at a 'Most likely outcome' or 'More than expected' level.

Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership Individual student goals with 'Less than expected' (GAS) ratings
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Improved decision making skill. Knowledge: Improved knowledge of decision making. Culture: No change in understanding of culture. Self Knowledge: Improved self knowledge.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills: 'Most likely outcome'. Knowledge: 'Most likely outcome'. Culture: 'Much less than expected'. Self Knowledge: 'Most likely outcome'.</p>
<p>GOAL/S: Skills: Present a piece of action research. Knowledge: Utilising case examples, develop ground breaking ideas on how to work with children experiencing abuse. Culture: Create an environment whereby I promote participation & critical thinking. Self Knowledge: Be cognizant of my own emotional responses to high conflict situations reflect.</p> <p>FINAL GOAL ATTAINMENT: Skills: 'Much less than expected'. Knowledge: 'Most likely outcome'. Culture: 'Most likely outcome'. Self Knowledge: 'More than expected'.</p>

4. Conclusions & recommendations

Overview of findings

The student perspectives on their level of attainment of self-identified goals make an independent contribution to the evaluation and development of these new programs in conjunction with other evaluation measures. With very few exceptions the students have reported that they have attained their group and individual goals for core course components and have exceeded these in the majority of instances. The response from EBL groups in both the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma has been particularly strong.

In addition to its role in evaluation, the modified GAS approach adopted in this program has the potential to encourage critical self reflection and self assessment to enhance the students' learning and practice. This appears to be supported by the encouraged use of the four domains (Skills, Knowledge, Culture and Self Knowledge) in the GAS response matrix. It is considered, also, that the GAS evaluation process has potential to make a direct contribution to the students' practice as it introduces a valuable tool for supervision, management and program evaluation, with a focus on goal setting & outcome measurement.

Process issues

Numerous process issues have arisen during the first year of implementation of this GAS aspect of program evaluation. They include the following points:

- Early misunderstanding of GAS level 0 ('Most likely outcome') as a 'zero' or negative rating led to some difficulties with self-scaling in

both course groups during the year. There was no evidence of this at final review, however.

- Student reluctance & diffidence in self scaling, noted particularly in the Graduate Diploma group, improved somewhat over the year.
- Variable approaches to goal setting, outcome measurement and the use of the four dimensions in EBL groups and different units has led to 'change fatigue' and some inconsistency in student responses. This has lessened with development of the GAS outcome levels/domains matrix form during the year and all EBL groups and most students were using the process well at the final GAS review session.
- Increasing familiarity with the Skills, Knowledge, Culture and Self Knowledge domains and their use in the GAS responses matrix in later units also appears to have reduced inconsistencies.
- The use of a range GAS outcome levels in analysing group, aggregate and individual responses was adopted to accommodate variable and multiple goals in this analysis. This is a more complex measure to rank and present than the basic five point GAS scale (related to goals rather than goal setters).
- Confidentiality & voluntary participation issues have complicated the independent data collection process and follow-up of missing data. Consideration of a computer based system, necessitating student access to computers on course days, is recommended as a possible way of overcoming these issues.
- The potential for other uses of the GAS process in learning and practice, for example in enhancing peer group and individual learning, self assessment, and the development of practice knowledge and skills in goal setting and measurement have not been explored in this analysis. Consideration of ways to integrate use of individual and group learning goals into each of the teaching/learning units is recommended.

Recommendations

It is considered that the GAS process appears to make a useful independent contribution to evaluation of the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice and Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership. It is noted that the process has been considerably developed and consolidated during the first year of implementation.

The following recommendations have arisen during the analysis.

1. Consolidation and consistent implementation of GAS processes, including consistent documentation throughout the year with consistent reviews, will consolidate the process for each group of students and allow for annual review and development of the process.
2. Adoption of consistent goal review processes, for example at the mid point & conclusion of each unit, with a follow-up session at the end of each semester, will help consolidate the GAS evaluation.

3. Early input on realistic, achievable, measurable goal setting practices in the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma courses will also assist students to adopt these processes to the benefit of their learning and practice and to provide more consistent data for program evaluation.
4. Introduction of individual, whole of course goals, at commencement of each course will add a further component to the evaluation. EBL groups could provide effective peer support for setting and review of these goals.
5. Consideration of a computer managed GAS documentation system, available on-line, could be considered as a way of streamlining student access to their goals and outcome measures and facilitating the GAS evaluation data collection system.
6. Consideration of other potential applications of the GAS process to enhance learning and practice and to further program evaluation and development, including the following potential uses:
 - Unit and course review – using findings and de-identified student GAS responses for internal course evaluation and development;
 - Post course evaluation – revisit the goals for a sample of course graduates on a longer-term basis, for instance at six or twelve monthly intervals; and
 - Students use their goal statements, outcome measures and GAS scores in their supervision if they choose to do so.

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Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice

Unit 3: Collaborative practice, decision making & best interests¹¹

Individual Goals

(An example of good use of GAS goal setting and possible outcome levels across the four domains, March 2010)

Domain	Skills	Knowledge	Culture	Self Knowledge
Goals identified in each domain:	<i>Increased speed & ability to come to sound decisions</i>	<i>Increased knowledge of theory of critical enquiry</i>	<i>Awareness of impact of culture on individual decision making</i>	<i>Calm approach & quicker reflective practice</i>
Review date:				
Level of expected outcome:				
Much more than expected +2	<i>Immediate response to supervisees</i>	<i>Clear direction of thought processes</i>	<i>Solid understanding of impact</i>	<i>Regular program of critical reflection -- as a group.</i>
More than expected +1	<i>Ready response & leadership</i>	<i>Comfortable in approach process</i>	<i>Ability to ask how culture impacts</i>	<i>-- in individual session</i>
Most likely outcome 0	<i>Ability to reach decisions</i>	<i>ditto</i>	<i>Consideration of possibility . . .</i>	<i>Consideration of possibility . . .</i>
Less than expected -1	<i>Have to consider texts</i>	<i>Vague recollections</i>	<i>No change</i>	<i>No memory</i>
Much less than expected -2	<i>No clue where to go!</i>	<i>No change</i>	<i>No change</i>	<i>No change</i>

¹¹ Unit 3: Key learning outcomes

On successful completion of this unit participants should be able to:

- Demonstrate their capacity for critical understanding of self and others in relation to analytic enquiry and decision making.
- Demonstrate a sound understanding of critical enquiry, analytical processing and ethical decision-making and an ability to incorporate this into reflective practice.
- Be more confident in practising collaboratively with key stakeholders including professionals, carers, children and their families and processing critical information to make holistic, ethical and defensible choices in relation to the children's best interests.
- Be more confident role models; they should be able to assist less experienced practitioners and others with critical enquiry and effective decision making.
-

Attachment 4 Recommended Refinements to Curriculum

Graduate Certificate in Child and Family practice

The consortium is committed to a process of continuous review and refinement of the courses, in order to ensure that they continue to engage with the realities of practice, and to be responsive to feedback from students and other stakeholders. An initial review was undertaken and reported on earlier this year in the interim evaluation report. . Some minor considerations arise from the evaluation data and consortium reflections and are outlined below.

Subject 1: Working with children and families: Theory and Practice

As the first of four units in the Graduate Certificate in Child and Family Practice, this unit establishes the importance of theory for sound practice and builds foundational knowledge for other units. The Unit provides the context for practice informed by international and local policy initiatives. It explicitly addresses the gendered nature of work with children and families and promotes anti-oppressive practice with diverse populations. The recommendations as a result of a review of this unit include;

- Ensuring that the theoretical models introduced in this unit are built upon in the following units, and that this is transparent to students.
- As with all units, ensuring that a ‘child centred’ lens is at the core of delivery

Subject 2: Relationship based practice with children and families

Primarily a practice based unit designed to enable participants to engage with vulnerable children, adolescents and families in ways that, building on the theoretical foundations from unit one, promote relationship building, and balances respect and empowerment with forensic astuteness

The recommendations as a result of a review of this unit include;

- Ensuring that in this skill development unit that the unique elements of the practice context is transparent to students
- Including a component of unit four, critical reflection within this unit, to allow unit four to become a ‘capstone’ unit

Subject 3: Collaborative practice, decision making and best interests

This unit is designed to enable participants to implement the Best Interests case practice model through facilitating the integration of theory, practice and active implementation and apply in all areas. The recommendations as a result of a review of this unit include;

- Enhancing the collaborative practice material , where currently an emphasis on decision making models
- Ensure that lecturers are mindful of workplace requests for data and materials and impact.

Subject 4: Reflective practice: use of self and self care

A critical reflective practice framework will support students to examine the impact of the personal and professional factors that influence their practice. Focus is on self-awareness and the development and exercise of self-management strategies to enhance mental agility and facilitate more effective and creative decision making and relationship building. The recommendations as a result of a review of this unit include;

- Using a component of this unit to draw all of the material across the three earlier units together, forming essentially a ‘capstone’ unit.

Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Practice Leadership

As with the Graduate Certificate, units delivered in the Graduate Diploma have been the subject of continuous review and refinement. Overall this is considered to be a strong, contemporary and relevant course with limited requirement for change. Some minor considerations arise from the evaluation data and consortium reflections and are outlined below.

Subject 1: Power of Relationships: Engaging Others

Theory and practice are integrated to guide the students’ exploration and development in key factors and processes that impact on the quality and depth of their engagement with the range of individuals and groups encountered within CP leadership roles.

A key focus is on facilitating students’ capacities to contribute to the development of an empowered and empowering organisational culture conducive to continued improvement in achieving the best outcomes for children and families.

The recommendations as a result of a review of this unit include;

- Consider carefully the process to form EBL groups
- Ensure that readings are identified as core and recommended

Subject 2: Decision making: thinking clearly and reflective insight

This unit focuses on building knowledge and skills for effective decision-making in relation to safety, development and stability for the child. Upon successful completion participants should be able to identify and reflect upon core assumptions and values that impact on themselves and others in decision-making. A critical awareness of culturally and ethnically diverse perspectives used in reflective enquiry, analysis and decision-making is central to this unit. Participants who complete this unit successfully should be ethical, effective and confident decision-makers in contexts of high emotion and professional pressure.

The recommendations as a result of a review of this unit include;

- Reconsider an aspect of assignment requirement where students worked with a peer mentor
- Ensure that regions are briefed about the ‘retention planning’ requirement for this unit, and the students’ need for local data

Subject 3: Mastering Oneself - Leadership in Reflection and Action

The discussion of knowledge and skills needed for self-management and mental agility will be developed in relation to the complexity and risks involved in several key areas of practice content, including family violence, parental substance misuse, and excluded families whose children suffer cumulative harm. At the completion of this unit, participants will be able to develop a workable plan to enhance their own and the supervisees’ self reflection, self-discipline and flexible response to such complex and risk-laden situations. The recommendations as a result of a review of this unit include;

- Ensure that readings are building upon earlier literature offered
- ensure that any external guests are well briefed in particular in relation to the student’s role as leaders and managers

Subject 5: *(delivered prior to subject 4)* Delivering Results and Achieving Outcomes

Building on the earlier units, this unit focuses on another aspect in the Best Interests Framework, that is, enacting and reviewing decisions and outcomes from a leadership perspective. This unit combines the leadership capabilities of ‘delivering results’ along with the workplace culture dimension of being ‘outcome focused’. This unit will highlight ‘making it happen’ and explore potential constraints to effective practice in leadership. In particular it explores how the Best Interests Case Practice model is applied in a leadership context, with a focus on intervention, action and co-creating success with others. This includes how these skills and capabilities apply to different aspects of leadership, such as implementing and reviewing Best Interests plans, ensuring that interventions planned are put in operation effectively, supervision, team leadership and middle and senior management functions. This unit will expand on strategies for problem solving and troubleshooting in complex client, staff and organization situations. The unit will integrate organizational, professional and personal values along with theories, skills and knowledge including self awareness and self-management to support and develop a healthy, learning, positive organizational culture and being outcome-focused in order to co-create sustained, successful outcomes. The recommendation as a result of a review of this unit include;

- Earlier introduction in the course of Goal Attainment Scaling, in particular the use of this method as a program measurement tool would be useful.