

# **Maximising learning dialogue opportunities in professional field-based experiences**

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Field-based experience is an integral component of many pre-service professional and vocational preparation programmes, yet the literature suggests that these experiences can vary greatly in terms of their impact on professional growth. A key contributing factor is the nature of the dialogue that occurs between the mentoring pair. This presentation outlines an AKO-sponsored research project which investigated ways to develop genuine learning dialogue between practicum mentors/supervisors and their students. Base data were gathered regarding counselling and early childhood participants' hopes for their practicum relationships and the actual lived experience. Participant pairs then trialled four interventions which might enhance practicum experiences, and their responses to these interventions highlighted the value of first intentionally promoting a learning relationship, which then allows genuine learning dialogue to occur. An unexpected finding was the varying degree of agency afforded to students within the two professions. Also highlighted were the ever-present issue of time and the discrepancy between what the mentors believed was happening in the mentoring relationship and what the students perceived to be the case.