Importance and Contribution of Field Placement

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Abstract- **We examined if supervision of students performing field placement can enhance self concept. Third year Psychology (22) and Criminology (48) students took part in supervised field placement and filled out SDQ III, at the beginning and end of school year. Compared to first year students who did not take part in field placement, Psychology students reduced physical ability self concept, Criminology students reduced general self concept and total self concept, and combined group improved mathematical, academic and physical ability self concept less than the control group. Ratings of their experience demonstrate the importance of field placement to enhancing self-confidence, integrating theoretical knowledge, acquiring practical experience and deciding on their future. Thus, we found a confusing picture relating to the importance of supervision of field placement.**

Keywords- Field Placement; Practicum; Clinical Training; Self-Concept; Self Confidence

I. INTRODUCTION

Field placements are practiced in various academic programs and are an important addition to them [1-8]. This experience may appear under the label clinical training or service-learning. Ref. [9] distinguishes between these two terms, stating that "clinical training emphasizes the development of skills and competencies for practice…service-learning are an educational methodology that integrates community service with explicit academic learning objectives" (p. 258). However, they acknowledge that this distinction "can be challenging", and that there are many university faculties as well as community service providers who find it difficult to distinguish between clinical training, service-learning and voluntary community service. Whether clinical training or service-learning, preparation for the experience as well as adequate supervision is necessary so that the students will feel competent and thus enhance their self-concept. This research is concerned with service-learning and addresses the question of how the experience affects the students' self-concept.

II. SELF-CONCEPT

Self-concept is a general construct defined as "the composite of ideas, feelings, and attitudes people have about themselves". It is both stable and enduring, yet situation dependent and malleable [10]. Ref. [10] suggested that it is actually a collection of a "wide variety of self-conceptions – the good selves, the bad selves, the hoped-for selves" (p. 859). It is formed during childhood, adolescence and early adulthood, as a result of experiences the individual has, as well as the feedback and evaluations received from significant others (parents, teachers, peers) in his or her environment [11-14]. The attributions the person makes for his or her successes and failures are additional sources of influence on self-concept [15].

Ref. [14] developed a multifaceted, hierarchical model of self-concept. In this model, general self-concept is a composite factor which combines academic and non-academic self-concept. Each of these is further subdivided into specific content areas, for example verbal and math in academic self-concept and social, emotional and physical in non-academic self-concept. Each non-academic content area is further subdivided into specific facets, for example social self-concept is divided into peer and significant others. Facets lower in the hierarchy are more amenable to change than those higher up, and the general self-concept is the most stable of all, requiring "many situation-specific instances, inconsistent with general self-concept" (p. 414) for change to occur. This multifaceted approach forms the basis for the self description questionnaire developed by [16] and has been repeatedly supported in research [12, 16-19].

III. SERVICE LEARNING

Service-learning adds a practical dimension to the theoretical understanding acquired during classroom presentation of material. Service-learning typically adds relevant adjunct classroom discussions or projects which enable the student to further develop his or her knowledge through critical reflection [1-7, 9, 20, 21]. Students generally prefer service-learning which has a clear connection to their professional program or that they believe will help them in their career [5, 9].

IV. PREPARATION FOR AND SUPERVISION OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Preparation prior to the field placement and ongoing supervision during the placement are important elements. Insufficient or inadequate supervision can have a negative impact on the experience [1, 5, 7, 9, 22]. Supervision should allow the students to explore concerns relevant to their work and learn that these concerns are a normal part of the experience. It should allow students to explore their thoughts, feelings, and behavior patterns [1, 21]. Both [7] and [9] found that involving community partners in designing and delivering the orientations improved their efficacy.

V. SERVICE-LEARNING, SELF CONCEPT, PREPARATION AND SUPERVISION

Service-learning provides the student with an opportunity to develop and clarify his or her identity [8] and moral and ethical standards [20, 21]. The student tries out new skills, experiences success and often sees tangible outcomes [5, 22]. These processes instill confidence [2, 5, 21] and help modify the students' self concept.

Several theories attempt to explain changes in self-concept following experiences in childhood and in adulthood, and can be extended to explain such changes following a work assignment. Exploring these theories and the differences among them is beyond the scope of this chapter. Therefore, two central theories of changes in self concept were chosen.

The first theory relates to academic self-concept. Reciprocity effects theory proposes that academic self-concept influences performance (perhaps through self-efficacy) and thus has an impact on achievement. Achievement in turn influences future academic self-concept, and so on [12]. Clearly, if the student attempts to work without adequate preparation and/or supervision, he will feel less qualified, perform at a lower level, achieve less and thus this experience will not serve to increase his academic self concept. On the other hand, sufficient preparation and good supervision will serve to enhance the performance and thus the self esteem.

An alternative explanation is self-perception theory [23], or role identity model theory [24]. Both theories claim that people infer their self-concept from their observation of their own behavior, especially when the self-concept is unclear, and there is no strong reason for making an external attribution. Behavior which is performed on an ongoing basis creates a new role identity and thus changes in the self-concept in this particular domain. Biased scanning theory [25, 26] extends these theories. Behavior causes increased attention to aspects of the self, which become highly accessible when trying to define the self and thus influence self assessment. If, as [10] suggested, the self-concept is an aggregate of individual self-concepts, then the behavior will elicit those self-concepts which are similar to it. According to [27] and [26], interpersonal processes motivate the change process. They regard the self as publicly constructed and existing in relation to others. Therefore, in their opinion, public events are more influential in effecting changes than private events. Private events can be ignored or canceled, whereas public events are more carefully monitored since they are obvious to others. Again, inadequate preparation and/or supervision may result in less than satisfactory performance and thus no increase in self concept, whereas good preparation and supervision will result in increased self-concept.

Therefore, service-learning which is accompanied by adequate preparation and good supervision is expected to change self-concept scores, whether due to external achievement (reciprocity effects theory) or due to increased salience of aspects of the self previously not attended to (role identity or self perception or biased scanning models). Following an extensive literature search we found only two studies which explored changes in self-concept following work exposure, one during college [5] and one during high school [28]. Ref [21] measured self esteem following work exposure. However they did not take pre-experience measures. Therefore their study cannot shed light on changes occurring following field experience. Ref. [5] found that field placement enhanced student teachers' self esteem. Unfortunately, they did not use a known, valid and reliable measure of self esteem, rather measured two aspects of self esteem (positive and negative) using only four questions for each. Likewise, although [28] found that high school students' service-learning increased efficacy and competence, they also failed to use a valid and reliable measure. Their measure of efficacy included four questions, and their measure of competence only three. Ref. [29] performed a meta-analysis on studies examining effects of service-learning and found a modest effect (d=.25) for self-evaluation. However, it is unclear what exactly self-evaluation includes, as they did not specify. In addition, they reviewed studies using service-learning with an age range from kindergarten to adults, thus it is unclear how many of the studies reviewed in this category employed college students. They examined moderating variables as well (use of reflection, number of hours, and length of service-learning). However, in this analysis they collapsed all six personality variables together. As a result, it is impossible to tease out the effects for self-evaluations. Therefore, our research was undertaken to examine changes in self-concept following field placement using a reliable and valid self esteem measure, which measures facets as well as general self esteem. Initially, we decided to examine changes following placement with little preparation and supervision. The results were that changes in self-concept among students who performed field placement were not larger than among those in a control group that did not perform such a placement. Following this, we decided to examine changes following placement with sufficient preparation and supervision. Thus, there is a cardinal difference between this research and past studies. In this research, students in the service-learning received supervision, while [29] studied the effect of structured reflection. Reflection described as: "the link that ties student experience in the community to academic learning". Although important, this does not include supervision.

Following service-learning work experience the self-concept facets most likely to change are those closely linked to application of the study material (academic self-concept, problem solving), those linked to behavior in service-learning settings (relations with the same sex, emotional stability), and general and total scores (general self-esteem and total self-concept). Therefore this study expected to find higher facet scores among students who underwent a field placement after receiving intensive training and supervision than among students who did not work in such a setting.

VI. METHOD

A. Participants

Four groups of participants were recruited for this study. Third year Psychology students and third year Criminology students who participated in a field placement course (compulsory for all students) were compared to two control groups: first year Psychology students (58) and first year Criminology students (14). The Psychology field placement course started out with 61 students. 51 students filled the "psychology course evaluation 1". However, for various reasons, only 22 were present both times the self description questionnaire was given out (first and last class of the year) and therefore were included in the statistical analysis of the "self description questionnaire". One failed to fill out the "criminology/psychology course evaluation 2", thus only 21 were included in this analysis.

The Criminology field placement course consisted of 53 students at the beginning of the year. However five were exempted from participating in the field placement for various reasons, thus leaving 48 in the group. There were 72 students in the first year Criminology program. However only 14 were present both times the questionnaire was given out (first and last class of the year), therefore only 14 were included in this group. Likewise there were 66 first year Psychology students of which only 58 were present both times the questionnaire was given out (first and last class of the year) and therefore were included in this group. Students were mainly young (average age 25) unmarried females.

Demographic data is provided in Table 1.

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Group	N	Ethnic		Age		Sex		Family status	
		Jew	Other	M	Std	Male	Female	S	M
Psych Prac	22	21	1	24	2.5	3	19	20	2
Psych Intro	58	49	9	23	2.4	16	42	56	2
Crim Prac	48	41	7	25	2.4	19	29	42	6
Crim Intro	14	13	1	23	1.6	3	11	14	0

Note. S = single, M = married

B. Measures

1. Demographic questions are: age, sex, nationality (Jew, Druze, Moslem, Christian Arab, and Christian), and family status (single, married, divorced, and widowed).

2. Self description questionnaire – SDQ III by [16] was designed to measure self-concept for late adolescents and young adults, and is therefore well suited for young college students. The questionnaire contains 136 items answered on an eight-point likert scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true. Half of the items are negatively worded. The questionnaire yields four academic self-concept scores (Mathematics, Verbal, General Academic, Problem Solving), eight non-academic self-concept scores (Physical Ability, Physical Appearance, Relations with Same Sex, Relations with Opposite Sex, Relations with Parents, Spiritual Values/Religion, Honesty/Trustworthiness, Emotional Stability) and two general self-concept scores (General-Self, Total Score). This questionnaire has been extensively tested and yields high reliability and validity scores [16, 19, 30, 31].

3. Psychology course evaluation 1__ this questionnaire was designed to measure degree of satisfaction from various aspects of the course which accompanies the field placement. Reliability and validity were not examined. The questionnaire contains four content areas: general importance of the course (4 items); introductory classes held prior to the field placement (3 items); course lecturers (3 items); field placement setting (6 items). Students were asked to rate the importance of each item on a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

4. Criminology/Psychology course evaluation 2__ this questionnaire was designed to measure students' point of view on the contribution of their experience in field placement – for themselves and for their patients. Reliability and validity were not examined. The questionnaire contains 14 true/false questions in two content areas: general importance of the course in increasing knowledge and self esteem (8 items); importance of student's contribution in the field placement setting to the person s/he was assigned to (6 items).

C. Procedure

Third year Psychology and Criminology students have an option of participating in field placement as part of their curriculum. This entails classroom meetings which are spaced out throughout the year in addition to field placement and supervision. Those who participated in these courses were given the SDQ III to fill out anonymously at the beginning and end of the school year, and the course evaluation questionnaires at the end of the year. Introductory psychology students were asked to anonymously fill out the SDQ III at the beginning and end of the school year as well.

VII.   RESULTS

A. Demographic Variables

The four groups (psychology practicum, psychology control, criminology practicum, criminology control) were compared on demographic variables (age, sex, ethnicity, family status) (see Table 1), using χ^2 for sex, fisher exact test for ethnicity and family status, and Kruskal-Wallis for age. No significant differences were found on number of males and females, $\chi^2(3)= 5.6$ n.s.; ethnicity $p \le 0.67$; or family status $p \le 0.25$; however, age differed significantly $\chi^2(3)= 16$, $p \le 0.001$. The age difference resulted from a significant difference between the psychology control group and the criminology practicum group. No other group differences on age were significant.

B. Changes in Self Concept Following Service Learning

Psychology field placement students were compared to psychology control students on changes on self concept facets from beginning to end of year using Wilcoxon scores with alpha correction (Table 2). The only significant difference was on Physical Ability Self Concept, $Z(78)=-2.17$, $p \le 0.01$. Practicum students decreased while control students increased their physical ability self concept. However, even this difference disappears after using alpha correction.

Next, Criminology field placement students were compared to criminology control students on changes on self

TABLE II SELF-CONCEPT FACETS

Group	Math				Verbal				Academic				Problem Solving				Physical Ability			
	Beg		End		Beg		End		Beg		End		Beg		End		Beg		End	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Psych Prac	4.74***	1.59	4.72***	1.71	5.79	0.78	5.90	0.67	6.04*	0.92	6.14*	0.97	5.38	0.88	5.41	0.82	5.34**	1.72	5.23**	1.60
Psych Intro	3.91***	1.51	4.34***	1.68	5.91	1.31	5.88	1.17	5.80*	1.06	6.15*	0.88	5.59	1.04	5.58	0.95	5.13**	1.76	5.29**	1.75
Crim Prac	4.00***	1.34	4.00***	1.47	5.99	0.91	5.95	0.95	5.60*	1.13	5.62*	0.89	5.54	0.80	5.54	0.85	5.53**	1.55	5.47**	1.59
Crim Intro	3.83***	1.73	4.49***	1.94	5.66	1.18	6.13	0.87	6.02*	0.89	6.29*	0.97	5.47	0.70	5.53	0.77	5.57**	1.73	5.88**	1.65

TABLE II (CONT'D)

Group	Appearance				Same Sex Peers				Opposite Sex Peers				Parents				Spirtual			
	Beg		End		Beg		End		Beg		End		Beg		End		Beg		End	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Psych Prac	5.25	1.46	5.45	1.56	5.39	1.16	5.51	1.11	5.29	1.26	5.30	1.12	5.32	1.17	5.55	1.14	4.05	1.48	4.54	1.50
Psych Intro	6.16	1.61	5.96	1.23	5.92	1.31	5.95	1.28	5.72	1.41	5.74	1.41	5.72	1.46	5.81	1.55	4.45	1.62	4.63	1.57
Crim Prac	6.03	0.87	6.06	0.98	6.16	0.86	6.08	0.96	6.22	0.84	6.29	0.97	6.16	1.18	5.94	1.29	4.16	1.27	4.10	1.33
Crim Intro	6.36	0.66	6.84	0.68	6.44	0.66	6.31	0.57	6.39	0.72	6.62	1.11	6.43	0.80	6.49	0.88	4.16	1.26	4.51	1.80

TABLE II (CONT'D)

Group	Honesty				Emotional				General Esteem				Total			
	Beg		End		Beg		End		Beg		End		Beg		End	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Psych Prac	6.03	0.70	6.24	0.55	4.68	1.38	5.03	1.21	5.41	1.32	5.75	1.22	6.13	1.30	6.23	1.47
Psych Intro	6.30	0.97	6.37	1.39	4.99	1.26	5.22	1.49	6.13	1.30	6.23	1.47	5.52	0.76	5.63	0.81
Crim Prac	6.28	0.78	6.33	0.80	5.15	1.17	5.26	1.32	6.65*	0.70	6.44*	0.97	5.65***	0.48	5.61***	0.52
Crim Intro	6.43	0.87	6.64	0.87	5.72	1.12	5.97	1.32	6.57*	0.77	7.08*	0.62	5.76***	0.52	6.08***	0.62

* $p \le 0.05$, ** $p \le 0.01$, *** $p \le 0.005$

concept facets from beginning to end of year using Wilcoxon scores with alpha correction. The only significant differences were on General Self Concept, $Z(70)=-2.41$, $p \le 0.01$ before alpha correction and $p \le 0.05$ after alpha correction, and Total Self Concept $Z(70)=-2.77$, $p \le 0.005$. On both self concept facets, students in the control group increased their self concept, while students in the practicum group either decreased or did not change their self concept.

Finally, both field placement groups were combined and compared to the combined control group on self concept facets from beginning to end of year using t-test scores with alpha correction. The significant differences were on Mathematical Self Concept $t(124)=-3.40$, $p \le 0.005$, Academic Self Concept $t(140)=-2.26$, $p \le 0.05$ and Physical Ability Self Concept $t(140)=-2.88$, $p \le 0.01$. On all three self-concept facets, students in the control group increased their scores more than students in the practicum groups.

C. Student Evaluation of the Course

Evaluation using Questionnaire 1. Looking at the ratings made by students in the Psychology field placement course (Table 3), it appears that the majority gave high or very high

ratings to the degree the course helped them familiarize themselves with the application of psychology in the field (89%), the degree it increased their ability to understand people (70%), the degree it increased self awareness (61%), the degree it helped in theoretical and practical integration (77%), the degree the instructors were available to help solve problems (57%), allocation to settings (72%), allocation of case (66%), impact of supervision in the field on clinical ability (79%), impact of supervision in the field on self awareness (72%), level of supervisors respect of the student (86%), level of supervisors openness to the students ideas and questions (86%), availability of supervisors (85%). However, the majority gave low or very low ratings to the degree the classroom assignments were understood (59%), the degree the classroom lectures imparted knowledge relevant to clinical work (61%), the degree of importance of introductory lectures in the classroom (57%). Thus, it appears that the students felt very positive about their field placement, yet they see less importance of in-class preparation.

Evaluation using Questionnaire 2. Responses to this questionnaire are depicted in Table 4. The first eight items relate to the student's experience, and the next six to his option

TABLE III LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGY COURSE AND FIELD PLACEMENT – QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (N=51)

Item	Very low 1	Low 2	3	High 4	Very high 5
Familiarity with Psych.					
Ability to understand	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	5 (10%)	13 (26%)	32 (63%)
Self-awareness	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	17 (33%)	19 (37%)
Theoretical and practical integration	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	7 (14%)	15 (29%)	20 (32%)
Understanding assignments	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	9 (18%)	18 (35%)	21 (42%)
Knowledge	17 (33%)	13 (26%)	7 (14%)	6 (12%)	2 (4%)
Importance of intro lectures	20 (39%)	11 (22%)	7 (14%)	6 (12%)	5 (10%)
Availability of lecturer Problem solving	20 (39%)	9 (18%)	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	6 (12%)
Allocation to setting	6 (12%)	4 (8%)	8 (16%)	9 (18%)	6 (12%)
Patient allocation	7 (14%)	2 (4%)	5 (10%)	11 (22%)	18 (35%)
Supervisor	1 (2%)	6 (12%)	7 (14%)	16 (31%)	21 (41%)
Supervisor and self-awareness	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	12 (24%)	18 (35%)	16 (31%)
Supervisor's respect	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	8 (16%)	10 (20%)	30 (59%)
Supervisor's openness	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	10 (20%)	14 (27%)	23 (45%)
Supervisor's availability	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	41 (80%)
	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	41 (80%)
	0 (0%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	6 (12%)	37 (73%)

TABLE IV LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF THE FIELD PLACEMENT – QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (n=71)

	Psychology				Criminology			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	No.	Perc.	No.	Perc	No.	Perc	No.	Perc
Acquired Knowledge	14	67	7	33	33	66	17	74
Integrated Knowledge	16	76	5	24	33	66	17	74
Acquired Understanding Of Therapy	18	86	3	14	37	74	13	26
Acquired Experience	19	90	2	10	43	86	7	14
Reached Self-Understanding	19	90	2	10	38	76	12	24
Increased Self-Esteem	13	62	8	31	30	61	19	39
Realized If Field Suits Me	17	81	4	19	40	80	10	20
Helped Decide On My Future	14	67	7	33	28	56	22	44
Helped Patient Cope Better	12	60	8	40	33	80	8	20
Raised Patient's Confidence	12	60	8	40	26	63	15	37
Raised Patient's Self-Awareness	11	55	9	45	31	74	11	26
Helped Patient Accept Difficulties	10	50	10	50	28	70	12	30
Corrective Experience For Patient	11	58	8	42	29	71	12	29
Increased Patient's Self-Esteem	11	58	8	42	28	70	12	30

regarding the experience the patient he worked with, underwent. It is clear from looking at the first eight items that the majority of the students in both Psychology and Criminology practicum's felt that this experience helped them

acquire theoretical knowledge relating to therapy (67%, 66%), integrate theoretical knowledge they acquired throughout their studies with practical experience (76%, 66%), acquire a better understanding of therapeutic processes (86%, 74%), acquire practical experience (90%, 86%), reach a deeper understanding of themselves (90%, 76%), increase self esteem (62%, 61%), helped reach a better understanding if they feel that they are equipped to work as therapists (81%, 80%), helped decide on their future career – both studies and jobs (67%, 56%). The differences between classes are small on most items. However, it appears that for integration of theoretical knowledge, acquiring a better understanding of the therapeutic processes, reaching a deeper understanding of themselves, and helping decide on their future, a larger proportion of psychology than criminology students found the experience more beneficial. Looking at the six patient related items, it is clear that the majority of students felt that they helped the patient in relevant aspects. In addition, it appears that a larger proportion of Criminology students felt they helped their patients cope better (80% versus 60%), raise self-awareness (74% versus 55%), accept difficulties (70% versus 50%), undergo a corrective experience (71% versus 58%) and increase self-esteem (70% versus 58%).

VIII.   DISCUSSION

In the current study we hypothesized that field placement with preparation and supervision can help the students feel more confident in their skills and thus enhance their self-concept more than those who do not perform such a placement (such field work). However, our findings failed to confirm this hypothesis. The results are similar to the findings of previous research which found that changes in self-concept among students who performed field placement with little preparation and supervision, were not larger than amongst those in a control group that did not perform such a placement. Thus, although the current study was undertaken to examine the added utility of sufficient preparation prior to, and during field placement, we failed to find that this helped change the findings. These findings support [14] who suggest that the general self-concept is a stable construct and not easily amenable to change. According to their multifaceted and hierarchical   model of self-concept, facets lower in the hierarchy are more amenable to change than those higher up, and the general self-concept is the most stable of all, requiring "many situation-specific instances, inconsistent with general self-concept" (p. 414) for change to occur.

Our findings show some changes – which occurred in lower facets in the hierarchical model of self-concept. Surprisingly, when examining the two practicum groups together, first year students who did not take part in the field placement improved their mathematical, academic and physical ability self-concept more than third year students who participated in field placement. This finding indicates that for Israeli students, the first year of academic studies has a greater influence on their self-concept than field work in their third year. Our assumption is that the importance of entering into academic studies is different for Israeli students than for American students due to the long time frame between high school and university, a recess due to their obligation to serve in the Israeli military, followed, in most cases, by the urge to go on vacation and travel in the world. Consequently, the beginning of academic studies is not a natural continuance of high school studies but rather a big change in their lives. This change is reflected in our study

group which showed an increase in academic and mathematical self concept upon completion of the first year of studies, possibly due to their success in statistics courses. In our opinion, these changes in first year students match the theory of [12] about academic self-concept. According to their Reciprocity effects theory, the academic self-concept influences performance (perhaps through self-efficacy) and thus has an impact on achievement. Achievement in turn influences future academic self-concept, and so on.

An alternative explanation is the self-perception theory [23], or the role identity model theory [24] which refers to the importance of developing a new role identity. Both theories claim that people infer their self-concept by observing their own behavior, especially when the self-concept is unclear, and there is no strong reason for making an external attribution. Behavior which is performed on an ongoing basis creates a new role identity and thus changes the self-concept in this particular domain.

According to [26] and [27], interpersonal processes motivate the change process. They regard the self as publicly constructed and existing in relation to others. Therefore, in their opinion, public events are more influential in effecting changes than private events. Private events can be ignored or canceled, whereas public events are more carefully monitored since they are obvious to others. It seems that academic achievements are salient public events which usually receive internal attribution.

Although we failed to show that field experience improves the students' self-concept, it does not mean that this practical work is not important. On the contrary, examining the students' assessment of their field work, one learns that they assign to it great importance in its contribution to their theoretical   knowledge   relating   to   therapy   in psychology/criminology, their ability to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience as well as acquiring practical experience. They also rated high their contribution to their patients. In addition, they felt that it helped them understand themselves better, examine their suitability to work in these fields and increased their self esteem. These results are similar to those reported by [29] who found that service-learning had a significant impact on personal, social and academic aspects.

This study was undertaken to demonstrate the importance of in-class preparation and support of field placement. Unfortunately, although we found that students rated their field experience as beneficial, they rated their classroom experience as unimportant for this placement. This, together with the lack of increase in self-concept, leads us to conclude that at least for the Israeli student population we cannot support the importance of intensive in-class preparation of field placement. This finding is in contrast to the meta-analysis conducted by [29] which found that structured reflection resulted in higher personal change (although it is impossible to know if also on self-concept as they did not examine this variable independently).

In a nutshell, we found a confusing picture relating to the importance of intensive preparation and supervision of field placement. On the one hand we failed to find an expected increase in self-esteem whereas on the other hand students rated their experience as important and enriching. The lack of significant changes in self-concept of students who participated in field placement may reflect the stability of the

self-concept, but may also be a result of using an inappropriate control group. Future studies should use third year students as controls and not first year students.

In addition, perhaps the supervision and practicum experience have an impact on other dimensions rather than on self-esteem, as found by [29], and as alluded to in the self report questionnaires we used. Future studies should try and determine what these important dimensions are.

In the meantime, we can point out the great importance and appreciation of the supervision, besides the service-learning: the majority of the participants gave high or very high ratings to the impact of supervision in the field on clinical ability (79%), and on self awareness (72%). Furthermore, most of them were satisfied from: supervisors respect of the student (86%); level of supervisors openness to the students ideas and questions (86%), and availability of supervisors (85%). Thus, it appears that the students felt very positive about their supervision during field placement. These findings correspond to those reported by Prieto & Meyers (1999) who found that training and supervision given to Psychology graduate teaching assistants had positive impact on their sense of self-efficacy toward teaching.

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