Developing Professional Interpersonal Competences Using Narratives Derived from Personal Experience:

An Evaluation of the PU-Project at Malmö University

Prof. Barbara Fresko

Beit Berl Academic College, Israel

August 2008

Abstract

Good interpersonal skills are essential for those who enter the helping professions. Helping professionals work in constant interaction with clients, their families, and other specialists and in order to do this well they require the abilities to take the perspective of others, to be empathetic to their needs, feelings, and beliefs and to use moral judgement when working with them. While training programs tend to concentrate on imparting disciplinary knowledge and developing specific practical skills, less is done to assist students in developing relevant attitudes and social competences.

A project carried out at Malmö University focused on how students can make use of experiences they have outside higher education in order to develop empathy, perspective-taking, and value clarification. The theoretical framework for the project was inspired by Clandinin and Connelly who have studied teacher knowledge in terms of personal practical knowledge built on what they call "narratives of experience". During participation in a series of seminars, students' stories were developed into personal narratives. The development of narratives was expected to lead to self-knowledge and the ability to interpret encounters with others in a pluralist, multicultural society.

Another idea behind the project was to acknowledge students' non-academic skills and experiences and relate them to professional development, particularly with respect to personal practical knowledge. Within the seminar framework which emphasized life experiences rather than academic achievement, students lacking the advantage of a strong academic background were given an opportunity to feel equal to others. Increased feelings of self-worth were expected to increase the likelihood that these students actually complete their studies and enter their profession, thereby serving as role models for others from similar backgrounds.

The project was accompanied by evaluation which provided formative feedback to project leaders and examined its impact on student learning and professional development. Eight groups of students (from teacher education, social work education, and the Näktergalen mentoring program), each with their own faculty leader, participated in a series of seminars (3 to 8) during one or two academic terms. Evaluation data were collected throughout the two terms from feedback questionnaires, psychometric questionnaires which measured self-esteem,

perspective-taking, and empathy, interviews with group leaders, focus groups with students, and documentation of seminar meetings.

Students wrote and told a story deriving from a personal experience, rewrote and retold it from the perspective of another in the story, discussed together different perspectives and alternative outcomes, and acted out the stories in forum plays. In addition social work and teacher education students exchanged stories.

Although all students participated in the basic telling and retelling of stories, three models of implementation developed for the three types of students: teacher education students, social work students, and student mentors. The models differed more in terms of organization and less in terms of content. In spite of these differences, students reacted to the project in a similar manner. They all liked telling their stories and changing perspectives. They viewed group discussions as vital to helping them better understand the situations depicted in the stories. They reported that seminar activities taught them about the way they act in interaction with others, how there are different possible and often viable solutions to any situation, and how their own behavior affects others. The most significant difference among the groups was found on the objective measures of empathy, perspective-taking, and self-esteem. Of the various groups, teacher education students were the only participants who exhibited statistically significant improvement on two of these measures (self-esteem and perspective-taking) and showed non-statistical improvement on the third (empathy). Social work students improved in perspective-taking, although this change was not statistically significant. These differences can be explained partly by differences in implementation and partly by differences in the various students groups.

The overall conclusion was that the approach adopted in the project can be applied with relative success given that the narrative-building activities are implemented in a structured and coherent manner, in small groups, over time, and in a manner that is suited to the stage of professional development of the students. Everyday experiences can provide suitable situations to be analyzed, but seminar leaders need to help students make the connections between what is learned from these situations and its relevancy to their future profession.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Introduction

Good interpersonal skills are essential for working in the helping professions. Teachers, social workers, health care professionals, and others, who work in constant interaction with clients, their families, and other specialists, should have respect for others, be insightful, compassionate, trustworthy, realistically self-confident, and self-disciplined (Strickling, 1998). The abilities to take the perspective of others, to be empathetic to their needs, feelings, and beliefs and to use moral judgement when working with them comprise just some of the necessary skills.

A project carried out at Malmö University in Sweden has focused on how students can make use of experiences they have outside higher education in order to develop such competences - in particular empathy, perspective-taking, and value clarification. According to project leaders, the theoretical framework for the project was inspired by Clandinin and Connelly (e.g., 1999; 2000; 2006) who have studied teacher knowledge in terms of personal practical knowledge built on what they call "narratives of experience". Clandinin and Connelly developed the concept "stories to live by", which are narratives of experience that are both personal, reflecting a person's life story, and social/professional, reflecting the environment and context in which teachers act. Stories are lived and told, retold, and relived (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The assumption is that who we are is intricately interwoven with the lives that we live (Clandinin & Huber, 2003). The initiators of the Malmö project felt that a narrative approach could potentially be applied to helping students become professionals. Building narratives based on situations which they have experienced was expected to lead to self-knowledge and the ability to interpret encounters with others.

Another idea behind the project was to acknowledge students' non-academic skills and experiences and relate them to professional development, particularly with respect to personal practical knowledge. Since the project was intended to emphasize life experiences rather than academic achievement, it was assumed that students lacking the advantage of a strong academic background would be given an opportunity to feel equal to others. Increased feelings of self-worth were expected to increase the likelihood that these students actually complete their studies and enter their profession, thereby serving as role models for others from similar backgrounds.

The Malmö project was conducted over a period of two academic years (2006-07 and 2007-08) during which activities were planned and carried out. The actual work with the students took place during the spring and fall terms in 2007. An evaluation study accompanied implementation, whose purpose was to provide formative feedback to project leaders and to examine the impact of this approach on student learning and professional development. The present report summarizes the evaluation study. The project and the evaluation were funded by the Swedish Agency for Networks and Cooperation in Higher Education.

Evaluation questions

Three major questions guided the evaluation, which focused on the soundness of the idea behind the project, project implementation, and project outcomes or effects. For each major question, several secondary questions were posed:

1. To what extent is applying a narrative approach feasible? In other words, is there a sound empirical and theoretical basis for using life experiences and narratives to develop professional interpersonal competences? And to what extent do university students have life experiences which could serve as the basis for developing personal narratives?

2. How were the ideas of the project actually implemented? Which activities were more effective and which activities were less effective as providing a learning experience for the students? In addition, what factors contributed to successful implementation?

3. Did the project have an impact on the students' ability to take the perspective of others, their feelings of empathy for others, and their self-esteem? What other effects did the project have on the students?

Method
Participants

Eight groups of students (two groups in teacher education, two groups in social work education, and four groups of student mentors in the Näktergalen mentoring program) participated in the project, each with their own faculty group leader. The teacher education groups were the largest with 13 and 15 students respectively, the social work groups had 9 students each, and the mentoring groups were made up of 5 students each. Six comparable control groups (two in education,

two in social work, and two mentoring groups) were selected who were participating in seminar sessions unrelated to the project. Overall, the study included 125 students: 61 in the experimental group and 64 in the control group. Both groups were similar to one another and relatively homogeneous with respect to background: the median age was 25; 84% were females; 83% were childless; and 89% had completed secondary education in an academic Swedish high school.

Data collection

Implementation of the project was documented by group leaders, who recorded the planning and actual implementation of each meeting with the students, as well as their own reflections on what took place. In January 2008 after the project was completed, all group leaders were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix 1) and focus groups were conducted with students from the different experimental groups in order to gather further information regarding project processes, operation, and outcomes (see Appendix 2). Interviews and focus groups lasted approximately one and a half hours. Additional feedback was gathered by means of questionnaires administered to students at the end of each term (see Appendices 4 and 5.) Background information on the participating students and information regarding the areas in which they had prior interpersonal experience were collected as part of the first questionnaire (see Appendix 3) administered before project seminars got underway.

Outcomes with respect to perspective taking, empathy, and self-esteem were directly measured using two sub-scales (*Perspective Taking* and *Empathic Concern*) of the *Interpersonal Reactivity Index* (Davis, 1983) and *Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale* (1965). All scales were translated from English into Swedish. Reliability coefficients were calculated for the pre-test: $\alpha=.574$ for the 7-item *Perspective Taking Scale*, $\alpha=.636$ for the 7-item *Empathetic Concern Scale*, and $\alpha=.870$ for the 10-item *Self-Esteem Scale*. Evaluation questionnaires appear at the end of this report in English (Appendices 3-5).

According to the research design both experimental and control groups were examined for changes in attitudes by means of these questionnaires which were administered at 2-3 different periods throughout the project: the teacher education and social work groups received questionnaires at the start of the project (January 2007), after the first term (June 2007), and after the second term (December 2007), while the

Näktergalen mentors, who only participated in the spring term, received questionnaires at the start and at the end of this term. Unfortunately, a problem arose with the control groups: some students failed to write the last four digits of their identification number on each questionnaire (which was the means for matching questionnaires) and many others wrote different numbers on each questionnaire. As a result data could be matched for only a small minority of students in these groups, leading to the decision to discard them from analyses of repeated measures of project outcomes. Change was examined within the experimental groups only.

Results

Feasibility of the approach

The first stage in evaluating the project was to examine whether the ideas embodied in its rationale and plan of approach have sound theoretical, empirical, and practical foundations. This task was performed in two steps. First of all, the professional literature was reviewed in order to see what others have written about using narratives to induce attitudinal change, develop self-awareness, and strengthen self-confidence. Secondly, responses of the students to a portion of the pre-test questionnaire were analyzed in order to see whether they indeed have had pertinent experiences outside their academic studies which could supply stories for professional development.

The empirical and theoretical base. The need to develop interpersonal competences, reflective thinking, and self-knowledge among students in the helping professions has been written about extensively. For example in the context of social work education, Waldman, Glover and King (1999) have related to the need to nurture students' capacity for conscious reflexivity, to teach them to value themselves and their ability for making sound judgments, and to help them learn from their experiences. They concluded that social work students need a learning culture which values emotional development alongside intellectual development and that conveys to them that self-knowledge is one key to professional competence. In the context of teacher education, Sanger (2008), for example, has discussed the need to engage teacher education students in a rigorous study of the moral aspects of their future work. Others have related to the multicultural nature of today's schools and the subsequent need to develop intercultural sensitivity among pre-service teachers (e.g.,

Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000; Conle, 2000; Conle et al., 2000; Hale, Snow-Gerono, & Morales, 2008; McVee, 2004; Melnick & Zeichner, 1995).

Despite the need to develop self-knowledge and interpersonal capabilities among new helping professionals, most professional-training programs concentrate mainly on imparting knowledge or developing specific practical skills. Less is done to assist students in developing relevant attitudes and social competences. Academic courses in psychology, sociology, and philosophy are often provided in order to develop students' awareness of the social and moral aspects of their future profession, but little is done to actually train them to develop relevant interpersonal skills (e.g., Conle et al., 2000). In this respect, the Malmö project aspires to fill a gap in the conventional training program for teacher education and social work education.

A central question here is whether interpersonal competences can actually be learned. Some empirical proof exists that indicates that perspective-taking, empathy, and moral judgement are abilities which can indeed be acquired. For example, in a study by Hatcher and colleagues (1994), an examination of an intervention undertaken with high school students and college students showed that empathy can be taught and that college students are more receptive to such intervention than younger students. Royal and Baker (2005) reported the results of a quasi-experimental study in which parents of elementary school children who were exposed to a moral education program exhibited positive change with regard to moral judgment, perspective-taking, and problem-solving behavior. Hale, Snow-Gerono, and Morales (2008) have reported that teachers, who engaged in narrative and ethnographic writing in the framework of a university course, learned to transcend themselves and see situations from different views, improved on empathy and perspective-taking measures, exhibited greater understanding of how they affect the children in their classes, and exhibited greater self-confidence.

The Malmö project adopted a narrative approach for nurturing interpersonal competences. Examination of the research literature shows that narrative inquiry has been applied in the past in various contexts, for example, to foster interpersonal competences and reflective abilities among students entering various helping professions (e.g., Braun & Crumpler, 2004; Conle, 2000; Conle et al., 2000; McVee, 2004; Rushton, 2004) and among those already engaged in those professions (e.g., Doecke, Brown, & Loughran, 2000; McMaster, 2007), as well as in situations of counseling or therapy as a means to promote personal insight and growth (e.g.,

Bujold, 2004; White, 2006;, Ville & Khlat, 2007). According to the literature, expected outcomes of the narrative approach include improved ability to reflect on experience, greater self-efficacy (Braun & Crumpler, 2004), greater self-knowledge (Causey et al., 2000; Conle, 2000; Doecke et al., 2000), improved perspective-taking and efficacy skills (Conle, 2000), and interpretive competence in encounters with different cultures (Causey et al., 2000; Conle, 2000; McVee 2004). Despite the many articles about narrative inquiry as a method, few report actual research data. The little existing empirical data indicates that narrative inquiry can lead to greater empathy and perspective-taking, enhanced self-awareness, and raised consciousness regarding professional issues in the context of interpersonal encounters (e.g., Braun & Crumpler, 2004; Hale et al., 2008).

The application of narrative inquiry for the purpose of professional development has taken various forms. Pedagogic practices which utilize personal narratives emphasize such activities as classroom discussion, sharing in small groups, journaling, cultural autobiographies, and reflection on the narrative building process (Braun & Crumpler, 2004; Causey et al, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Participatory drama in which the audience can explore different possibilities, solve problems, and propose different scenarios around a situation is another technique that has been used in this context (Mehto, Kantola, Tiitta, & Kankainen, 2006).

 In many instances, narrative inquiry focuses on stories that derive from professional experiences in the field (e.g., Conle, 2000; Craig, 1997; McMaster, 2007). However, autobiographies have served as a source of narrative development as well as what Causey and others (2000) have termed "social memoirs" that focus on particular types of interactions with others (such as interactions with different ethnic groups). Regardless of their source, narratives are built by telling and retelling stories derived from individuals' experiences with others.

The act of writing down experiences is an important factor in the narrative-building process, as are receiving feedback and discussing the stories with others in a supportive environment (Braun & Crumpler, 2004; Bujold, 2004; Causey et al., 2000; Conle, 2000; Conle et al., 2000; Craig, 1997; Doecke et al., 2000: Hale et al., 2008). Joint construction of meaning through discussion enables students to transcend their particular story and to feel identification when listening to others' stories (Conle et al, 2000; Doecke et al., 2000; White, 2006). The narrative emerges over time with repeated writing or telling, often moving from a vague disorganized account to a

coherent and insightful view of a situation (McVee, 2004; Ville & Khlat, 2007) and this process is facilitated through group discussion.

This brief summary of the research literature indicates that the idea behind the Malmö project has both theoretical and empirical foundations. It seems that those entering the helping professions need help developing interpersonal abilities, but university programs generally do little in this regard. Narrative inquiry has been used sporadically in the past for professional development in both training and in-service programs and shows promise as a method for nurturing the type of interpersonal competences at which the Malmö project aimed.

Students' prior experiences. To what extent do students have the kinds of experiences that could be taken into account in the development of personal professional narratives? The answer to this question is critical in determining whether the proposed approach, which is based on analysis of interpersonal interactions outside the academic sphere, could in reality be applied. In order to resolve this concern, students were asked to relate to 19 areas of experience that involve interpersonal interaction on a regular basis with others, who are neither family nor friends, and to indicate the degree of their experience in each area. It should be noted that both project participants and control group students reported similar degrees of experience in each area. Results for all students are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:
Frequency distributions in percentages of the degree of the students' experience in various areas (N=125)

Area	No experience at all	Very little experience	A medium amount of experience	Very much experience
Work in a preschool or school	33.1	41.1	21.0	4.8
Work in health care services	74.2	12.1	7.3	6.5
Caring for the elderly	58.5	17.1	16.3	8.1
Social work as a contact person, personal assistant, etc.	65.3	20.2	5.6	8.9
Administrative office work	51.2	28.0	17.6	3.2
Public service work in a restaurant, hotel, post office, bank	28.0	30.4	26.4	15.2
Work in industry, carpentry, factory work, construction	72.8	14.4	8.0	4.8
Small business owner	92.0	2.4	3.2	2.4
Managerial experience	67.5	18.7	10.6	3.2

Salesperson, cashier in a store	41.9	22.6	20.2	15.3
Au pair, babysitting, housekeeping	54.4	24.0	9.6	12.0
Mentoring/tutoring	76.6	8.1	9.7	5.6
Volunteer work as a leader in the scouts, sports group, summer camp, the arts	58.9	16.1	13.7	11.3
Voluntary organizational work in public and private organizations (on the board, in committees, labor unions)	66.1	16.9	9.7	7.3
Other volunteer work	56.0	25.6	13.6	4.8
Activity in the area of culture and the arts	73.6	14.4	7.2	4.8
Activity in the area of sports	30.4	29.6	19.2	20.8
Client of medical and health services	92.0	6.4	1.6	0.0
Activities involving travel and adventure	9.6	40.8	32.8	16.8

As can be seen from the distributions in Table 1, several areas were mentioned by 40% to 90% of the students. These areas focused on activities involving travel, public service, sales, sports, volunteer work with youth, volunteer work of other types, baby-sitting, caring for the elderly, and helping at a school or pre-school. All students indicated at least two areas in which they had some degree of experience. In conclusion, it seems that students have experience interacting with people outside their circle of significant others, either in work or voluntary service, meaning that building narratives from experience outside the academic world is a feasible activity in which all students can participate.

Models of implementation

Project leaders worked together throughout the duration of the project in order to develop their ideas, plan seminar sessions, and reflect on the application of the use of narratives with the students. Nevertheless, three models of implementation developed which resulted in essence from the organizational characteristics of the three frameworks: teacher education, social work education, and the Näktergalen mentoring program. These models will be presented individually below. In addition to the description of the organizational aspects of implementation and of the seminar content, participants' reactions to, and evaluations of, the project will also be included.

Model 1: Teacher education

Seminar activities. The teacher education students attended four seminar meetings in the spring term of 2007 and four seminar meetings in the fall term of the same year, which for all students were their second and third terms of study at the university. Groups remained essentially the same throughout this period with respect to both the students and the seminar leaders. In addition to the general planning meetings of all seminar leaders, the two teacher education leaders worked closely together to plan out the details of each meeting and as a consequence both of their groups were exposed to nearly the same activities.

Before the seminars began the students were told about the project and given an assignment to come to the first seminar with a story that they had written down. The story was supposed to describe some incident in their lives in which they came into interaction with others. During Seminars 1 and 2, each student told his or her story, while the others listened and asked questions or made comments. Group leaders also told a story that they had prepared. Students were then told to rewrite the same story from the perspective of someone else in the story. This was a homework assignment which they were to bring with them to Seminar 3.

During Seminars 3 and 4 all students told their rewritten story. Again the students listened, asked questions, and commented. They were asked to write down their comments on each story which they later gave to the storyteller. Each student summarized in writing why they chose to write their story from a particular person's perspective, what happened in the process of rewriting the story, whether they discovered anything new by rewriting the story, and whether the situation could have been handled in another way. In one of the two teacher education groups the students were also asked to write "after-thoughts" or written reflections about the seminar activities. In this group they also discussed the types of experiences that students have outside of their studies that could be relevant to learning about interactions with others.

Before Seminar 5, at the start of the fall term, students were given instructions to think of another story and be prepared to tell about it in class. This story was not written down in advance as they had done before. Each student told her story in Seminar 5 and at the end of each presentation key words were written on the board that related elements of the story to behaviors and skills of teachers. During Seminar 6 students were divided into small groups where they each told their new story from the

viewpoint of another character in the story. They were also asked to come up with new key words that relate to professional competences, to select the five most important among them, and to rank them. Afterwards each group reported to the entire class and the chosen key words and their rankings were discussed by everyone. Between Seminar 6 and Seminar 7, students exchanged stories with the social work students: students sent their own stories by e-mail to whoever they were paired with in the other group, received comments from them on their story, and sent to them comments on the story which they had received.

Forum plays were the focus of Seminar 7. The person whose story was presented became the director and appointed the players. Stories were performed twice. The first time a story was enacted it was done according to the instructions of the director. However during the second time, others in the groups could stop the performance at any time and change it. During this meeting, the students also reported on the exchange of stories with the social work students.

Two activities were carried out in Seminar 8. First the students discussed criteria for assessing abilities that are defined in the Swedish national curriculum for teacher education: such as demonstration of self-knowledge, empathy, and the ability to make judgments. They worked in small groups and then presented their ideas to the entire group. An attempt was made to connect this discussion to the aims of the project. The second part of the meeting was devoted to role play. The two group leaders had prepared in advance a situation for role play which was to take place at a school's staff Christmas lunch. All students received parts and took active participation in the play. After 15 minutes they exchanged roles and began the role play again. They exchanged roles a third time and then discussed the outcomes from the perspective of their own behavior.

Students' reactions to the project seminars. Students expressed their reactions to the seminars on the questionnaires which were administered to them at the end of each term. They were presented a series of statements which related to the project activity and were asked to indicate their degree of agreement on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Their mean responses on each item per term are shown in Table 2.

Table 2:
Student reactions to seminars at the end of each term, teacher education students only, (scale 1-6)

Reactions	Spring term (N=26)		Fall term (N=25)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I enjoyed writing my own stories for the seminar.	4.54	1.10	4.42	0.76
I liked to share my stories with others.	4.85	1.12	4.88	0.52
It was interesting to hear stories prepared by other students.	5.19	0.90	5.23	0.65
Group discussions helped me better understand different life experiences.	5.15	0.83	5.12	0.59
I felt tense whenever I came to this seminar.	1.76	1.01	1.85	1.19
The atmosphere in class was always supportive and non-judgmental.	5.58	0.70	5.65	0.63
I really do not understand why I have to attend a seminar like this.	2.08	1.32	1.77	0.99
I would recommend attending a seminar like this to others.	4.58	1.36	4.62	1.10
I did not like getting comments from other students to my stories	*		1.65	0.85
The forum-plays helped me to better understand different viewpoints.	*		4.48	0.75
The concluding discussion about the project made the purpose of the seminars clearer to me.	*		4.36	1.25

* These items were added later to the questionnaire administered in the fall.

From examination of the results in Table 2, it is clear that students evaluated the seminars in a similar manner at the end of each term. In both cases their opinions were positive. Students especially liked hearing the stories told by the others and felt that group discussion greatly contributed to their understanding of the situations described in the narratives. Moreover, they felt comfortable in the group and reported that the atmosphere was always supportive and non-judgmental.

These findings were supported by their comments on open-ended questions at the end of the first term and from the discussion which arose in the focus groups. While they were shy in the beginning, they began to feel comfortable with one another as time went by and felt that they could be open with the group. Several students mentioned that the atmosphere in the seminars was non-judgmental and trusting, and others commented that through telling and retelling personal stories they got to know each other well. With respect to project activities, they particularly liked

the role play, taking the perspective of others, and the discussions, all which were viewed as important seminar activities. They found that they could learn from one another and that discussing their own life experiences and those of others could teach them many things about themselves and about other people. The following are some examples of their comments:

"The first story that we wrote about ourselves, maybe we did not have to write it down but just talk about it. But the one we wrote from the other's point of view – that was very good. You could see the difference between your feelings and the others. I also liked hearing the [others'] stories."

"I liked the role play. I do not like to play in front of people, but it was fun and good experience. It was good to take other people's perspectives and see things from other people's point of view."

"In this group I am very comfortable and if I make a fool of myself no one will judge me."

"In the beginning you do not want to select something personal because you do not trust the others, but now all the group has become my friends."

Although all students agreed that the seminars had been a very positive experience, some criticism was voiced and suggestions were made to improve the activity. Some students thought that not all of the stories told by the students in their group were suitable: some stories were too neutral, others were too simple, and as one student said: "some stories just did not touch me". They felt that they learned more when a story told of a significant encounter. Another complaint focused on the size of the group: there were too many stories to hear and react to and not always enough time for discussion. In addition students commented that too much time elapsed between seminar meetings. The exchange with the social work group was also criticized and many of the students found it to be, on the whole, disappointing. Not everyone received feedback from the social work students and the comments that were received did neither added new perspectives nor raised issues that had not been discussed in their own seminar groups. The general consensus was that a meeting with the social work students would have more beneficial and enlightening. Below are some student comments which illustrate the above points:

"I liked everything but the exchange with the other students. I got a response but it was meaningless. It was only one time and we did not talk about it. It

was just something we had to do. The story I got was interesting but it would have been nice to meet with them."

"What I got [from the exchange] was nothing new. Just confirmed what the others said."

"It was interesting to hear the stories [of the others in my group]. On the negative side we were too many. At the same time we did not want to miss any stories."

"There was a lot of time between seminars and sometimes it was a month and we forgot everything. There were too many stories. But it was very good."

"Maybe there should be shorter sessions but more sessions."

Reflections from seminar leaders. As mentioned above, the two group leaders worked closely as a team, planning together the details of each meeting and discussing each meeting after it took place. As a result of their close collaboration, not only were their seminars similar, but they also tended to concur in their reactions to the project. They reported similar achievements as well as similar implementation problems.

Both group leaders were satisfied with the seminars. They were pleased with the way the students were able to take the role of another when retelling their stories or acting them out. They reported that students were very attentive when others were telling their stories and in general were highly engaged during all seminar activities. One indication of the students' motivation and interest could, in their opinion, be found in the fact that attendance was high in spite of the students' heavy workload and the often inconvenient hour at which seminar meetings took place.

Both leaders noted that the atmosphere in class was very good and sensed that their students had become a cohesive group as a result of the narrative-building activities which required them to share personal experiences with their peers. They compared their groups to two non-project teacher education groups who met throughout this period in unrelated seminars. While they had heard of some problems among the students in the non-project groups, in their group the students got along very well.

On the negative side, the group leaders made comments similar to those made by the students. They felt that their groups were too large, class time was often insufficient for everyone to participate to the same extent, sessions were far apart, and group discussions could have been developed more, particularly with respect to

making connections between the narratives and the role of the teacher. They noted that in some cases they were forced to divide the students up into smaller groups so that everyone could be active. Since the project was experimental and new to them as well, working with the students in small groups often gave them a sense of losing control over what was happening in class.

Only with respect to the exchange of stories between the teacher education students and the social work students did the two group leaders have different opinions. Not only did they view this activity differently, but their reactions differed from those of their students. One of the leaders felt that the exchange was not successful, mainly because she heard from her students that the social work students tended to write to them in a condescending manner. The other leader felt that the activity had worked out well and reported that her students found the exchange interesting. Both reported that most of their students had received responses to their narratives from the social work students.

Both seminar leaders were certain that they would use the narrative approach in the future with other groups of students. One leader said that she would like to develop it more and strengthen the connection to professional development. The other leader related that she is already applying this approach with new groups of students: she is having them write and rewrite stories derived from personal experiences and plans to engage them in forum drama and role play as well. Since she is the coordinator of seminars for teacher education in her program at the university, she has encouraged the other seminar leaders to adopt these activities as well and all four seminar groups were to engage in narrative-building activities in the spring term of 2008.

Model 2 – Social work education

Seminar activities. Unrelated to this project, all social work students are required to participate in reflection groups during terms 4, 5, and 6 of their studies at the university. These reflection groups meet 6 times per term. Groups tend to be stable with respect to the students, while their reflection group leader changes each term. The project seminars were incorporated into these reflection groups. Accordingly, during the spring and fall terms of 2007, eight of the twelve reflection group meetings were devoted to working with the students on developing their narratives and four meetings were devoted to non-project activities intended to develop their professional

reflection skills. The two project leaders, who also coordinate all social work reflection groups, exchanged project groups in the fall term. In each of the two project groups, there were 9 participants who, when the project began, were in their fourth term of study.

During the first term (spring 2007), project seminars in both social work groups were carried out very much as they were in Model 1 with the teacher education students. Students came to Seminar 1 with a story that they had written down. During Seminars 1 and 2 everyone told their story, including the group leaders, while the others asked questions and commented. Stories were rewritten from the perspective of someone else in the story and during Seminars 3 and 4 everyone told their rewritten stories. In one of the groups, students were asked to write down why they chose the perspective of a particular person in their story, what happened to them while rewriting their story, if the group discussion gave them anything new, and could they connect between what they learned in the seminars to their future profession. In the other group, the seminar leader fell ill just before Seminar 4 and since she could not change the date for the meeting, she asked the students to conduct the session on their own, which they did.

During the second term in the fall, there were significant differences in what took place in the two groups. In the first group, Seminar 5 was devoted to having students tell new stories and in Seminar 6 they retold their new stories from another perspective. Between Seminar 6 and Seminar 7 they exchanged stories with the teacher education students, and in Seminar 7 they discussed the story exchange and carried out a forum play created around one story. In Seminar 8 they participated in a value clarification activity. This last activity was not conducted in the teacher education groups but had been discussed by all project leaders beforehand, who agreed that it was clearly in line with project goals.

The seminar leader in the second group had originally intended to carry out the seminars according to the collective plan in which there would be storytelling, retelling of the story from another perspective, an email exchange of stories with the teacher education students, discussion in small groups, role play, and a final evaluation. However during the term, she found herself deviating from the general plan. She understood from the students that they wanted something new this term and did not want to repeat exactly what they had done the previous term, so in Seminar 5 she tried to have them tell and discuss their new stories using another method

developed by the Australian Michael White (see White, 2006 for a description of the method). When she saw that the students were not responding well to the new method, she returned to the original approach. Due to technical reasons, Seminar 6 was very short in which only one student presented her story, followed by some discussion, and they talked about the upcoming email exchange with the teacher education students. Although the plan had been to discuss the stories and comments sent by the teacher education students in Seminar 7, the idea was discarded following complaints from the students that the exchange had been a waste of time. Therefore, two more students told their second story and the group discussed them. In Seminar 8 the students were supposed to participate in a forum play centering on one of the stories presented in Seminar 7. Few students attended this meeting and the student whose story was to be enacted did not come either. As a result the meeting was devoted to a discussion of issues not related to the narratives, but of great concern to the students (their anxieties concerning their practical placement in the next term). During the first half of the reflection group's final meeting, originally not planned as part of the project, the students did an evaluation of the project and its aims. The second half of this meeting was devoted to other issues, mainly related to their upcoming practical training.

Students' reactions to the project seminars. Students expressed their reactions to the seminars on the feedback questionnaires administered to them at the end of each term. Their mean responses on each item are shown in Table 3.

Table 3:
Student reactions to the seminars at the end of each term, social work students only (scale 1-6)

Reactions	Spring term (N=17)		Fall term (N=15)	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
I enjoyed writing my own stories for the seminar.	4.29	1.10	2.47	1.25
I liked to share my stories with others.	4.29	1.05	2.93	1.58
It was interesting to hear stories prepared by other students.	5.24	0.97	4.07	1.16
Group discussions helped me better understand different life experiences.	5.18	0.88	4.00	1.07
I felt tense whenever I came to this seminar.	**	**	2.87	1.46

The atmosphere in class was always supportive and non-judgmental.	4.71	0.92	5.20	0.94
I really do not understand why I have to attend a seminar like this.	2.41	1.66	3.47	2.03
I would recommend attending a seminar like this to others.	4.06	1.52	3.67	1.68
I did not like getting comments from other students to my stories	*		2.33	1.11
The forum-plays helped me to better understand different viewpoints.	*		3.64	1.69
The concluding discussion about the project made the purpose of the seminars clearer to me.	*		3.00	1.46

* These items were added later to the questionnaire in the fall.
**Due to a technical problem, this item was not included in the spring term questionnaire for this group.

At the end of the first term, the students were quite positive about seminar activities. Although they rated all items highly (between 4.06 and 5.24), they particularly enjoyed hearing the stories told by the others and the group discussions which helped them better understand the situations described in the stories. At the end of the second term, the students expressed considerably less satisfaction. It should be pointed out that, despite lower satisfaction with the seminars during the second term, three items were still rated quite highly: the students still enjoyed hearing stories told by their peers and still valued group discussions. Moreover, they concurred that the atmosphere in the groups was supportive and non-judgmental. The students' evaluation of this last item was the only one which had increased at the end of the second term. In absolute terms, it received a very high rating (Mean=5.20), indicating the formation and continuous development of positive intragroup dynamics.

Even though the seminar activities in the two project groups were not exactly the same during the second term, the students in both groups generally gave similar evaluations. A statistically significant difference was found between them on only two items at the end of this term (p<.05). The students in the first group, in which implementation had gone smoother, tended to report a more supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere in class (Mean=5.56) as compared to the second group (Mean=4.67). The second group more often agreed with the statement "I really do not understand why I have to attend a seminar like this" (Mean=4.67 versus Mean=2.67).

Students' reactions to the project were also voiced in their response to open-ended questions on the feedback questionnaire administered after the spring term as

well as in the focus group discussions at the end of the project. Despite the implementation difficulties in one group, their reactions were in general positive and tended to overlap with the results obtained from the first feedback questionnaire. Students particularly liked presenting their story from the viewpoint of another, although they found that this was not always very easy. They also felt that group discussions and feedback from their peers greatly enhanced their understanding of the situations depicted in the stories. The process of standing up before a group and speaking was perceived as important in itself and as preparation for situations they will encounter when they enter the world of work. They liked the open and relaxed environment in class. As one student commented, *"I saw that you can get strength from small groups and open up to others."* The following are some other examples of their comments:

> *"When we had discussions, I gained perspectives about how other people thought".*
>
> *"I really liked when the discussion got going and we could share opinions."*
>
> *"It was interesting to hear the experiences of other people, to see their dilemmas."*
>
> *"This was an environment outside of the classroom where a person could discuss work-related things without the requirement for[formal] learning."*
>
> *"It was great to speak freely about things."*
>
> *"The seminars are a place to breathe in a hectic schedule – reflect and breathe."*

The students mentioned several problems related to the seminars. For example, several students found the activity too personal and felt uncomfortable sharing their experiences with the others. Other students mentioned that they had difficulty coming up with what they thought was a suitable story. It seems that when the first story told in class was very dramatic, the others felt that they needed to relate something similar. In both groups the students were not satisfied with the swapping of stories with the teacher education students. They felt that the stories they received were less emotional and lacked depth as compared to the ones that they sent and that the comments they received on their stories were too short and very shallow. Moreover, not everyone got responses. The students complained that it was difficult to carry out this assignment for lack of time because of their busy schedules. Students in the second group felt that project activities lacked structure during the second term,

so much so that they had a hard time remembering exactly what they did in the project seminars during this term.

Reflections from seminar leaders. Although both group leaders agreed that students had learned through project activities, they differed in their reactions to the project. One group leader commented on the warm and friendly atmosphere during seminar meetings and the high engagement of the students in seminar activities. As she pointed out attendance was high despite the students' heavy workload. She felt that relating personal experiences brought group members together and created an atmosphere of camaraderie. The group became a social support group where they felt that they could talk about what was on their minds. She did feel that a smaller group would be better so that everyone in the group could have enough time to speak and the others have enough time to discuss each story. Her feeling was that one term was enough to develop narratives, mainly because the students had the feeling that they were getting more of the same during the second term.

The second group leader felt frustrated and disappointed about the way the group went the second term. She did not like that she had to stick to the project plan agreed upon by project leaders and would have preferred a more flexible framework. Moreover, she felt that her frustration was mirrored in the students' frustration, who openly expressed their dissatisfaction with activities during the second term. Like her colleague above, she also felt that the time allotted for project activities was insufficient to give adequate attention to every student's story and that more time and/or a smaller group would have been preferable.

Both leaders commented that the students did very well retelling the stories from another's perspective. Whereas students tended to be shyer when presenting their original narratives, they became more animated during the retelling stage.

In addition both group leaders emphasized the importance of "good" stories which they defined as stories which have a focus and describe something significant that happened. Moreover, stories need to be different. As one seminar leader pointed out, the stories in her group were too similar and as a result the discussion kept returning to the same issues.

Both group leaders reported that students made good connections between their stories and their future profession as social workers. Whereas one group leader explicitly gave examples in class that served to make these connections, the other group leader felt that the students were making their own connections and that she did

not have to make them explicit. However her field notes show that she had lead group discussions in directions which facilitated making the connections to social work.

Model 3 – Student mentors

Seminar activities. The third model for implementation was carried out in the Näktergalen mentoring program with students who were working as volunteer mentors of needy children. Within the Näktergalen program, mentors generally have two compulsory supervision sessions with a program coordinator during the school year, and participation in the "narrative" seminars was defined as optional. Approximately 20 mentors volunteered to participate in these seminars. Most of them were students in teacher education, social work education, and nursing education.

Project participants were divided into 4 groups of 5 mentors each. One seminar leader was in charge of three groups and the other took on the fourth group. The plan was to carry out three seminars for each group of mentors.

Since attendance was purely voluntary, one of the fears of the seminar leaders was that mentors would not attend. It appears that these fears were well-founded and many students did not attend regularly. Only a small group attended all three seminars while others came to only one or two meetings. In only one group did most of the students come regularly, whereas the other three groups in which attendance was sporadic were combined into one group for the final seminar meeting. Both seminar leaders and the mentors found this situation difficult and would have preferred a stable group. Seminar leaders felt unsure as to how to handle the situation in which not everyone had participated in the previous seminar, while mentors felt that the change in the group's composition each time reduced cohesion and intimacy within the group. In their opinion, attendance in the seminars should have been taken seriously by their fellow mentors and in the future perhaps should be made obligatory.

The mentors were told to come to the first meeting (Seminar 1) with a written story about something that had affected them in their mentoring work. Seminar leaders reported that most students had prepared a story, usually around some dilemma. Each mentor told his or her story while the others listened. Some of them asked probing questions pertaining to the emotional side of the story and others asked for further details about the situation described. In one group the mentors took a more problem-solving approach, giving advice to the storyteller. The seminar leader in this group was dissatisfied with this direction because, in her opinion, it was too

instrumental and not sufficiently reflective. Seminar leaders told their own stories in the meeting as well. At the end of Seminar 1, mentors wrote there reactions to the activity.

Mentors came to the second meeting (Seminar 2) after rewriting the same story from the point of view of another character in the story. Each mentor presented the new story and then a discussion was had which focused on what happened to them when they rewrote their stories and how the outcome of each situation could have been different. Again at the end of the meeting each mentor wrote their evaluation of how the activity had affected them.

In Seminar 3, the mentors were asked to reflect on how working with the stories had helped them develop a "strategy for action" and how this strategy could be used in their future profession. The meeting ended with the administration of the research questionnaire and a short oral evaluation of the seminars and the mentoring period.

Although the seminar meetings concentrated on activities related to the mentors' stories, some attention was given to other activities which are generally included in supervision in the Näktergalen program. For example in Seminar 1 the mentors introduced themselves and their children before telling their stories, in Seminar 2 a discussion was carried out about how to prepare the child for separation from the mentor at the end of the school year, and in Seminar 3 the seminar leaders talked with the mentors about their administrative responsibilities within the Näktergalen program.

Meetings took place late in the day, lasting approximately 1.5 to 2 hours. The late hour for meetings was problematic for the students, who had difficulty fitting them into their very busy schedules. The students in the focus group felt that despite the late hour, mentors were so highly engaged in the telling of their own stories, hearing the stories of the others, and responding to the stories, that time passed very quickly. Seminar leaders also reported that mentors were very attentive when others told their stories. When stories were retold, students became very involved and a lively discussion ensured. Both seminar leaders and mentors commented that the atmosphere in the groups was good from the beginning but became even better as the project progressed.

Students' reactions to the project seminars. At the end of Seminar 3, students completed the feedback questionnaire on which they indicated how they felt about

project activities and the atmosphere in the group. Their responses are summarized in the following table.

Table 4:
Student reactions to the seminars, Näktergalen students only (N=10) (scale 1-6)

Reactions	Mean	SD
I enjoyed writing my own stories for the seminar.	4.60	0.97
I liked to share my stories with others"	4.60	0.84
It was interesting to hear stories prepared by other students.	5.50	0.71
Group discussions helped me better understand different life experiences.	5.50	0.71
I felt tense whenever I came to this seminar.	1.80	1.14
The atmosphere in class was always supportive and non-judgmental.	5.30	0.82
I really do not understand why I have to attend a seminar like this.	1.40	0.70
I would recommend attending a seminar like this to others.	5.50	0.85

The results in the table indicate that the mentors had very positive reactions to the seminars. In particular, mentors liked hearing the stories told by others, found that group discussions helped them make sense of the situations described in the stories, and felt that the atmosphere in the group was always supportive and non-judgmental. These results point to the importance of the group to their experience in the project seminars. Nearly all mentors indicated that they would highly recommend attending such seminars to other mentors.

Comments by students in the focus group and in response to open-ended questions on the feedback questionnaire indicated that seminars should start earlier (mentoring begins in October and the seminars began in March). On the positive side, they indicated that they enjoyed sharing stories and that through this activity they became a support group for one another. The following are some of their written comments:

> *"It was good not to feel alone. Those mentors who did not participate lost out on a great experience."*
>
> *"[I liked] the involvement. Everyone was part of the group, even the instructor."*
>
> *"It is nice to meet in small groups, the participants were keen, the atmosphere was open."*
>
> *"[I liked] having the chance to speak and listen to other mentors. It was very helpful. It was nice to speak about oneself and hear about the experiences of others."*

"It is good to exchange experiences with one another and see and understand situations through another person's perspective".

"[I liked] to receive a perspective about what I have told and to hear other people's stories."

"[I liked] to listen to other people's stories and have other people listen to my experiences and express their point of view."

Reflections from seminar leaders. In addition to the general planning undertaken by all seminar leaders, the two leaders in the Näktergalen program worked together to plan seminar meetings. Both were committed to the idea from the beginning and they were very satisfied with the results at the end. Their main regret was that not all mentors took part in the project, and that many mentors participated only sporadically in seminar meetings.

From the viewpoint of the seminar leaders, three meetings were sufficient: the activities did not repeat themselves, they did not become boring to the mentors, and they were stimulating and made the mentors think. The ideal group size, in their opinion, is 5-6. Also they stressed the importance of having good stories as the basis for good discussions.

Overall both leaders felt that they themselves had learned from their participation in the project. One leader commented that she had learned that "*these methods are good, that they can teach so much – empathy, ability to make adjustments*". The other leader said that, like the mentors, she herself had learned to take another's perspective and that "*that there are not always easy answers to situations."*

Outcomes

The effects of the Malmö project were examined in different ways. Students gave subjective reports of what they had learned from participation in the project both on the feedback questionnaires as well as in the focus group discussions. Seminar leaders reported on learning outcomes for their students based on their observation of the students in class. Their assessment regarding the project's impact was documented in their notes that they wrote after every seminar meeting and was conveyed directly to the evaluator during the interviews. In addition to all of this, changes in students with regard to perspective-taking, empathetic concern, and self-image were assessed

using objective psychometric questionnaires administered at three points in time during the project.

Students' reported learning

Three items on the feedback questionnaire examined student learning and were administered at the end of the first term and again at the end of the second term. The results are reported for each group separately in Tables 5-7. Table 5 presents results for teacher education students.

Table 5:
Self reports of learning at the end of each term, teacher education students only (N=26) (scale 1-6)

Aspects of learning	Spring term (N=26)		Fall term (N=25)	
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
I learned a lot about myself through the seminar activities.	4.96	0.87	5.04	0.87
I have learned to see and understand situations from the perspective of others.	5.00	0.80	5.19	0.854
I have learned new aspects of my future profession.	4.69	0.97	4.81	0.94

Examination of Table 5 shows that, on the whole, the teacher education students felt that they had learned a lot from the project: they learned about themselves, they learned to understand situations from the perspective of others, and they learned new sides to their future profession. All of these areas were rated highly both at the end of the spring term and at the end of the fall term. They consistently reported having learned the most with respect to perspective-taking and the least with regards to professional knowledge, although in all cases their ratings were quite high and increased from one term to the next.

In Table 6 the results are presented for the social work students. As can be seen, students' reports of learning are moderately high in all areas. At the end of both terms, the contribution of the seminars was greatest in relation to their learning about themselves, followed by learning to take another's perspective, and last by learning aspects relevant to their future profession. Despite their relative dissatisfaction with seminar activities during the second term, their assessment of learning as a result of participation in the seminars was only mildly affected. In other words, even though

they criticized the activities during the second term as being repetitive and in the case of the second group, as being disorganized, on the whole they felt that they had learned something from the narrative-building activities.

Table 6:
Self reports of learning at the end of each term, social work students only (N=17) (scale 1-6)

Aspects of learning	Spring term (N=17)		Fall term (N=15)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I learned a lot about myself through the seminar activities.	4.53	1.46	4.20	1.08
I have learned to see and understand situations from the perspective of others.	4.24	1.48	4.13	1.06
I have learned new aspects of my future profession.	4.12	0.70	3.93	1.16

Table 7 presents the results for the Näktergalen mentor group. Since this group participated in the project only during the first term, results were obtained only once.

Table 7:
Self reports of learning after spring term, Näktergalen students only (N=10) (scale 1-6)

Aspects of learning	Mean	SD
I learned a lot about myself through the seminar activities.	5.30	0.95
I have learned to see and understand situations from the perspective of others.	5.20	0.79
I have learned new aspects of my future profession.	5.10	0.99

The results presented in Table 7 are quite positive and indicate that mentors felt that the seminars had taught them a lot about themselves, how to see situations from the perspective of others, and new aspects of their future professions. Although all areas were rated highly, it should be pointed out that like in the other groups, learning new aspects of their future profession was rated lower than the other areas of learning. Similar to the social work students, the mentors rated self-learning highest.

Comments from students on open-ended questions on the feedback questionnaire at the end of the spring term and their discussions in the focus groups also indicated that the students felt that they had gained by participating in project activities. Their comments can be categorized into a number of themes, mainly: building self-knowledge, acquiring interpersonal skills, learning to work in groups improving communication skills, and learning from non-academic experiences.

Learning about self. Particularly when they took the perspective of another in their story and when they heard the reactions of their fellow students, students felt that they got a better understanding of their own behavior and how that behavior influences the behavior of those around them. Some examples of their comments are presented below:

> *"I think that I got a better picture of how and why I react in different situations, and how I could act differently."*(teacher education student)

> *"[the role play] helped me understand that you do not always have to be so serious, that you can make fun of yourself, that you can make a fool of yourself and still be accepted by others."* (teacher education student)

> *"I think about myself and how I influence others. When I meet someone and if I smile, I will get good feedback...I think about this when I meet people.* (teacher education student)

> *"It gave me a deeper understanding of how I am thinking and behaving. It also gave me tools to do something about it."* (social work student)

> *"I understood how much I talk and how much I need to control situations."* (social work student)

> *"I discovered that I make prejudgments of people. I discovered this through my own stories and the stories of others."* (social work student)

> *"Before I judged someone. Now I see that I need to understand and take his perspective. Try to do that and not be so quick to judge."*(social work student)

> *"[I learned] about myself, things that I had not thought about. The others helped me realize how I acted and how the child acted in turn."* (mentor)

> *"I have thought more about how I influence others. Sometimes I am too cynical and demean others too much".* (mentor)

> *"It calls to or forces a degree of self-insight about how locked up your thoughts often are. It is a way of examining your own mind in a way."* (mentor)

> *"It is interesting to discover how I have started to think about my actions in other situations." (mentor)*

Acquiring interpersonal skills. Students mentioned a variety of interpersonal skills that were improved as a result of project activities. Most prominent among them were the ability to listen to others, empathy, and perspective-taking.

Learning to listen to others was most commonly mentioned by the social work students, many of whom discovered that they have a tendency to talk too much and to not really listen to what others are saying. Here are two examples of their comments.

> *"I have learned to listen and I am more attentive to what others have to say before I interrupt. I listen more carefully and let others speak. This is considerable progress for me. I need to hear my clients."* (social work student)

> *"The seminars taught you how to argue in a calm way. Everyone was talking and listening to each other even though we did not always agree. I have used this in my everyday life. You listen to others better. A conflict might just be a misunderstanding."* (social work student)

Most students in all groups talked about the perspective-taking activity and its effect on their understanding of other human beings. Many of them said that the insights that they acquired from the seminars have carried over into their personal life.

> *"We came to understand that none of us is a blank sheet of paper when we come here. I got to understand that no one that I meet is a blank paper, no one."* (teacher education student)

> *"There is always another point of view or perspective and as a teacher you have to remember that. When you work with children and their parents, you always have to think not just about yourself. You have to think twice. You are different and meet people from other backgrounds."* (teacher education student)

> *"I learned to put myself in another's situation. There are always two sides to a story. You have to think that there are always other perspectives."* (teacher education students)

> *"I learned to see a situation in the eyes of other. There are different views – mine and others. It is difficult to see from another's eyes."* (teacher education student)

> *"I learned how people think when they don't think like me. What is right for me is not necessarily right for others. There are always two sides or more and one needs to respect that others think otherwise."* (teacher education student)

> *"It has strengthened my empathy. When I communicate with someone I try to think about what the other thinks. I got into an argument and I could not*

get angry because I kept thinking about what he is thinking. I think that this is good." (social work student)

*"Just to be able to see things from another point of view. This is what **I** mean. What do **you** mean?"* (social work student)

"[I learned] to see different perspectives, to take the time to see things differently." (mentor)

"[I learned] to think from another's perspective." (mentor)

"You can learn how important and how much you can learn from taking another's perspective and in that way get a better knowledge of how different people might think." (mentor)

Learning about the benefits of group work. Not only did the seminar groups become intimate and cohesive units, but the students themselves became aware of the advantages of discussing personal experiences with others. They were aware that they were functioning as a support group for each other and highly valued the feedback that they received from their peers. As one mentor expressed it, *"It was relieving to hear that others have similar experiences. What I learned is that it is a good thing to tell others when you feel that something is not right."*

Improving communication skills. Students mentioned that they had improved their ability to organize their thoughts and present them to a group. For example:

"I learned to speak in front of people when I told my story." (teacher education student)

"I learned to write down things and tell them in front of a group...We had not been writing before and some of us do not like to stand and speak in front of other people. But you need to do this in your work." (social work student)

Learning from non-academic experiences. Another learning outcome was the development of the students' awareness that they could gain professional and personal knowledge from non-academic experiences. This outcome was particularly prominent for the mentors.

"You can clearly see that if you focus on one meeting [with the child] and reflect over that you can learn more than you think". (mentor)

"I think and hope that you can learn something from every person you meet. That thought is something I have brought with me to every meeting with my

mentor child and I think that I have learned things from her, even though she is only 10 years old." (mentor)

Seminar leaders also talked about the learning that they had noted in their students. Each group of leaders tended to emphasize different aspects of the students' learning. The leaders of the teacher education groups saw their students learning *"that things they do outside the university can teach them a lot - that it is the same world as the world of school."* Moreover, they felt that their students had learned *"to reflect in a way in which they understand that there is another perspective to things"*. They noted that some students had become more self-confident as a result of the telling and retelling of their stories. Leaders in the social work group emphasized problem-solving skills and communication skills. Their students learned*: "to think about a problem in different ways and to find different solutions. They learned how to deal with real situations in a professional way."* They learned *"to tell, listen, and discuss the experiences of others. They learned to be more open."* According to the leaders of the mentor groups, mentors learned most about perspective-taking: "*The stories [telling and retelling] and the responses of the others to the stories made them see themselves in another light...They could put themselves aside and enter another's shoes"*.

Attitudinal changes among students

The impact of the project was also examined with respect to the perspective taking, empathetic concern, and self esteem measures described in the methods section of this report. Repeated measures analysis of variance was carried out on each psychological measure for each experimental group. The data are presented in Table 8.

Table 8:
Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) by experimental group on measures of empathetic concern, perspective taking and self esteem, by testing time

Measure	Testing time	Education (N=20)		Social Work (N=15)		Mentors (N=9)	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Empathetic concern (scale 1-5)	January 2007	4.15	0.44	4.26	0.43	4.36	0.39
	June 2007	4.34	0.40	4.19	0.38	4.16*	0.32
	December 2007	4.46	0.36	4.30	0.33	-	-
Perspective taking (scale 1-5)	January 2007	3.90	0.36	3.90	0.49	3.82	0.51
	June 2007	3.94	0.38	3.92	0.48	3.62	0.46
	December 2007	4.12*	0.40	4.13	0.47	-	-
Self-esteem (scale 1-6)	January 2007	4.46	0.78	4.71	0.80	4.67	0.40
	June 2007	4.73	0.83	4.51	0.76	4.81	0.51
	December 2007	4.78*	0.84	4.69	0.80	-	-

* $p<0.05$ for Wilk's Lambda in a test of repeated measures of variance

Examination of Table 8 reveals that the teacher education students improved in perspective-taking and self-esteem, social work students made no statistically significant changes, and mentors decreased in empathetic concern. Although not statistically significant, education students also improved in empathetic concern, social work students improved in perspective-taking, and mentors improved in self-esteem but decreased in perspective-taking. It should be noted that for the few control students for whom we could match their different testing results, no significant changes were noted.

An attempt was made to further understand the changes that the students underwent in these three areas. For these analyses six "change" scores were calculated for each student: the difference between the pretest score (January 2007) and the score at the end of the first term (June 2007) and the difference between the pretest score and the score at the end of the project (December 2007) in each of the three areas.

In order to see whether changes in the three areas were related to one another, correlations were calculated. The results indicated that at the end of the first term, there was a slight though significant tendency for students who exhibited greater empathetic concern to improve with respect to self-esteem ($r=.362$, $p=.012$). At the end of the second term, significant correlations were also found between changes in

empathetic concern and self-esteem (r=.404, p=.012), as well as between empathetic concern and perspective taking (r=436, p=.006).[1]

One of the goals of the project was to empower those students who have a weaker academic background, thus change scores were examined for students who had completed secondary education in an academic Swedish gymnasium as opposed to those who had studied in alternative frameworks. The students participating in the project were a very homogeneous group. Students who had finished secondary education in a non-academic framework were few and mainly concentrated in the social work group. As a result, it was decided to compare students by educational background only within this group. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9:
Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of change scores on measures of empathetic concern, perspective taking and self esteem, by students' high school background for social work students only.

Difference measure	Finished gymnasium (N=12)		Finished alternative route (N=5)		t	p one-tailed test
	M	SD	M	SD		
Empathetic concern: one term	-.135	.280	.171	.421	1.776	.048
Empathetic concern: two terms	-.117	.367	.371	.884	1.543	.074
Perspective-taking: one term	.012	.359	.086	.480	.351	.365
Perspective-taking: two terms	.171	.403	.371	.818	.647	.264
Self-esteem: one term	-.317	.490	.100	.274	2.228	.022
Self-esteem: two terms	-.230	.572	.420	.719	1.912	.039

Despite the small sample size, the comparisons between the students with a stronger academic background and the students with a weaker academic background were consistent and tended to be statistically significant. Those students who had not studied at a gymnasium, showed improvement on all measures, both at the end of the first term and at the end of the second term. In contrast, the other students exhibited positive changes only on the perspective-taking measure. On the empathetic concern

[1] While the former set of correlations included all students in the project, the latter set of correlations referred only to social work and teacher education students.

and self-esteem measures their attitudes changed in a negative direction. Significant, or "near" significant, differences between the two groups were found regarding empathetic concern and self-esteem, both after one and two terms of participation in the project.

Discussion and conclusions

Three main topics were addressed in the evaluation of the Malmö project: the feasibility of the approach which guided project activities, project implementation, and project effects. The discussion presented below does not focus on these areas individually, but attempts to provide an integrative picture of evaluation results.

The main purpose of the Malmö project was to use narrative-building activities in a series of seminar meetings in order to develop empathy, perspective-taking, and self confidence among students who will enter a helping profession at the end of their university studies. The research literature supports the ideas behind this approach. While it is generally agreed that students preparing to enter a helping profession need to develop interpersonal competences, such as empathy and self knowledge, it is also acknowledged that the development of these competences are not systematically addressed in the university curricula. Therefore an intervention, such as the project described here, which aspires to ameliorate the situation and nurture these competences, is a welcome initiative.

Research shows that interpersonal competences can be improved through guided reflection and practice, and that using narrative inquiry which entails writing, rewriting, and group discussion is one way to accomplish the task. Students in the Malmö project engaged in such activities: they wrote and rewrote stories deriving from their personal experience, they told and retold their stories in class, and they discussed these stories with their classmates with respect to different perspectives and alternative outcomes. Group leaders gave reflection tasks to be applied in connection to the stories and group discussion encouraged critical analysis of the situations and an exchange of interpretations. In addition students engaged in less common narrative-building activities, such as forum plays, role play, and an exchange of stories with others outside their group.

Three different models of implementation emerged. Student mentors participated in only three seminars. Social work students participated in eight project

seminars over two academic terms, which were incorporated into already existing reflection groups that met 12 times over this period. In addition each group had a different seminar leader each term. In the teacher education groups, four project seminars were held each term which replaced other types of seminars usually conducted with the students and their seminar leaders remained constant throughout. In addition to these organizational differences, implementation difficulties were experienced differentially: most of the mentor groups were unstable with respect to participants and during the second term one social work group deviated from the original implementation plan. Other differences existed among the groups, mainly with respect to size and the degree of teamwork engaged in by the group leaders in each framework.

Despite the variation in implementation, and the subsequent differences among the groups with respect to exposure to narrative inquiry, the reactions of all students to the project and to the narrative-building activities were quite similar. Students particularly liked changing perspectives and retelling their stories from another point of view and they also liked hearing the stories told by their classmates. Group discussions were viewed by nearly everyone as vital to helping them understand the situations depicted in the stories and perceived as contributing to group cohesion. Forum play and role play were consider "fun", but were less often mentioned as significant learning experiences. The general consensus was that the exchange of stories between the teacher education and social work groups was unsuccessful. Although this idea had potential and could have enhanced the students' learning by showing them how others outside their own group respond to the situations, it was carried out under pressure (as reported by the students) and without sufficient follow-up in seminar discussions.

Another important similarity among the groups was in the way they viewed the class atmosphere. In all cases students reported that the atmosphere in class was supportive, relaxed, and non-threatening which encouraged them to feel at ease and to be open and frank with their peers. The fact that students felt comfortable in their seminar groups enabled project activities to take place more or less as planned and created a positive environment in which learning and individual development was made possible.

In general the activities of the first term were viewed as more significant by the students than those of the second term, probably because in the first term it was new

for many of them to look at themselves in relation to others in an objective and analytical way. Seminar leaders tended to agree with this view and many of them felt that only one term of narrative inquiry was necessary. However, the activities during the second term appeared to have reinforced and enhanced processes initiated through the original telling and retelling activities. The gains made at the end of the second term by the education students on the objective measures of empathy, perspective-taking, and self-esteem and the gains made in perspective-taking by the social work students attest to the importance of continued work with narratives beyond four meetings in one term. As with the learning of other skills, "practice makes perfect". Simply introducing students to a new approach is unlikely to be sufficient for them to internalize it. Mastery will occur more likely after continuous reinforcement, although this reinforcement does not necessarily have to take the same form as in the seminars which were carried out during the second term of the project. There are other possibilities which could be explored. For example, the focus of narrative-building could begin with everyday situations and move gradually to more professional encounters. In addition, instead of more seminar meeting, the process could be continued by incorporating reflective narrative activities into more academic courses which deal with sociology, philosophy, and psychology. In any case, in order to maintain the students' interest and motivation and at the same time reinforce their professional competences, additional activities beyond the basic telling and retelling of stories need to be varied and planned such that they build upon previous ones.

Not only were students reactions to the project similar in all groups, but the participants in the focus groups indicated the same areas of learning. In every group, students talked about learning about themselves, about improving their abilities to understand others and take another's perspective, and about how much can be learned through group discussion. Less frequently mentioned were improved communication skills and learning from non-academic experiences, although these areas were mentioned by at least one person in every group. Even if some of the students thought that the project could have been managed better, they were all very positive about their participation in it. The fact that their statements were so similar attests to the power of narrative-building as a tool for professional development.

Of the various groups, teacher education students were most satisfied with the project and exhibited the greatest degree of change on measures of empathy, perspective-taking, and self-esteem. The fact that they received more intensive

treatment (as compared to the mentors) in more structured seminars (as compared to at least one group of social work students) probably accounts for this result. However, other factors may be at play here, most particularly the fact that they began the project earlier on in their professional training. As mentioned above teacher education students were in their second and third terms of study when the seminars took place, whereas the social work students were in their fourth and fifth terms. Not only were the social work students further along in their professional training in a "numerical" sense, but in the fifth term they were preparing for their practical placement which was to take place the following term. Their concerns about placement interfered to some extent with their motivation to continue to participate in project activities. It would seem from this that effective use of narrative inquiry should take into account the needs of different types of students who are at different stages of their professional development. More research is needed to determine the kind of activities which are best suited to different students: those who are more advanced in their professional training and those in different university programs (e.g., teacher education, social work, nursing, and counseling).

One of the innovations of the Malmö project with regard to narrative inquiry was the focus on everyday occurrences rather than on professional or semi-professional situations. The results here show that students do have experience interacting with people outside their circle of significant others and that these experiences can be used to develop narratives which have significant professional implications. However, it should be pointed out that one consequence of using everyday experiences was that the connections between the situations depicted in the stories and professional competences were not always explicit. Group leaders had to help students make these connections, which they did in the teacher education and social work groups mainly through guided class discussion. In the teacher education groups, there were also activities around the identification of key words, as well as role play of a situation in a school setting, and in one social work group there was an exercise in value clarification, all of which served to strengthen the connection between the narratives and professional work. In the case of the Näktergalen mentors, the students' stories derived from their mentoring experiences, which were perhaps semi-professional in nature but unconnected to their university studies and their professional training. Group leaders did not want the insights achieved by students to

remain something that was seen only in the context of mentoring, thus in the final meeting an attempt was made to help them generalize to their future work.

Apparently these various attempts made by the seminar leaders were relatively successful and many students did succeed in making connections between the narratives and professional abilities. On the feedback questionnaire, they indicated a moderate to high level of having learned new aspects of their future profession through project activities. However, relative to learning about themselves or to learning to see and understand situations from other perspectives, this area was rated lowest among all seminar groups. It appears that an application of a narrative approach in the future should entail more work on helping students connect between their future work and the narratives that they construct from everyday encounters with others.

It can be concluded from the evaluation data that project goals which related to self-knowledge and the ability to interpret encounters with others were achieved to a reasonable degree given the duration and intensity of intervention. In addition to these goals, the Malmö project aimed at providing an opportunity for students who have a weak academic background to feel on par with their peers. The effects of the project in this respect were difficult to ascertain because of the relative homogeneity of the participants and the sparse data concerning their academic and socioeconomic background. From the very limited analysis of the questionnaire results for the social work students, it appears that this goal was also realized. Students from a weaker academic background had improved in self-esteem both at the end of the first term and even more by the end of the second term.

According to Bullough and Pinnegar (2000), narrative inquiry is a form of self-study in which participants examine their private experience in order to gain insight and solution for more public issues while at the same time they examine public theory to gain insight and solution for private experimentation (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2000). The main aim is to provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and determine. The results of the Malmö project indicate that this approach can be applied with relative success in the context of professional development, particularly when it is implemented in a structured and consistent manner, spread over a period of time, and provided at a suitable stage in the professional training program.

References

Braun Jr., J.A. & Crumpler, T.P. (2004). The social memoir: An analysis of developing reflective ability in a pre-service methods course. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20,* 59-75.

Bullough Jr., R.V. & Pinnegar, S. (2000). Guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study. *Educational Researcher, 30*(3), 13-21.

Bujold, C. (2004). Constructing career through narrative. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 64*, 470-484.

Causey, V.E., Thomas, C.D., & Armento, B.J. (2000). Cultural diversity is basically a foreign term to me: The challenges of diversity for preservice teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*, 33-45.

Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry. Experience and story in qualitative research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, D. J. & Huber, M. (2003). Shifting stories to live by: Interweaving the personal and professional in teachers' lives. Paper presented at ISATT, Leiden, the Netherlands, June 2003.

Conle, C. (2000). Narrative inquiry: Research tool and medium for professional development. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 23*(1), 49-63.

Conle, C., Blanchard, D., Burton, K., Higgins, A., Kelly, M., Sullivan, L., & Tan, J. (2000). The asset of cultural pluralism: An account of cross-cultural learning in pre-service education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16,* 365-387.

Connelly, F.M., & Clandinin, D.J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J.L. Green, G. Camilli, & P.B. Elmore (Eds.), Handbook of complementary methods in education research (pp. 477-487). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. (1999). *Shaping professional identity: Stories of educational practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Craig, C. (1997). Telling stories: Accessing beginning teacher knowledge. *Teaching Education, 9*(1), 61-68.

Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach . *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44*(1), 113- 126.

Doecke, B., Brown, J., & Loughran, J. (2000). Teacher talk: The role of story and anecdote in constructing professional knowledge for beginning teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*, 335-348.

Hale, A., Snow-Gerono, J., & Morales, F. (2008). Transformative education for culturally diverse learners through narrative and ethnography. *Teaching and Teacher Education* doi: 10.1016/j/tate.2007.11.013.

Hatcher, S.L., Nadeau, M.S., Walsh, L.K., Reynolds, M., Galea, J., & Marz, K. (1994). The teaching of empathy for high school and college students: Testing Rogerian methods with the interpersonal reactivity index. *Adolescence, 29*(116), 961-974.

McMaster, G. (Feb. 2007). Storytelling in medicine. *Express News.* University of Alberta. Retreived on 18.6.08 from

 www.expressnews.ualberta.ca/article.cfm?id=8246

McVee, M.B. (2004). Narrative and the exploration of culture in teachers' discussions of literacy, identity, self, and other. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20,* 881-899.

Mehto, K., Kantola, V., Tiitta, S., & Kankainen, T. (2006). Interacting with user data: Theory and examples of drama and dramaturgy as methods of exploration and evaluation in user-centered design. *Interacting with Computers, 18*(5), 977-995.

Melnick, S.L., & Zeichner, K.M. (1995). Teacher education for cultural diversity: Enhancing the capacity of teacher education institutions to address diversity issues. Retrieved on June 6, 2008 from:

http://ncrtl.msu.edu/http/rreports/htm/pdf/rr954.pdf

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Royal, C.W. & Baker, S.B. (2005). Effects of a deliberate moral education program on parents of elementary school students. *Journal of Moral Education, 34*(2), 215-230.

Rushton, S.P. (2004). Using narrative inquiry to understand a student-teacher's practical knowledge while teaching in an inner-city school. *The Urban Review, 36*(1), 61-79.

Sanger, M.N. (2008). What we need to prepare teachers for the moral nature of their work. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 40*(2), 169-185.

Strickling, B.L. (1998). A moral basis for the helping professions. Paper presented at the 20th World Congress of Philosophy. Retrieved June 23, 2007.

www.bu.edu/wcph/Papers/Bioe/BioeStri.htm

Waldman, J., Glover, N., & King, E. (1999). Readiness to learn: An experiential perspective. *Social Work Education, 18*(2), 219-228.

White, M. (2006). Working with people who are suffering the consequences of multiple trauma: A narrative perspective. In D. Denborough (Ed.), *Trauma – Narrative responses to traumatic experiences* (pp. 25-85). Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications.

Ville, I. & Khlat, M. (2007). Meaning and coherence of self and health: An approach based on narrative of life events. *Social Science & Medicine, 64*, 1001-1014.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Protocol for interviews with seminar leaders

Background

How did the idea for the project develop? How did you become involved? What were your expectations when you began?

Description of seminars

When did they take place? How long did each last? How many students were supposed to participate and how many attended regularly?

What did you tell the students about the project at the start?

Describe each seminar meeting to me.

What kind of stories did you tell them to write?

Did everyone actually write a story?

Did you present a story as well?

What kind of comments did the students make in response to the stories? Examples.

What happened when the students told their stories from the perspective of another? Did they find this task difficult?

What happened when the students did forum play? Did they find this task difficult?

What happened when the students did role play? Did they find this task difficult?

What was the atmosphere in the group? Did the size and composition have an effect on what developed?

Was the classroom time sufficient?

What was done to connect the students' stories and their future profession?

What would you do differently if you planned the seminars again?

Outcomes

What do you think the students learned from the seminars?

Which activities had the greatest impact on them?

Do you think that they will use what they learned in the future? How?

Did you learn anything from using this narrative approach? Explain.

Do you intend to use this approach in the future? How?

Were your expectations for the project fulfilled?

Appendix 2: Protocol for focus-groups

Introduction: An explanation of the purpose of the evaluation as well as procedural instructions as to how the focus-group discussion will be conducted.

Questions for discussion

What do you think was the purpose of the project seminars?

Describe what you did in the seminars.

What did you like about them and what did you dislike about them?

How could they have been carried out better?

What did you learn from the seminars?

Have they used, will they use, what they have learned outside the seminar meetings?

Do you have anything more that you wish to tell me about the seminars?

Procedure: Students came with paper and pen. The interviewer asked one question and before anyone spoke each student wrote down what she or he thought. A Swedish-English dictionary was on the table which could be consulted. When all students were finished writing, one began and gave her/his comments. The others followed in turn and also reacted to the comments given by the other students. The discussion was recorded as well as written down by the interviewer.

Appendix 3: Student Questionnaire - January 2007

As part of your participation in the project seminars, we would like to ask you to complete the following questionnaire. All information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

The last four numbers of your personal identification number: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Background

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male

Year of birth: _____

Where did you complete your secondary school education?

☐ Gymnasieskola (regular secondary)

☐ KOMVUX (adult education - high school completion)

☐ Folkhogskola (boarding school)

☐ Utlandsk gymnasieutbildning (abroad). Where? _____

Have you studied before in higher education? ☐ no ☐ yes

If yes, where did you study? _____

What languages do you speak? _____
In what town and country did you grow up? _____

How many children do you have? _____
Has any one in your immediate family studied in higher education?

☐ my father ☐ my mother ☐ a brother/sister ☐ other: _____

In this seminar we will talk about our life experiences in situations outside the formal university program. To what extent have you had any experience in the following areas? Indicate your answer for **each** area by marking X in the appropriate box.

Area	No experience at all	Very little experience	A medium amount of experience	Very much experience
1. Work in a preschool or school	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Work in health care services	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Caring for the elderly	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Social work as a contact person, personal assistant, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Administrative office work	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Public service work in a restaurant, hotel, post office, bank	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Work in industry, carpentry, factory work, construction	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Small business owner	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Managerial experience	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Salesperson, cashier in a store	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Au pair, babysitting, housekeeping	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Mentoring/tutoring	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Volunteer work as a leader in the scouts, sports group, summer camp, the arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Voluntary organizational work in public and private organizations (on the board, in committees, labor unions)	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Other volunteer work	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Activity in the area of culture and the arts	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Activity in the area of sports	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Client of medical and health services	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Activities involving travel and adventure	☐	☐	☐	☐

How do you feel about yourself? Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with **each** of the following statements by marking an X in the appropriate box.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. At times I think that I am no good at all.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How would you describe yourself? Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with **each** of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I generally try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I usually feel protective toward those taken advantage of.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I often am quite touched by things that I see happen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I often imagine how I would feel before criticizing others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I usually am pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I tend to look at both sides to every question.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I generally find it easy to see things from other people's perspectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I find it easy to experience feelings of sympathy and compassion for unfortunate others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

.

Appendix 4: Student Questionnaire - June 2007

As part of your participation in the project seminars, we would like to ask you to complete the following questionnaire. All information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

The last four numbers of your personal identification number: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How many seminars did you attend this term? _____

We would like to hear what you think of these seminars. Please rate your experiences by indicating to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I enjoyed writing my own stories for the seminar.						
2. I liked to share my stories with the others.						
3. It was interesting to hear the stories prepared by other students.						
4. Group discussions helped me better understand different life experiences.						
5. I learned a lot about myself through the seminar activities.						
6. I have learned to see and understand situations from the perspective of others.						
7. I have learned new aspects of my future profession.						
8. I felt tense whenever I came to this seminar.						
9. The atmosphere in class was always supportive and non-judgemental.						
10. I really do not understand why I have to attend a seminar like this.						
11. I would recommend attending a seminar like this to other students.						

What did you particularly like about the seminars?

_____ 52

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What did you not like about them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do you recommend changing to make them better?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you feel about yourself? The following questions are already familiar to you. Please read them again carefully and mark the answer which best describes your opinion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. At times I think that I am no good at all.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How would you describe yourself? The following questions are also already familiar to you. Please read them again carefully and mark the answer which best describes your opinion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I generally try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I usually feel protective toward those taken advantage of.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I often am quite touched by things that I see happen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I often imagine how I would feel before criticizing others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I usually am pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I tend to look at both sides to every question.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I generally find it easy to see things from other people's perspectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I find it easy to experience feelings of sympathy and compassion for unfortunate others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your time!

Appendix 5: Student Questionnaire - December 2007

As part of your participation in the project seminars, we would like to ask you to complete the following questionnaire. All information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

The last four numbers of your personal identification number: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How many seminars did you attend this term? _____

We would like to hear what you think of these seminars. Please rate your experiences by indicating to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I enjoyed writing my own stories for the seminar.						
2. I liked to share my stories with others.						
3. It was interesting to hear stories prepared by other students.						
4. Group discussions helped me better understand different life experiences.						
5. I learned a lot about myself through seminar activities.						
6. I learned to see and understand situations from the perpsective of others.						
7. I learned new aspects of my profession-to be.						
8. I felt tense whenever I came to this seminar.						

9. The atmosphere in class was always supportive and non-judgemental.		56			
10. I did not like getting comments from other students to my stories					
11. The forum-plays helped me to better understand different viewpoints.					
12. The concluding discussion about the project made the purpose of the seminars clearer to me.					
13. I really do not understand why I have to attend a seminar like this.					
14. I would recommend attending a seminar like this to other students.					

How do you feel about yourself? The following questions are already familiar to you. Please read them again carefully and mark the answer which best describes your opinion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. At times I think that I am no good at all.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How would you describe yourself? The following questions are also already familiar to you. Please read them again carefully and mark the answer which best describes your opinion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I generally try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I usually feel protective toward those taken advantage of.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I often am quite touched by things that I see happen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I often imagine how I would feel before criticizing others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I usually am pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I tend to look at both sides to every question.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I generally find it easy to see things from other people's perspectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I find it easy to experience feelings of sympathy and compassion for unfortunate others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your time!