

**'She didn't *seem* like a social worker':
Practice Educators' experiences and perceptions of assessing
failing social work students on placement**

Introduction

This report seeks to investigate a key intersection of academic and practical learning in social work training: the assessment of students on placement and the challenges for practice-based assessors in assessing a failing student. Department of Health (2002) requirements for social work education require that students spend at least 200 days in practice learning (in at least two settings); gain experience of undertaking 'statutory' social work tasks (involving legal interventions); and provide services to at least two different service user groups. These practice placements are assessed by practice educators, either placed within organisations, or by independent assessors. Whilst academy-based social work educators generally have recourse to such support mechanisms as collegial discussion, opportunities for moderation and codified assessment procedures when making assessment judgments, the experience of the practice assessor is potentially more isolated – and certainly less well documented. What are practice educators' experiences and views of the 'challenging' or 'failing' student on social work placements? What strategies have proved productive in supporting a failing student and what outcomes have educators observed? The present study seeks to answer these questions and to capture and codify some key principles and practices accordingly. In line with recent discussions and concerns within the profession regarding assessment of social work students on placement (Basnett & Sheffield, 2010), the study proffers a sustained and specific focus on the experiences and perceptions of practice educators (PE) to determine their views of the 'difficult student', and their sense of the support they require from academic colleagues in order to reach judgments and to implement interventions.

The wider context

The study is situated within wider discussion of this important issue, the question of the placement/academy relationship having come to increasing salience in recent years (see Rai, 2004) – not least in Social Work Reform Board's identification of practice education as an area requiring remodeling (2010). The General Social Care Council (GSCC) has found that universities and colleges are struggling to find placements, particularly statutory placements (GSCC, 2010) with some higher education institutions (HEIs) making recourse to placements that they would preferably not, and the GSCC implementing in September 2010 (for the first time) mandatory quality assurance programmes for placements (GSCC, 2010). Widely-cited studies have highlighted the challenges for practice assessors (even across professions) in finding it difficult to fail students (Ilott and Murphy 1997, 1999; Duffy, 2004), and in balancing their role as facilitators of learning with the need to act as professional 'gatekeepers' (Holmstrom and Taylor, 2007).

Crucially, in the present study's contribution to this discussion, novel emphasis is given to the importance of viewing the practice educator's role *relationally*, taking into full account their role in the wider educational experience of the student as both trainee social worker and university undergraduate. Currently, the professional and pedagogic relationship between the practice assessor, the tutor and social work student is not as clearly articulated and identified within the social work pedagogic literature as might be helpful. The management of either a 'difficult' or 'failing' student appears to be discussed rarely, with few practical suggestions as to how to manage in this trying situation. There also does not appear to be much research on the role of university-based teams in supporting practice assessors in making their final recommendations: few studies have followed in the wake of Brandon and Davis' (1979) study exploring the role of the HEI in assessing marginal or failing students on placement and determining that tutors can focus on the 'enabling' part of the assessment process and can, therefore, encourage practice assessors to adopt a similar role.

The extent of failure on social work placement

Studies from the last thirty years appear to chart a low failure rate on social work programmes and particularly in placements (Brandon and Davis, 1979; Williamson et al, 1985; Walker et al, 1995; Hughes and Heycox, 1996; Raymond, 2000; GSCC, 2007).¹ The General Social Care Council's most recent figures for student failure on social work practice learning outcomes is 2.6% (GSCC, 2007:17). Elsewhere (Basnett & Sheffield, 2010) a figure of 3% has been identified within a single university, and by extrapolating this to the entire student population (using GSCC 2008 figures) up to 500 social work students fail their placement every year.

Judgments of failure tend to be predicated on the clear threshold competencies required of the effective social worker: Barlow and Coleman argue that social work educators feel that a portion of their responsibility is the task of gate-keeping (Barlow and Coleman, 2003). Indeed, it has also been argued that the responsibility of gate-keeping has increasingly been handed over by academics to practice assessors (Younes, 1998; Crisp and Green Lister, 2002) making the practice arena the crucial context for assessment. At the same time, research has depicted trends of reluctance amongst practice assessors to fail students (Duffy, 2004; Shapton, 2006). Interestingly, Shapton (2006: 41; see also Duffy, 2004: 5) suggests that there is not such a struggle to fail students amongst academics, and that this disproportion warrants further investigation. It appears that a focus on assessing failure or the experience of failing a social work student on the placement is scarce in discussions of practice assessing (Knowles et al, 1995; Burgess et al, 1998b, Sharp and Danbury, 1999; Duffy, 2004; Furness and Gilligan, 2004; Basnett and Sheffield, 2010). Parker (2006) suggests that '[w]hilst the importance of practice learning is recognised within the literature...studies reflect diverse positions and indicate that research into effective field education is still in its infancy' (2006: 8).

What reasons have been established for reluctance amongst practice assessors to adjudge their students as failing? One answer noted within the literature is the 'rule

¹ Low failure rates have also been observed in other professions including nursing (Redfern et al, 2002, Duffy, 2004), occupational therapy (Illot and Murphy, 1997, 1999) and teaching (Knowles et al, 1995).

of optimism' (Dingwall et al, 1983; Blom-Cooper, 1985) that impacts on the assessment of marginal students in placement. Both Alzonzo and Milner & O'Bryne suggest that once practice assessors form an initial impression of a student, evidence that may conflict with those initial impressions is often ignored (Alzonzo, 1996; Milner and O'Bryne, 2002). There are comparable findings of this impression-retention in other professional fields, including Vacha-Haase et al (2004) and Good et al (1995) in psychology, and the famous Duffy (2004) report in nursing. Broader cultural considerations have also been considered: Bar-On (2001) discusses an account of social work education in Botswana where a strong suggestion is found of 'cultural legacy that impedes persons in authority from assessing their subordinates negatively' (2001:128).

Other literature from a range of international and multi-disciplinary contexts is more strident, describing less a reluctance to fail than a 'failure to fail' in practice learning settings (the phrase is widely attributed to the Duffy 2004 report, of the same title). This implies that assessors often give students the benefit of the doubt and pass them even when practice evidence suggests the student should fail. Some reasons for this alleged 'failure to fail' include; lack of understanding of the assessment framework, procedures not being followed properly, role confusion or strain and fear of litigation (Brandon and Davies, 1979; Williamson et al, 1985; Lankshear, 1990; Proctor, 1993; Knowles et al, 1995; Hughes and Heycox, 1996; Ilott and Murphy, 1997, 1999; Duffy, 2004; Shapton, 2006).

Whilst these studies have proved valuable in framing the extent and nature of the issue and in proposing some motivating factors, it will be clear that some sustained qualitative research was called for to provide much fuller insight on the question. Accordingly, this project attempted to understand what might be at play in the practice educator-student relationship when there are difficulties on placement. How do practice educators experience failing the assessment of a social work student on placement? Can some common experiences and judgments be extrapolated? And can proposed interventions and support strategies (for both assessors and students) be drawn out from the data?

Methodology

A dual strand qualitative research methodology was utilized in the study involving semi-structured (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Roulston, 2010) recorded interviews with twelve practice educators and three university-based tutors. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The sampling was purposive and opportunistic from within Buckinghamshire New University's pool of current and past verifiers and assessors; the tutors were drawn from within the research team's professional contacts, and are in post at other universities. Emergent themes from interviews were introduced into a series of two focus groups with practice educators. The project team sought sustained insight into the perceptions and attitudes of practice educators so that the various rationales for 'failing to fail' could be more fully documented and explored than hitherto.

Because of the nature of the methodology used, a feedback loop was created between the researcher and the subjects. This was realised by a 'bullet-point' sheet from each interview being sent to the interviewee, to determine their approval of its content's validity. At the midway point an initial evaluation meeting took place among the project team, in order to provide preliminary evaluation and for recommendations for adjustments to project plan.

The data from both the interviews and focus groups was analysed using thematic analysis, based upon Ryan and Bernard's (2003) system of organisation which predominantly identifies:

0. repetitions
 1. indigenous typologies or categories
 2. metaphors and analogies
 3. transitions
 4. similarities and differences
 5. linguistic connectors
 6. missing data
 7. theory-related material
- (from Ryan & Bernard (2003))

The interview schedule was identified from the available literature, and piloted with the first two interviews, with small changes being made after the pilot (for interview schedule, see **Appendix 1**).

Findings

As might be expected, a wide range of themes emerged during the course of the interviews, with some experiences being idiosyncratic to one interviewee and others more commonly represented. Recurrent notions included: the strong sense of the necessity and importance of PEs in educating 'the next generation' of social workers - 'I'm passing people that will have an effect on the whole profession' (Respondent 2); the satisfaction to be gained from overseeing a student's learning and development - 'I get to see them grow in confidence. Watching them find a niche for themselves. I like seeing people move on' (Respondent 3); the observation of PEs that responsibility for supervising and assessing a student positively impacted on their own practice - 'I'm able to refresh my knowledge of the theories again, which is helpful, and I quite enjoy' (Respondent 2); and the observation that supervising a student enhanced reflective practice - 'she made me think about what I did, and why. I had to concentrate more, and explain why I made choices, which made me a better social worker' (Respondent 8).² Sustained data analysis resulted in the identification of a coincident themes (approximately 15 in number), and whilst looking for commonalities and collapsing them, six dominant themes emerged.

PEs identified the following issues as being of primary importance in their experience of a difficult or failing student placement: communication; professionalism; values; insight; impact; and most importantly, engagement and orientation towards practice. The report will now turn to consider of these in turn before seeking to capture proposed interventions and support mechanisms.

² One recurring thought that was not amenable to full exploration within the context of this project, but which would benefit from further enquiry was the sense of loneliness that some PEs feel during this process (and when assessing students in placements more generally, it would seem). Several made statements along these lines, with one stating poignantly, 'I feel very lonely, as there are very few of us [within my local authority].'

Communication

PEs stated consistently that communication was a key element in determining a student's ability. Using 'communication' in the broadest sense of the term, including e-mail, phone and verbal communication in person, interviewees suggested that failing students struggled to communicate effectively, and struggled to understand feedback. One participant suggested that their role was in 'teaching people different ways of communicating. If they can learn to communicate in our environment [of a challenging placement] then they can communicate anywhere' (Respondent 6). Another participant said that 'if you're [the student] unable to do it on time, you send me an email with the reason, don't just not send me a log [reflective diary]. That's not okay' (Respondent 2). One of the tutors highlighted that students' communication can be an issue, 'there are times that the student doesn't communicate as they should, and it starts a ball rolling in the placement' (Tutor 2). Whilst communication was not invariably nominated as an area of concern by all interviewees, many of the issues raised across the data set could reasonably be related back to the issue of communication further arguing for the salience of this issue amongst others.

Professionalism

Another concern for PEs was the nascent professional identity of these students. This began at the pre-placement visit, with some students not being appropriately attired. One participant suggested that many students required support to develop their professional identities, and were able to incorporate suggestions. She put it succinctly to her students in this way; 'You are a social worker first, then a student second. The name is important' (Respondent 12). She went on to state that 'professionalism is about being respectful to everybody. Respectful to the clients, respect for other professionals.'

Another participant suggested that becoming a social worker required developing an ability to manage in situations which others might find unusual; 'you're kind of desensitised to a level of things that other people might find shocking. You kind of don't any more, cause you're exposed to it all the time' (Respondent 7). Students

may need constant encouragement whilst being acculturated into social work, one participant commented that 'sometimes students need to be reminded that their behaviours can be misconstrued.' Much of the qualitative data garnered from the study can helpfully be understood in terms of the theories of professional knowledge and competence evolved by Eraut (1994) and followers, where professional knowledge is seen largely to inhere in attributes and ways of proceeding which become tacit or invisible to the expert, but which require careful exposition and introduction to the layperson or new entrant to the profession. This theory suggests that an experienced professional may experience difficulty in 'unpacking' the separate components of their knowledge, since they may hold their professional experience and identity as 'tacit' rather than explicit expertise, and may struggle to articulate what they do habitually, or even unconsciously, in their practice.

Values

Additional to the forms and modes of professional practice are the values that ideally underpin social work practice. Concerns with students incorporating the values of social work, or difficulties in doing so, were present in a number of interviews. One participant remarked that 'there was the values side which...was the most important. She wasn't demonstrating it with any service users that she came into contact with.' This would suggest that there are concerns with students transferring an academic understanding of the values required by social work to the practice arena, and to use them with tact and appropriateness in interactions with service users. One participant commented on the difficulty in assessing a student's inculcation of the values of social work by stating, 'Often you don't have the clear evidence to say that is not something that is within the social work values' (Respondent 7). She also commented that 'I have had a few students that it [values issues] has come up with often around religion and sexuality.' Whilst outside the scope of the current, this topic would benefit from further exploration, as it was raised with some concern by the respondents.

Insight

Some participants found that a student's insight (or potential lack thereof) was an issue whilst on placement. There were concerns noted that insight is an innate quality that perhaps some individuals may not be able to develop. One participant stated that 'someone has to have the capacity to develop insight' (Respondent 3). This same PE went on to state, 'you either have it or you don't. I don't think you can teach insight.' One participant suggested that with some students, they are unable to develop insight, by stating that 'there was no recognition that there [were] any issues...[the student] was therefore not able to understand that what they did wasn't okay' (Respondent 4). Another suggested that '[the student] had no awareness that this was a problem. Completely unaware' (Respondent 1).

There is a potential that insight may be a process that requires a lengthy period to develop. Some participants suggested that becoming a social worker took a long time, and that 'takes a long time to work out what's going on, and you feel like you don't know what you're doing, and you never will...they can't make head or tail of it' (Respondent 10).

Impact

One of the most consistent themes that emerged was of the impact of a difficult student upon the PEs, particularly in relation to their time:

'If you've got a student that's failing, it's just so time-consuming!' (Respondent 4).

'It's just so time-consuming!' (Respondent 7).

'You need a lot of extra time' (Respondent 8).

Consistently, the participants (including the tutors) felt that working with students experiencing difficulty (or failing) required significantly more of their time than other, more highly performing students. There was a concomitant concern that students that were experiencing difficulty actually *took* time from these other, also (or more?) deserving students, with a sense of resentment attached to the statements. One

participant put it succinctly in this way; 'Do I need this kind of stress when I have 50 million cases?' (Respondent 7).

Some participants noted that having a difficult or failing student raised concerns within them regarding their own practice. One participant stated: 'I felt very like we'd failed in some way' (Respondent 3). Another suggested that 'I think when you start off with students...it makes you challenge, am I, was it something that I did or didn't do' (Respondent 11). She went on to review a student's failure in these terms: 'what was it that we *weren't* doing that didn't enable her to learn, and questioning our practice, and our methods.' One of the participants had actually supervised a student who lodged a complaint about the verifier's practice. She stated that 'it was quite traumatic particularly for my colleague, because the student actually made an allegation directly about her work practice, which she found very upsetting' (Respondent 7). One participant noted that, 'it seemed like her purpose for coming was to find fault with somebody' (Respondent 4). These and other reflections on scrutiny, observation and inspection, are reminiscent of what Foucault (1977) terms 'the gaze', where social and hegemonic norms are enforced by the subject's heightened awareness of being under surveillance. The concept is a productive one for the situation here described, since it would appear that the practice educators, in their role as auditors and assessors of a student's practice, were themselves unsure as to how far they too were being observed or studied (in an inverse of the manner of the Panopticon), and for what purpose, making the situation fraught with tension. Interesting that in this circumstance, it is the PE that is purported to have the power, yet they feel 'observed'. It helps to exhume the complex power arrangements that exist within social work practice, and the fragility contained in these practitioner's sense of their place within the profession. Indeed, one participant suggested that they were even frightened of a student: 'she's dangerous, she's going to come in here [to a placement] and wreck somebody's career. Somebody could work their way up for years, and she could come in and say something and that could be their career' (Respondent 7). Whilst this may seem to be an exaggerated, even mildly paranoid statement, it was echoed in a number of interviews, with the fear of the effect of the student upon the professional lives of the staff prevailing.

Several participants mentioned an impact for the team when a student was having difficulty. One averred that; 'There were trust issues with the rest of the team, it [didn't] help a team morale or the gelling of the team' (Respondent 5). 'It had a huge impact on the team. It was very difficult because they were a very nurturing team' 'there's a cost to the team' (Respondent 3). 'The situation was draining for everyone' (Respondent 7). This issue resulted in a few of the teams refusing to take further students, or requesting a break from students, stating: 'Oh we don't want another social work student!' (Respondent 2).

There was also a concern identified by a number of participants of the potential impact upon service users of having a difficult or failing student interact with them, with a number of participants suggesting that they felt 'you also need to protect service users' (Respondent 7). One participant stated that she felt an overarching responsibility to service users, suggesting that 'I feel responsible to the client, ultimately' and felt responsible when she 'let a student loose on the world' (Respondent 2). One participant went so far as to state that; 'as soon as something went wrong, it wasn't about you can't try again, but the next time you go out, can we make it safe?' (Respondent 5). These statements show a deep and abiding concern for the welfare of the individuals that use services, and concern for the potential negative impacts to them of students in difficulty.

Engagement and orientation towards practice

If a sense of ascending priority has been emergent from the themes reviewed above, it is certainly the case that the theme of engagement and orientation to practice was predominant in the interview sample, both as a theme *per se* and as an underlying consideration in many of the challenging situations described. One participant's assessment of a non-engaged student captures the important of the theme: 'There was no passion, no 'fire in her belly. She wasn't keen to learn, or keen about social work' (Respondent 5). Another found that a student had commented upon being

bored during some meetings, and remarked: 'She couldn't possibly have been bored, there's so much going on, I think what it was she didn't understand what was going on, so therefore she wasn't participating' (Respondent 7). The appearance of non-engagement may be a mechanism by which students manage being in new and confusing, stressful circumstances, or display a student unable to cope with the pressures (or chaos) of a busy social work team.

Another participant found that when it comes to gauging the degree of student engagement and orientation to practice, observing students in their first few days of placement can be highly telling: 'If, after the first few days, or after a week, they're sitting in the back of the room, preferring to observe, that can be a problem. You can learn things by observing, but it's not the same thing as getting involved...they need to get involved' (Respondent 6).

One participant recounted the case of a student whose woefully low engagement was provoking much frustration in the team: 'There's one particular student at the moment that hasn't bothered to make contact with me, they've started placement late, and I've contacted them twice. And then I've driven all the way over to see them, and they weren't there, and they said "well, I didn't have your contact details, and I couldn't contact you"' (Respondent 2). One participant suggested that some students can be more elusive than others, 'then you get the students that you're forever chasing for information that, you know, you're constantly saying, "I need this information"' (Tutor 1).

One participant stated that non- (or dis-)engagement was the major issue in the difficult or failing student placement, and that this factor seriously inhibits her ability to assess the placement. She said that 'one of the main issues is avoidance. "If I don't meet with her, this will all go away!" But if I don't have the evidence, I can't pass them' (Respondent 4). This engagement issue arose in a number of areas, but timeliness was a recurring theme. One participant suggested that a difficult student was 'someone that has poor attendance, or is always late - timekeeping issues. Not engaging with me as an assessor. Not being prepared for the sessions we have

together' (Respondent 9). One participant suggested that students studying to become social workers today in comparison 'gotta be a lot quicker off the mark I think' (Respondent 1). Does this statement suggest that we expect students to become immersed with more immediacy than previously?

Contextualising the emergent themes

We have seen how the sample of practice educators interviewed in the course of this project collectively identified six dominant considerations or themes in their experiences and perceptions of the failing social work student: communication; professionalism; values; insight; impact; and most importantly, engagement and orientation towards practice. It is helpful to contextualize and supplement these six themes with researcher observations before concluding with consideration of the recommendations for enhanced practice arising from the data.

Within these interviews and focus groups, there was a great deal of emotion displayed and articulated ranging across fear; anger; (mis)trust; compassion; relief; and irritation. The experience of working with a student who is encountering difficulty whilst on placement appears to have been a significant event in each of these individuals' working lives and the experience has proved paradigmatic for many in terms of their openness to accepting further student placements. One participant said to the interviewer, 'I'm so glad that you're undertaking this research, as I really needed to talk to someone about what happened' (Respondent 5). Another spoke of the situation of working with a student whom she eventually failed in one word: 'raw' (Respondent 7). Hochschild (1983) suggests that within our service-oriented society we are requiring people to develop the ability to 'detach' from 'emotional labour': such detachment would appear to come at a cost for the interviewees sampled. The participants, even the tutors, spoke of the difficulty they personally felt whilst engaging with these students, and the lasting effects (and memories) of them upon their working, and upon their teams.

It is striking that in many of the accounts comprised in the data set, the role of practice educator is viewed somewhat in isolation. The majority of respondents reflected the sense that whilst the universities were highly supportive, being a practice educator was 'a lonely job', in the words of one of the participants (Respondent 2). One participant commented that the experience of working with a successful student and a difficult student were not in the same realm, and that they required very different skills and approaches (Respondent 6). It may be that a more structured approach is required by some universities in the way that they inform the PE about the previous placement experiences of the student. Likewise, it may be that a more relational view of the practice educator's role – one which emphasizes the distribution of the assessment function between practice educator and university tutor collaboratively – would serve to mitigate this sense of isolation. To date, there is no requirement from the GSCC that any previous information arrive with the student to any subsequent placements: although practice in this regard differs in each HEI, the process may need to be addressed in a more systematic manner.

Recommendations

The participants themselves volunteered a number of recommendations during the course of the interviews, and some further suggestions arose from a review of the data.

First, PEs are urged to 'speak early and honestly' in making assessment judgments on students. One participant said; 'Don't ignore it. You've got to address it early.' (Respondent 8). 'I think it's important to address it quickly.' (Respondent 1). This suggestion is for all those involved in a placement, including students, tutors and PEs. One participant went so far as to say that she was 'brutally honest with my students' (Respondent 2). These comments are in line with the current dominant view within pedagogy for feedback provision being timely, clear and in a manner able to be digested by the recipient (see Nicols and MacFarlane-Dick, 2006; and Gibbs, et al, 1998).

Secondly, participants recurrently identified the importance of supervision, and its value as a forum in which to address issues as and when they arise. Regular, reflective supervision was recommended, that was positively challenging, both of the PE and the student, was suggested as necessary for the learning required in placements. The finding accords with the suggestion of Ruch (2007) who argues that the development of 'safe spaces' is necessary for beneficial practice for social workers.

Thirdly, participants spoke of the availability of tutors as being important. They stated that three-way meetings were often the first point of call when there was a situation that required a structured response. One participant said that: 'I would ask for a three-way meeting with the tutor at the earliest possible point if I thought there was difficulty' (Respondent 1).

Some participants suggested meetings for PEs to gather and discuss difficult students or situations, one even went on to recommend a 'buddy system' (Respondent 2). Others felt that this suggestion would be helpful to those PEs that were either new to the role, or who did not have management experience. One participant suggested that using meetings for PEs was a good thing. She suggested that when receiving support from other PEs in a meeting that 'I think it was reassuring, very reassuring' (Respondent 5).

A suggestion that appears relevant given the data is the potential of management training being included in PE framework; particularly that of working with poorly performing members of staff. A number of participants identified the benefit of having management experience. Some participants suggested that their experience of being managers was invaluable to use as a PE, particularly when a student was experiencing difficulty; one of the participants even used the term 'poor performing student' as opposed to 'difficult' or 'failing', linking it with performance management policies within their organization (Respondent 3). Another participant stated that 'it's very similar to working with a poor performing member of staff. I think it would be

good to have that training within the practice teaching programme, training in managing poorly performing staff' (Respondent 1).

Conclusion:

The focus on this study upon the challenge of assessing a struggling or failing student has necessarily obliged an emphasis on the more challenging aspects of social work practice education. The demands and challenges of such a close supervisory or mentoring relationship have been manifest in reviewing the data collected for this study. Accordingly, it is important not to lose sight of the gratification and rewards to the profession that derive from the opposite experience – the supervision of a flourishing and successful student.

'It's just a joy, when you have a good student, and you come out the other side, and you've got a good social worker in the making there, that's great for the profession.' (Respondent 5)

It is the suggestion of this study that by attending to the recommendations emerging from the above data, and by encouraging a more relational conception of practice education and academy-based education, more such positive experiences of social work placement will be promoted and sustained. It is also suggested that some of the difficulties outlined above can be mitigated by attending to issues early, and with a strong communication link between the tri-party arrangement (tutor, assessor, student).

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Appendix One

Interview Schedule

What's the term that you use to describe you when you are working with a social work student on placement?

For how many years have you been working with students in this capacity?

How many students have you assessed/verified/tutored?

What is the experience like?

What is the best part?

What do you envisage as the roles as a practice educator?

How did you manage the roles of supporting the student and assessing?

How do you balance those different roles?

What makes a student difficult?

Can you describe what a difficult student placement looks like from your perspective?

Have you ever had a student fail a placement?

What was the experience like?

Was there an emotional/professional/personal/other cost?

What are some of your ways of managing difficulties on placements?

What did (or can) the University do to support you when experiencing a circumstance like this?

Do you have any recommendations to other practice educators that are working with students that are either 'difficult' or 'failing'?