Bachelor in social work field education program's use of a learning contract assignment to measure competency

Toni-Marie Ciarfella
University at Albany, State University of New York, tmchudcin@aol.com

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BACHELOR IN SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM'S USE OF A LEARNING CONTRACT ASSIGNMENT TO MEASURE COMPETENCY

By

Toni-Marie Ciarfella

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Bachelor in Social Work Field Education Program’s Use of a Learning Contract Assignment to Measure Competency

by

Toni-Marie Ciarfella

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Abstract

Field education is deemed the signature pedagogy in social work education and due to this designation, evaluation of field education assignments is key. The purpose of this qualitative content analysis case study was to explore how undergraduate social work students move knowledge from the classroom to field practice using a Learning Contract Assignment (LCA).

The sampling frame consisted of twenty-two seniors representing two cohorts at one college during a single academic year, from which 16 cases were selected. The research questions were generated based on a historical review of field education in the literature and framed in the context of constructivism and learning theory. A coding framework was developed that utilized the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (RBT) of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) to examine how students moved knowledge from the classroom into their field practice (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In addition to RBT’s three domains of learning a fourth domain was created that identified instances where students shared their engagement in all three RBT domains in a single practice example.

The results of this study found that the application of RBT in evaluating the LCA did provide a picture that demonstrated student learning and transfer of knowledge from the classroom to the field setting. A more purposeful and transparent alignment between the LCA and RBT in the classroom and field setting by faculty and agency field supervisors may contribute to the future development of the LCA as competency based measure.
Acknowledgements

Dedicated to my late father,

Francis R. Ciarfella

and to my beloved husband and partner in life,

Mark B. Searle

To acknowledge everyone one who shared this journey with me would surely leave out the many moments shared with me that made a difference and brought this work from its early nickname of “Frankenstein,” which grew to become known as “Frankie” and ultimately became an accomplishment lovingly referred to now as “Francis”. To begin, with gratitude, I would like to acknowledge the commitment and patience of my doctoral committee, Barry Loneck, Ph.D., SUNY Albany, Lara Kaye, Ph.D., NYS Department of Health (previously of SUNY Albany) and Elisa M. Martin, Ph.D., Siena College for sharing their wisdom, humor and expertise. Validating the teaching of Buddha, that we do not learn by experience, but by our capacity for experience. This journey was shared with many others, foremost my cohort, colleagues and friends Patricia Weldon, Ph.D. and Janet Acker, Ph. D and my lifelong friends, Kathleen Cecilia Dorn, Janette Relyea, Joy Paradis and Linda Goff all of whom never wavered in their constant belief in me and from whom I received and felt endless encouragement, caring and support. I would also like to thank James and Arlene Cappola who gave me hope and began this journey with me with enthusiasm and finally, to all my students in the bachelor of social work program who taught and inspired me to be a better social worker every day.
Chapter 1 – Overview

Introduction

The intention of this literature review was to establish the need for a reliable competency based evaluation tool of social work students’ practice in field education. The Council on Social Work Education’s (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) in 2008 did two key things: it solidified the expectation that programs use competency based assessment plans and it affirmed that course work and field education share an equal partnership in delivering social work education by declaring field education the profession’s signature pedagogy (CSWE, 2008). Academic course work includes both explicit and implicit curriculum. The explicit is the transmission of the profession’s knowledge, values, theories and skills in the classroom setting. The implicit curriculum is the profession’s expectation that programs socialize students to the profession. Field education encompasses both the explicit and implicit curriculum, with the student receiving social work supervision and training in a human service agency based field setting. The goal of this literature review is to look comprehensively at the history of student evaluation in field education to explore if there is a gap, especially since field education is now elevated to the status of a signature pedagogy.

Research in field education is an important component in social work curriculum improvement because the profession expects graduates to be able to function as independent practitioners. Objectives of the social work curriculum include the expectation to socialize students toward independent practice, use critical thinking, to engage in self-reflection and self-correction, and become ethical practitioners (Grady, Powers, Despard, & Naylor, 2011; Holosko, Skinner, MacCaughelty, & Stahl, 2010; Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011; National Association of Social Workers, n.d.; Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2010). In order to accomplish this goal, social work
programs are accredited by the CSWE. The accreditation process involves an initial certification application and then reaccreditation every eight years through an academic self-study assessment of the social work program to ensure that the program is in compliance with the CSWE’s EPAS.

The 2008 EPAS standards frame the focus of this study since they were in effect during this study’s timeframe. During this time period the CSWE’s focus moved from a curriculum content based model to a competency based measuring system requiring programs to evaluate social work student outcome through an evaluation of students’ mastery of ten core competencies and forty-one related practice behaviors (see Attachment I) (CSWE, 2008; Meyer-Adams, Potts, Koob, Dorsey, & Rosales, 2011). Based on these new accreditation standards social work programs were required to assess student ability to apply learning from the classroom to field placements across these ten core competencies and forty-one practice behaviors (Holloway, 2009). In addition to the move by the CSWE toward a competency based model of evaluation, it called for programs to frame field education as the signature pedagogy for social work education and to define its place in the curriculum as the focal method for teaching and learning (Holden, Barker, Rosenberg, Kuppens, & Ferrell, 2011). In response to the CSWE EPAS statement that field education is the signature pedagogy, Holden et al., (2011) under took a quantitative research study that captured the history and importance of social work field education from 1931 to 2006. Holden and his team’s findings showed no eligible studies for teaching field instruction in social work in the United States during this seventy-seven year time frame that met their inclusion criteria which was based on the effectiveness of field education to be named a signature pedagogy (Holden et al., 2011). What little evidence they did find was more anecdotal without any robust research to verify the decision by the CSWE to designate field education as a signature pedagogy (Holden et al., 2011). This finding creates an impetus for
social work programs to examine their assessment plans to determine whether there was sufficient competency based measures in place to assess whether or not the CSWE mandate regarding field education is being achieved and how best it could be actualized.

This essay provides a comprehensive review of the literature exploring the link between student classroom learning and student performance in field education. This review examines the history of the CSWE standards and the current research regarding how classroom knowledge is evaluated in field education. In addition, the literature explores how social work programs implemented the CSWE mandate for the assessment of student learning in field education. Key concepts include: the CSWE, EPAS, field internships, internships, socialization, placement, field, practicum, practica and measurement.

This literature review ultimately set the foundation for the development of the Learning Contract Assignments (LCA) to assess and engage students in becoming more robust partners in demonstrating their achievement of the required competencies. The importance of this idea of students as partners is not new; it is found in current day discussions, the literature and the consumer based media which defines students as informed consumers of their educational service (Barton, Bell, & Bowles, 2005). Dolinsky (2010) talked about the importance of programs having sufficient information openly available (i.e. primarily available via the internet) as prospective students rely on it when making college and program selection decisions (Manthorpe et al., 2010). The CSWE mandate that requires programs to make public their aggregate program assessment outcomes on their respective websites (CSWE Accreditation Standard 4.0.1; www.cswe.org) further strengthens transparency to students by informing them of how they will be assessed. Additionally, these sites provide equally pertinent information related to student outcomes that students can use to assess the quality of the program in which
they are interested. The indication here is that consumerism and transparency is part and parcel of higher education and it reinforces the importance of delivering evidenced based quality education. In sum, sustainable social work education and program commitment to the educational standards of its accrediting body, and its identification with its professional codification through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), need to make it clear that it is important for key faculty and program staff to evaluate whether students are gaining the necessary competency to practice both competently and ethically.

Statement of the Problem

Gate keeping in any profession is a critical function of academia, and it is no less important for the field of social work. Gate keeping happens throughout the continuum of study, and field education is a key place for evaluating whether a student is suitable to join the profession (Miller & Koerin, 2001; Sowbel, 2011). In 2008, the CSWE announced EPAS that require social work programs to establish a continuous assessment plan that can evaluate students on the established core competencies (Holloway, 2009). The CSWE called for programs to frame field education as the signature pedagogy and measure students’ achievement of the core competencies as outlined in the 2008 EPAS, including both the explicit and implicit curriculum (CSWE, 2008, 2015). Framing field education as the signature pedagogy, the CSWE stated that social work educators must see field education as equal to classroom curriculum, and as such must assess student mastery of the ten core competencies and forty-one related practice behaviors to maintain CSWE accreditation. The continuous assessment and competency based field education model has continued into the 2015 EPAS.

Research in social work education as a signature pedagogy asks programs to examine their success with which students who are graduated into a profession are ready to function as
independent practitioners because of having completed the explicit and implicit curriculum. This objective includes the expectation of programs to socialize students to also be ready to use critical thinking and self-reflection to facilitate professional self-correction in order to be ethical practitioners (Grady et al., 2011; Holden et al., 2011; Holosko et al., 2010; Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011; Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010).

Literature on effectiveness of field education as a teaching tool to meet expectations of signature pedagogy are inconclusive. The literature covers the areas of student satisfaction; student self-assessment of competency; self-efficacy measures; agency field supervisor assessment quality and related assessment tools; variations in field supervisor evaluations; relationship between the field agency and the university; mixed methods; pre-requisite skills that may predict educational achievement; and studies on reaccreditation outcomes for field education. The main conclusion from this review revealed consistent research recommendations for programs to use multiple measures when assessing field practice student skills. Apart from Marion Bogo’s team and their work in 2011 to develop a mixed model assessment approach there was a consistent absence of a methodology that combined qualitative methods with a competency based education approach to evaluating Bachelor in Social Work (BSW) field education across all the studies that were examined.

This proposed study utilized a learning contract assignment (LCA) as a means of understanding how students move their classroom learning into field practice and how they express their operationalization of the CSWE stated core competencies that are required to meet the goal of becoming an independent, ethical and self-corrective social worker.
Importance to Social Work

Research in social work education as a signature pedagogy is trifold. First, there is an examination of the success with which students are graduated into a profession that expects them to be able to function as independent practitioners because of having completed the explicit and implicit curriculum. Secondly, the development of competency based assessment strategies in assignments assure that students are ready for practice. And thirdly, there is the examination of the viability of social work education in a consumer driven market place. For the purpose of this study, I focused on competency based assessment strategies that are intended to ready students for practice.

The task of field education is to set the foundation for students to learn self-reflection and self-correction to accomplish the program’s goal of socializing the student toward independent practice by developing critical thinking skills and abilities. Such programs must ensure that there is a competency based evaluation to inform the flow of students coming into programs at the time of admission and throughout their academic preparation to graduation. This progression is known as the gate keeping process. As noted above, gate keeping is a continuous process present at multiple points in the academic preparation, with field education often being a critical point for this evaluation (Miller & Koerin, 2001; Sowbel, 2011). The responsibility for gate keeping as the ongoing process in education to screen students for their abilities to engage in ethical and competent practices lands squarely on the shoulders of academia across the implicit and explicit curriculum (Miller & Koerin, 2001). Indicators of student readiness that are selected in the gate keeping process in any profession is a critical decision for academia and no less important for social work. These are again, underscored in the accreditation standard and later in practice by the licensing body for the profession.
This literature review explores how social work programs undertook the mandate for assessment of student learning in field education and describes how the learning is integrated by students into their professional view as a new practitioner. Furthermore, this literature review supports the development of a field evaluation tool called the Learning Contract Assignment (LCA) that intends to engage students in becoming functional partners in their education by showing faculty how they demonstrate their attainment of the required competencies. The social work profession’s code of ethics and the accreditation mandates join to underscore the importance placed on academia to graduate competent and ethical social workers by engaging in research to evaluate programs (5.02(a), NASW, COE, 2006) that offer this professional degree. This research examines students’ reflection on their application and applicability of classroom knowledge in the field placement and contributes to the professional literature in this area.

**Organization of Dissertation**

I have organized this dissertation to guide the reader through an overview of the importance of field education to social work and clarification of the problem to be explored that is associated with the research questions before outlining the research design and reporting the results. To this end, chapter two reviews the relevant literature associated with historical context of social work education and specifically field education over the past 120 years. Chapter three describes the research findings when exploring evaluation of students using various techniques and measures in field education evaluation over time. Chapter four focuses on two predominant field education assignments, the process recording and the use of learning contracts. This includes the explanation of the use of the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning (RBT) and finally the theoretical framework of constructivism that was utilized in this study. Chapter five describes the research design, questions and the demographics of the case study participants. I
will provide details about the qualitative content analysis approach and case study design
articulating the methods associated with data collection, analysis and how these were informed
utilizing the RBT framework for coding. I will also discuss the integrity of data collection and
analysis. Chapter six details the results of the research and communicates what emerged from the
data. Chapter seven concludes the dissertation by discussing the research findings overall and in
context of the research questions along with summarizing the limitations, implications and areas
for future research.
Chapter 2 – Review of Historical Literature

This chapter will cover a review of the literature relevant to the proposal. First, I provide some historical background of social work field education beginning with the advent of social work as it emerged from the Charity Organization Society and Settlement House Movement at the turn of the century into the profession it is today. From the early reliance on the apprentice model of teaching to competency based evaluations and to 2008 when social work field education was deemed to be the signature teaching pedagogy that continues to this day. I have concluded this chapter with a synopsis of field education history.

*Time line: History and Themes of Accreditation for CSWE*

An initial review of the literature explores the history and themes of changes in the early curriculum policy statements (later to become the EPAS) of the CSWE and covers the accreditation process from 1898 to present. Ultimately, in the 2008 EPAS, field education was declared as the signature instructional technique of the profession. The importance placed on field education underscores its historic role in professional screening or gate keeping in social work education.

*Time Period: 1898 - 1959*

The history of social work education began at the turn of the previous century when the Summer School of Philanthropy was founded in 1898 by the Charity Organization Society of New York. It was soon followed by ‘training schools for social work’ in major cities such as Chicago, New York and Boston. In 1919, the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Workers was founded and in 1932, it began to establish formal accrediting regulations (CSWE, 2008). Also during this period, the Milford Conference highlighted the social work education movement between 1923 and 1927 calling for a single model for social work practice.
The development of social work education continued with the founding of the National Council on Social Work Education in 1945 which put forth the recommendation that a “sole organization….would participate in setting and maintaining accreditation criteria” (“Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) - The Road to 1952: AASSW and NASSA,” n.d., para. 4). This was followed by the Hollis-Taylor study in 1951 that inspired the creation of the CSWE (Greene & Galambos, 2002). This study resulted in the CSWE being established in 1952 from which came the Commission on Accreditation (COA) that began accrediting and re-accrediting graduate social work programs. Shortly after the creation of the CSWE, a curriculum study by Boehm in 1959 included and solidified field education as part of social work education and curriculum requirement (Greene & Galambos, 2002). Finally, the Council for Higher Education and Accreditation (CHEA) recognized the CSWE as the sole accrediting body for social work education (CSWE, 2008).

One theme during this time period focused on how field education was taught or supervised. At the end of the 19th century and during the early years of the 20th century, social work education resembled an apprentice approach or ‘learning by doing’, which paralleled the work being done by the settlement house movement of the times (Barretti, 2009; Goldstein, 1993; Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010). It was also during these early days of social work emerging as a profession that John Dewey’s influence brought theory and methods of social philosophy to bear on the issues confronting the work done in the settlement houses (Goldstein, 1993). The apprentice model for supervision and training was soon followed by the philosophy that social work supervisors were role models with the expectation that students emulate their supervisors’ professional skills (Barretti, 2007, 2009).
Since the 1950’s, the momentum began to build to accredit undergraduate programs in social work. In 1961, the CSWE issued a guiding statement called the ‘Social Welfare Content in Undergraduate Education’ (Gibbs, 1995) to support programs interested in this level of training. In doing so the CSWE established content standards in undergraduate curriculum, staffing requirements and an organizational structure for social welfare programs (Gibbs, 1995). With compliance to this content or to the guiding statement of criteria, Bachelors in Social Work (BSW) programs were able to make a self-declaration of compliance statement to the CSWE that would then result in BSW programs being awarded with membership and support by the CSWE (Gibbs, 1995). The initiative to set standards for BSW programs by COA may have been motivated by the resurgence of social welfare initiatives that were on the horizon during the 1960’s Johnson Administration. The need for undergraduate level social workers created a need for established standards (much like those for MSW programs) so that programs could develop curriculum and graduate entry level social workers for these new social welfare programs. During this time, President Johnson’s War on Poverty initiatives created a need for an increase of public social service positions that required professional social work education (Bremner & Zastrow, 2008). Field education formalized this when internships became “fully institutionalized in 1970 [when] CSWE included field education as an accreditation requirement” (Fortune, Lee, & Cavazos, 2007, p. 256). In 1971, faculty were required to take on the responsibility for the development and administration of field education that included a requirement to have “regular planned communication with agencies and field instructors” (Wayne, Raskin, & Bogo, 2006, p. 163). In 1973, the CSWE established the Task Force for the Structure and Quality of Social
Work Education that in collaboration with NASW, agreed that the bachelor’s degree in social work would be the entry level degree into the profession (Briar, 1975).

Once the CSWE acknowledged curriculum standards for undergraduate education, it marked the beginning of a new debate on differences between undergraduate and graduate programs (Bremner & Zastrow, 2008; Gibbs, 1995). During the time period of 1961 through 1974, COA had been approving Social Welfare Content in Undergraduate Education but formalized this practice in 1974 when it began to accredit the BSW programs much the same as the graduate programs in social work (MSW) (CSWE, 2008). BSW and MSW programs then shared the same accreditation cycle of four (4) years at initial accreditation and re-affirmation every eight (8) years (Mabrey, 1998). In 1975, the Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD) was established to focus on and strengthen BSW level social work education (Bremner & Zastrow, 2008). In 1978, COA approved advanced or accelerated standing for BSW graduates into MSW programs (Bremner & Zastrow, 2008).

The competency-based evaluation (CBE) movement of assessment that arose in the 1970’s focused on “creating valid and reliable measures by identifying and operationalizing the practice behaviors that students needed to learn” (Meyer-Adams et al., 2011, p. 491). Relevant to field education were the issues of race, racism and gender along with increased social activism by social workers which together prompted the reassessment of field placement settings and agency field supervisor selection during the period of the late 1960’s to early 1970’s (“Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) - The Concerns of the Profession,” n.d., ; Jani, Pierce, Ortiz, & Sowbel, 2011). In 1971, the Women’s Caucus (WC) was founded and four years later the CSWE Board of Directors formulized this group into a Task Force on Women in Social Work Education. In 1971, the CSWE then adopted Standard 1234 requiring programs to operate
without discrimination based on race, color, creed, ethnic origin, age or sex (Alvarez, Collins, Graber, & Lazzari, 2008; Jani et al., 2011). This new standard applied to the selection and nature of field placement settings, and demographic composition of field instructor staff (Jani et al., 2011).

Continuing the efforts to address diversity and gender identity, the CSWE took its initial steps in 1977 toward including content and sensitivity in these areas by adopting a curriculum policy standard to ensure content on issues that face women and minorities both in the classroom and in the field settings (Tice, 1990). This prompted a joint NASW/ CSWE initiative of establishing a task force in 1979 to look at the nature of specialization by population (Jani et al., 2011). By 1980, the CSWE held its first meeting of the “Gay and Lesbian Task Force to examine education content on gay and lesbian issues as well as gay and lesbian field settings” (“Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) - The Concerns of the Profession,” n.d., para. 7) which later became the Council on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression (CSWE, 2008). These various task forces and changes to the CSWE standard were reflective of the times. This prompted the profession to revisit field education practice settings and the recruitment of agency field supervisors while building competency in students’ preparation to practice (Alvarez et al., 2008; Jani et al., 2011; Tice, 1990).

**Time Period: 1980 - 2000**

The CSWE accredited BSW programs flourished from 1980 onward. There were 351 BSW programs in 1981 and by 2007 they had increased to 461 (Stoesz, 2008). There was a notable shift by the CSWE in the 1980’s; at this time they began to implement standards that required programs to “evaluate the effectiveness of their programs” (Meyer-Adams et al., 2011, p. 490). The CSWE included in their accreditation standards in 1982 that MSW foundational
year content be congruent with BSW programs (Drolen, 1999); internship hour requirements in BSW programs were set at 400 hours, with MSW programs requiring 900 hours (Wayne et al., 2006), and the BSW program curriculum was recognized as being grounded in a generalist practice (Galambos & Greene, 2006; Greene & Galambos, 2002). Within this generalist framework arose the knowledge, values and skills from which the course content was focused and goals identified for students to demonstrate competency by graduation (Galambos & Greene, 2006). The CSWE then followed this up in 1983 by issuing a revised curriculum policy statement for BSW programs (CSWE, 2008). This enabled academic programs to develop two curriculum frameworks to meet the needs of the times. One for students who were seeking entry level social worker education and another for those desiring advanced practice degrees. These entry level programs were referred to and became known as, foundational (BSW) and concentration (MSW), so that BSW graduates did not have to “repeat foundation content” (Bremner & Zastrow, 2008, p. 102) if they choose to continue into graduate study.

The 1982 CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement allowed programs broad freedom in how to design and deliver field education. Sowers-Hoag and Thyer (1985) looked at 23 studies from 1975 to 1983 that reported on teaching methodologies in social work education. They began to identify the competency based education approach in the literature and reinforced the need to evaluate, “change at the level of the individual student, as opposed to the hypothetical ‘average’ student of large group research” (Sowers-Hoag & Thyer, 1985, p. 13).

By 1992, the Curriculum Policy Statement made it compulsory that programs offer orientation and training programs to field instructors (Wayne et al., 2006). The literature began to explore the problematic nature of how to operationalize the integration of theory and practice. Pilalis’ (1986) examination of the notion of integration of theory and practice, pointed to the use
of it in field work evaluation during this time period without a universal understanding of integration of theory and practice in the field. She went on to define integration of theory and practice as, “the gap between reflective thought and purposeful action and an ability to put that understanding into practice in a way that increases the consistency between their purpose and action” (Pilalis, 1986, p. 94) in the classroom and field setting. The 1991 edition of the revised 1988 *Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures* acknowledged the use of employment settings for field practice. It clearly spelled out how students could use their work place as their field setting as long as there was a separation of experiences and supervision from their assigned position in their agencies (Wayne et al., 2006).

In their literature review on the use of integrative seminars for teaching field practicum, Birkenmaier, et, al. (2003) examined the 1994 CSWE mandate to integrate the knowledge, values and skills to achieve competent practice. They found no standardized method of evaluating the integration of theory and practice published in the literature at that time (Birkenmaier, Wilson, Berg-Weger, Banks, & Hartung, 2003). Although the literature explores and struggles with how to define the integration of theory and practice, it continued to be seen as an important foundational concept in social work education (Lyter & Smith, 2004). This struggle may have resulted in the Curriculum Policy Statement in 2002 stressing the integration of theory and practice, and the notion of the field supervisor being responsible for the liaison role with regard to this integration (Lyter & Smith, 2004).

Also during this era of social work education history, Laird (1993) talked about social work education moving away from the scientific model in the late 1980’s and toward a social constructivist approach. Goldstein (1993), promoted this view by contending that the “heart of education for practice should be located in the field rather than in the classroom, a more
facilitating context for the development of the reflective practitioner” (p. 7) in his examination of the historical underpinnings of field education. He asserts early on that field education has gone through many changes and names over the years, and that the experiential piece of social work education has often been placed apart from, and secondary to, the classroom component of programs (Goldstein, 1993). Highlighting the lack of integration with the classroom, Goldstein recounts field education as being only a minor reference in the Curriculum Policy Statement of this time period and noting that guidance is lacking within the standard on how to achieve the called for “application of theory and skills acquired in the foundation areas” (p. 169).

Field education began to embrace adult learning theory in its theoretical construct as students reflected on their involvement with clients in their field settings (Tungate, Lazzari, & Buchan, 2001; Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010). Birkenmaier et al. (2003) noted that in the mid-1990’s, the concept of an integrative seminar was a result of an expressed need from graduate social work students for a place to process and reflect on their field experience. A variety of field seminar models arose during this time. These models included credit or non-credit, pass/fail options, as a connection to field experience that is either separate from or part of the passing grade, use of case study presentations to critique in class, and finally, options for assignments as part of the seminar (Birkenmaier et al., 2003).

Trends in society regarding diversity during these two decades (1980-2000) continued to influence social work education and field education by prompting the reassessment of field placement settings and agency field supervisor selection to include settings and experiences with diverse populations. In 1982, the CSWE revised its Curriculum Policy Statement and Accreditation Standards by adding a section on ‘special populations’ which focused student preparation on understanding cultural and social diversity (Jani et al., 2011). The 1982 revision
also added three different evaluative standards, one expanding the definition of nondiscrimination, another addressing cultural diversity, and a third about women. All of these additions called for the enrichment of the educational experiences with new objectives in the curriculum and the field placement setting out to address discrimination and embrace racial and ethnic perspectives and the role of women (Jani et al., 2011). The 1994 Curriculum Policy Statement built on the 1982 standards by including the focus on social and economic justice and expanding it to “cover a wider array of populations at risk” (Jani, et al., 2011, p. 290).

During the 1990’s the profession began to take the job market, for which programs were preparing social work students, into consideration. It was becoming apparent that classroom curricula were not keeping up with the skill set needs of the field (Lyter & Smith, 2004; Tungate et al., 2001). Further fueling the discussion in the literature was the status of field education in the academic hierarchy and how the internal power dynamics of curriculum and field education melded into one educational entity (Goldstein, 1993). Finally, the issue of the relevance of classroom content to field learning (Kaye & Fortune, 2004; Lam, Wong, & Leung, 2007; Lyter & Smith, 2004; Tungate et al., 2001) highlights the reality of which skill sets that agencies need, the skills they are looking for and how this impacts their perception of student performance. Additionally, the program assessment standards moved away from program assessment every seven years to a more continuous process that incorporates “systemic input on the educational experience and product [by having] student voices in the context of program assessment” (Tungate, Lazzari & Buchan, 2001, p. 98). This discussion would evolve into the present-day view of education as a consumer product and the impact of the relevance of social work programs in producing not only competent practitioners but also marketable ones.
**Time Period: 2000 - Present**

At this point in the history of the CSWE, the Curriculum Policy Statement and Accreditation Standards began to evolve into today’s EPAS. The standards adopted in 2001 reiterated the mission to provide quality education that prepared competent and effective professionals for practice (Gambrill, 2001). The CSWE also emphasized that programs were required to have an assessment plan and a procedure for “evaluating the outcome of each program while also demonstrating the use of the continuous assessment to improve the quality of the educational program itself” (Meyer-Adams et al., 2011, p. 491). The 2001 EPAS required field instructors to have a BSW or MSW to teach BSW students in the field setting (Wayne et al., 2006). The Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) also called for programs to graduate social workers who are intelligently equipped for their professional lives (Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a), setting the foundation for requisite skills and competencies assessment. In 2004, the CSWE established a Council on the Continuum as a part of the Commission on Curriculum and Educational Innovation (COCEI). These two entities were created to address and resolve the issue of the connection between BSW and MSW programs (Bremner & Zastrow, 2008). The result was an agreement that from start (BSW) to finish at MSW level, there would be ‘no redundant content’ in the curriculums (Bremner & Zastrow, 2008).

The CSWE created the Katherine A. Kendall Institute for International Social Work Education in 2004 and established the Center for Diversity and Social Economic Justice in 2006 (Alvarez et al., 2008). These two additions to the CSWE supported the 2008 EPAS call for competency in a student’s ability to recognize the “relationship between cultural structures and the oppression, marginalization and alienation of individuals and groups… [and to develop] self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in practice” (Jani et al., 2011,
Concurrent was the expansion of the definition of diversity to include “age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation” (EPAS 3.1), (Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b, p. 360). This broadening of the definition of diversity by the CSWE then required field faculty to determine how diversity was reflected in the learning environment, including field placement settings, and the clients served in those settings (Jani et al., 2011; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b).

The 2008 EPAS then set forth four focal areas in their accreditation standards for programs to integrate into their curriculum design: 1) program mission and goals, 2) explicit curriculum (including field as signature pedagogy of the profession), 3) implicit curriculum, and 4) assessment (Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010, p. 127a). These program design features were accompanied by evaluations to assess student learning in the ten core competencies (see Appendix I; CSWE Core Competencies) and related practice behaviors (Meyer-Adams et al., 2011). With field education being declared the signature pedagogy, the focus on how to assess student ability to apply learning from the classroom to the field placement inspired further research in the literature to explain the origins of this designation and to look for methods that would accomplish the goal of assessment in field education (Dennison, Gruber, & Vrbsky, 2010; Holden et al., 2011). The changes to the EPAS facilitated the recognition of field education as being the primary method of teaching functional social work skills and as the fundamental method to socialize students to the roles of the profession. It underscored the expectation that field education be of equal importance to the explicit curriculum of the classroom (Holden et al., 2011). However, the current EPAS do not incorporate how the profession was to evaluate student performance in the field (Gambrill, 2001; Holden et al., 2011; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a; Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010). Additionally, the 2008 EPAS set a standard for social work
programs that requires them to have program assessments measuring student performance in mastering the ten (10) core competencies as demonstrated in field education (CSWE, 2008). Within this standard there is no recommendation as to how to achieve it, only denoting the amount of field hours to be completed by the student (Stoesz & Karger, 2009; Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010).

Although this study was conducted during the 2008 EPAS, it is important to complete the history of social work education to note the changes that arose in 2015 the CSWE EPAS. The 2015 EPAS continued to frame field education as its signature pedagogy and the expectation of the integration of classroom theoretical and conceptual foundation into practice. The 2015 EPAS modified the core competencies from ten to nine and included within the standards the direction to have at minimum two measures developed that can assess each competency (CSWE, 2015). Specifically, these assessments required programs to have one of the assessment measures be based on demonstration of the competency in real or simulated practice situations. This reinforced the necessity and the opportunity to look at field education assessments that could be done through observation of the student in real practice situations that were available in field practice settings.

A Synopsis of Field Education History

The roots of field education can be traced to the work of Mary Richmond and her colleagues at the University of Chicago who envisioned social work education to include “practical experience in the field” and whom “regarded field work as essential” (Goldstein, 1993, p. 177).

From the inception of the CSWE in 1952, field courses were listed side by side with the classroom and research as part of the framework of social work education. Since the beginning
of field education, and based in the beliefs of Mary Richmond and her colleagues from the Chicago School, the field education component was not seen as subordinate or dependent on knowledge taught in the classroom (Goldstein, 1993). Instead it was seen as the “site where the validity of scholarship of the academic center might be tested and implemented” (Goldstein, 1993, pp. 171–172). However, over time it was noted that the CSWE made only minor references to the standards for field education and often just mentioned the amount of field hours in their requirements (Stoesz & Karger, 2009; Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010).

Several studies in the literature explored how programs would implement the 2008 EPAS and its mandate to evaluate how programs teach and measure practice competency of social work students (Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Bogo, Regehr, Katz, Logie, & Mylopoulos, 2011; Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a, 2010b; Ryan, Cleak, & McCormack, 2006; Wayne et al., 2006; Wehbi, 2011; Williamson, Hostetter, Byers, & Huggins, 2010). They all recommend further validation of measures and provide no universal agreement on a standard for evaluation. Holden et al., (2011) questioned the basis of evidence used by the CSWE to support their assertion that field education was the profession’s signature pedagogy. These authors went on to conduct a thorough review of quantitative studies in the literature, citing the use of 25 databases among other strategies. These strategies included hand searching modeled after the Campbell and Cochrane systemic review approach (Welcome | Cochrane Economics. (n.d.) from /economics/welcome) to social work education journals and newsletters, a team member also searched monographs and collections of books, a search of the grey literature (i.e. dissertations) and requests of social work education list-serves. These authors found attestations by various authors from 1942 through 2006 heralding field education as being: important; the foundation to professional education; the magical moment of learning; most memorable part of
social work education; and the “single most useful…powerful learning experience” (p. 363). But what they also found after looking at only 87 out of the 2453 records or the first 3% of their sample, was that they had already achieved an “empty review….no evidence (at a pre-specified level) of effectiveness of field instruction in social work” (Holden et al., 2011, p. 369).

As history reminds us, we know that gatekeeping happens throughout the continuum from admission into the program, in the classroom and also during the field education which is a strategic time for evaluating if a student is appropriate to join the profession (Miller & Koerin, 2001; Sowbel, 2011). This caution includes that social work educators cannot rely heavily on agency field instructors or field faculty at the eve of graduation to make this decision (Cole, 1991; Cole & Lewis, 1993; Fortune, 2003; Sowbel, 2011). Finding ways to clearly assess students’ abilities continues to be a priority for CSWE, evident with changes in the 2015 EPAS measurement expectations. With this, continued and rigorous research on field education assignments that can both teach and evaluate student competency can prove valuable and contribute to the gate keeping process.
Chapter 3 – Research on Field Education

This chapter reviews key concepts and finding from the literature review on social work field education evaluation. It examines eight categories that capture assessment and measurement strategies that were key to evolution of field education evaluation and to the conceptualization of the research questions. Each grouping is described in the context of the literature and relationship to field education evaluation. The conclusion of the chapter summarizes the literature reviewed and supports the need for this research.

Key Concepts Defined

Prior to becoming identified as the signature pedagogy, field education or practicum had a long history in social work education as the place academia looked to provide a setting where theory and practice application can occur, to finding placement sites where students’ can demonstrate the profession’s values and purposes and be evaluated for the same (Barton et al., 2005). The CSWE defined requirements that were to be reflected in programs’ implicit curriculum, as being, “the educational environment in which the explicit curriculum is delivered” (Holloway, 2009, p. 1) and the explicit curriculum as being the “instructional program and courses” (Holloway, 2009, p. 1) with field education as being part of the explicit curriculum (Grady et al., 2011). Additionally, as a part of the CSWE 2008 mandate (and again in the 2015 EPAS), social work programs were required to view field education as the cornerstone to social work education. This new designation of field education prompted social work educators once again to evaluate gate keeping to the profession (Sowbel, 2011). This directive was clear on its expectation regarding assessment and competency based evaluation (CBE) prompting social work educators to respond with numerous studies exploring best practices in how to measure social work student competency in field education (Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Bogo,
Regehr, Katz, et al., 2011; Hay & O’Donoghue, 2009; Kaye & Fortune, 2004; Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a, 2010b; Ryan et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2006; Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010). CBE was introduced into social work education as part of evaluating social work programs in an effort to demonstrate that educational programs were preparing practitioners who were not only able to be proficient in the classroom but also able to practice in the field (Bogo, Regehr, Hughes, Power, & Globerman, 2002).

**Key Findings**

Given the depth of the literature on the methods for evaluating field education, only the key findings in relation to the themes of assessment and measurement were explored and organized. This research falls into nine (9) key areas that are listed below in their respective sections: student satisfaction; student self-assessment of competency; self-efficacy measures; agency field supervisor assessment quality and related assessment tools; variations in field supervisor evaluations; relationship between the field agency and the university; mixed methods; pre-requisite skills that may predict educational achievement; and studies on reaccreditation outcomes for field education. The main conclusion from this review reveals consistent research recommendations for programs to use multiple measures when assessing field practice student skills.

**Student Satisfaction**

The research on student satisfaction does not provide clear evidence that student satisfaction can be a predictor of future effectiveness and ethical practice. The literature focused on how students perceived their field placement experience based on an array of factors such as the value they place on field education, the effectiveness of field supervisors, tasks that they were assigned to do, and attributes of their field supervisors. None of these factors were
indicators of overall skill attainment or competency. This area of the literature remains consistent with earlier findings of Fortune (2001) who found that no matter how students perceived the value of their practicum experience, it had little consequence or influence on their performance in field placement.

Student satisfaction was connected to effective field supervisors, described as those who, “actively involve students; provide instructive feedback; and encourage their students to be autonomous, self-critical and link the classroom to the field” (Knight, 2000, p. 174). Satisfaction with field practicum was also based on the perception of the value students placed on field education or the quality of the field practicum agency (Fortune, 2001; Fortune et al., 2007; Grady et al., 2011; Kaye & Fortune, 2001, 2004; Williamson et al., 2010). Grady et al. (2011) utilized an online survey of MSW graduates and found that these students vastly agreed (85.7%) that they relied upon and applied knowledge gained in the classroom in their field settings. Opportunities in field placements were also discussed from various perspectives such as agencies’ ability to offer student internship opportunities, internships with tasks that students value (Kaye & Fortune, 2004), and those that offered internship tasks or work assignments that developed increasing levels of independence in performance (Barton et al., 2005). The frequency to engage in the practice of skills in a placement affects student satisfaction as noted by Fortune, Lee and Cavazos, (2007). Repetition of skill application by the student in the field setting enriched student satisfaction in field education.

Barretti (2009) also explored the literature on the attributes students’ value in field supervisors. Her review captured research from 1975 through 2001 and confirmed the earlier work of Ellison (1996) who had compiled attributes of the field supervisor that included the ability to “teach and communicate theoretical and practical knowledge” (p. 49). The Barretti
(2009) study did not evaluate competency attainment of students but did prompt consideration for, “how students reconcile the discrepancies between ideal and real representations of social work” (p. 61). This insight, when coupled with field supervisor satisfaction over the practicum site, illuminates how field education is part of a formative or developmental stage in learning (Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011). The importance of field supervisors as role models is what adds vigor to the learning transfer between the classroom and the field (Barretti, 2009). Williamson et al. (2010) looked at how students reflect on their learning. It was found that such reflection was consistent with data regarding students’ satisfaction with their field experience. In their conclusion, Williamson and colleagues noted the importance of “additional factors that are not always addressed in a practicum evaluation, such as the growth and development of confidence and awareness of self” (p. 245).

**Student Self-Assessment of Competency**

The use of self-reporting of assessment is fraught with concerns due to the subjectivity of this assessment model. Students can respond to a self-assessment tool as they wish to be seen or struggle with balancing their confidence issues which could result in under rating their abilities. A few studies have been identified where the students’ reflections of the quality of their own work in the field placement was evaluated (Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Bogo, Regehr, Katz, et al., 2011; Miller, Kovaecs, Wright, Corcoran, & Rosenblum, 2005). What arose is that student perception of the quality of their learning did not necessarily correlate to an objective evaluation of skill competency. Miller et al. (2005) conducted a study that examined the learning process using Kolb’s Learning Cycle with MSW students and field instructors. Their finding provided no correlation to student competency or skill achievement. However, what they did find
was the importance of the students and field instructors shared experience and the how their relationships influence the experience of learning in the field (Miller, et al., 2005).

Blom, Nygren, Nyman, and Scheid (2007) used narratives as a means to explore how students expressed course work knowledge into situations they described from their field settings. What they found was that “social work education is the stated source of knowledge in less than a fourth of the cases (23%) and that the students’ own similar experiences are stated as the source of knowledge in a fourth (25%)” (p. 58). Two different studies done by Bogo and her teams in 2011 focused on students’ perception of their practice experience (Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Bogo, Regehr, Katz, et al., 2011). These two studies concentrated on the development of a CBE tool that incorporated a Likert scale to numerically rate practice in defined terms with follow-up interviews with students to process their perception of their competency from a client interaction perspective. The study found that “the ability to interact effectively with a client and the ability to reflect effectively on that interaction and its implications for an individual’s conceptualization of practice appeared to be identifiably distinct skills” (Bogo, Regehr, C., Logie et al. 2011, p. 14). There was no discussion regarding the debriefing or qualitative piece that provided an accurate measure of competency of practice skills, just that it was measuring the students’ perception of their ability to interact effectively with clients. It did affirm to the researchers that students were able to provide a conceptual understanding of their practice demonstrated in their individual skills (Bogo, et al., Regehr, G., 2011) but mastery of competency in those skills was not measurable. Since conceptualization is not application, it suggests that in reflection students may be able to identify social work theory and knowledge in discussion or in assignment, but are not able to demonstrate its application through action when engaged in their client interactions.
Self-Efficacy Measures

Self-efficacy measures were examined in the literature as a potential tool for determining student performance in field education (Ahn, Boykin, Hebert, & Kulkin, 2012; Fortune, Cavazos, & Lee, 2005; Holden, Barker, Rosenberg, & Onghena, 2008a; Holden, Meenaghan, & Anastas, 2003; Holden, Meenaghan, Anastas, & Metrey, 2002). Self-efficacy is based in social cognitive theory and defined as, “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of actions required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Collectively, the findings of studies on self-efficacy as a measure of competency revealed that self-efficacy held some practical or reliable qualities but it was not a strong predictor of student performance of complex tasks such as those that require critical thinking (Fortune et al., 2005; Holden et al., 2008, 2003, 2002). The research generated caution that reliance on these types of measure in the field should be taken into account.

Holden and his teams’ research demonstrate diligence in examining whether self-efficacy could be a measurement tool and to that end, developed various scales to evaluate its value. Holden et al. (2002) developed the Social Work Self Efficacy scale (SWSE) and found this measure to be able to detect an increase in a student’s sense of their self-efficacy as they moved through the program. Holden et al. (2003) then developed the Foundation Practice Self-Efficacy scale (FPSE) and compared it to the Social Work Empowerment scale (SWE) to see if it could predict changes in MSW students’ self-efficacy over time. Holden et al. (2008) continued their work to develop the Evaluation Self-Efficacy scale (ESE) and found that the ESE provided additional evidence to support the psychometric properties of data to validate its use in measuring self-efficacy in students. Unfortunately, Holden et al. team’s results from the use of
ESE were not correlated to other measures, except for identifying themes that addressed students’ perceptions of their abilities and satisfaction with their field experience.

Fortune, Lee and Cavazos (2005) included self-efficacy in their study regarding motivation that found a positive and significant relationship between student self-ratings of their skills to the values they associated to the task being performed, their intrinsic motivation and their sense of self-efficacy. This was not significantly related to field instructor evaluations of student performance. Ahn et al. (2012) found that more time in the social work program and in field internships resulted in students who self-reported higher levels of self-efficacy. A key perspective on self-efficacy was provided by Holden and his colleagues, that self-efficacy assessments do not measure any specific skill set but establishes a students’ belief that they can apply their social work skills as expected under the different sets of conditions of field practice using whatever skill level that they possess (Holden et al., 2008). Given this insight, their findings support the importance of developing and using “multiple measures that are capable of proving reliable and valid data regarding the variety of relevant educational outcomes” (Holden et al., 2008, p. 46). In summary, none of these studies measure student competencies of knowledge or skill achievement instead they continue to re-visit student perception and satisfaction with their field experience.

**Agency Field Supervisor Assessment Quality & Related Assessment Tools**

A majority of the studies utilized field supervisors as their primary sources to evaluate students’ performance and achievement of the core competencies (Bogo et al., 2006; Bogo, Regehr, Power, & Regehr, 2007; Hay & O’Donoghue, 2009; C. Regehr, Regehr, Loeson, & Fusco, 2002a; G. Regehr, Regehr, Bogo, & Power, 2007). These studies continue to examine agency field supervisor perception and satisfaction with their students.
Bogo et al. (2006) sampled field instructors to identify characteristics that constitute an exemplary versus problematic student in their agency. This study concluded that CBE should not be the sole evaluation for competence as it is a “reductionist approach” (p. 591) but calls for a more balanced method that includes data on student thinking to explore or reveal what underlines student behaviors. Bogo et al. (2007) examined four studies involving qualitative data in the following methodologies: in-depth interviews, categorizing vignettes as performance measures, a practice-based evaluation tool and the use of ‘realistic’ student vignettes. Their findings highlighted the conflicting values field instructors balance when confronted with decisions regarding challenging students. The values are at conflict with beliefs in individuals’ capacity and supervisors’ tendency to build strengths in the student, empowerment of the student, positive contexts for learning through the strength-based approach, social justice and maintaining the positive image of the profession especially when in a host setting (Bogo et al., 2007). Regehr et al. (2002), considered self-directed learning and found that both students and field instructors’ ranking of learning goals were positively correlated. This study only evaluated agreement on and not competency in achieving these goals.

Regehr et al. (2007) presented findings that evaluated different strategies field instructors could use to evaluate student performance in the field. There was no evidence that the practice based evaluations (PBE) they developed were any more effective than other competency based tools with similar constructs of field supervisor evaluations of student performance comparison models. Regehr et al. (2007) found that numeric scales are not an effective tool to assess student performance in the field settings. Regehr et al. (2007) went on to conclude that they could not find any studies that demonstrate, “sustained success in improving the sensitivity of evaluation
scales when used in practice” (p. 338) and recommend a blending of models to achieve the goal of evaluation of field performance.

These studies highlighted the variability of agency field supervisor evaluations, as well as subjectivity and confidence in their role as a field supervisor. What we see is the variability lies in agency field supervisors’ willingness to identify characteristics that constitute an exemplary versus problematic student in their agency (Bogo et al., 2006). Their values and obligations seem more aligned with seeing the student more like a client. This can challenge the agency field supervisors’ obligation to the gate keeping role of the profession that asks them to address student capacity and competency when confronted with challenging behaviors (Bogo et al., 2007).

**Variations in Field Supervisor Evaluation**

Variations in field supervisors’ skill in evaluating and reporting on student field performance were explored in the literature. This group of studies focused on how agency field supervisors interact with students and social work programs while providing field education. Overall, this literature returned to the central themes of inconsistency, motivation to assess fairly when there is a difficulty based on a student’s behavior, variability in field supervisor skills and how some agency field supervisors require more support and training. The dilemma emerges, when the pool of available agency field supervisors shrinks and the reality of current economic situations for agencies increases demands on their social workers’ time, resulting in fewer social workers being able/willing to take on the added responsibility of an intern.

Bogo et al., (2007) identified that field instructors need more support and training to be confident and reliable evaluators. Issues regarding field supervisor quality can contribute to the variability in their ratings of students that continue to challenge performance evaluation
measures (Bogo, Globerman, & Sussman, 2004a; Bogo et al., 2002; Fortune, 2001; Kaye & Fortune, 2004; Knight, 2000; Sowbel, 2011; Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010). Lack of conformity in field supervisors’ skills given their practice experience and agency setting, coupled with a lack of consensus on how to best share knowledge with field supervisors given the diversity of student assignments (Wayne, Bogo & Raskin, 2010), contributes to the variability that can result in student evaluation.

Bogo, Globerman and Sussman (2004) explored the proficiency of field instructors in providing group supervision and learned that this form of supervision led to student dissatisfaction. Students felt that they had difficulty being prepared to share their experiences with cases due to not having enough time to reflect on practice prior to formulating their case presentations (Bogo, Globerman, & Sussman, 2004b). Given these challenges students felt there was little time left to fully process what they were learning or to link theory and practice (Bogo et al., 2004a). Fortune, (2001), explored MSW students’ satisfaction and compared this to field instructor evaluation forms to discover that “student learning goals were not associated with ratings of skills” (p. 50). An explanation of this can be found in variations in field instructors’ standards. Bogo et al., (2002) findings explored the “inadequate correlation between the rating of individual students in their first and second year field education experiences” (p. 397) further supporting the literature that field instructor ratings are inconsistent and lack operational definitions for how to rate student skill acquisition. Demands on field supervisors in their work settings may make them prone to rate students above expectations (both school expectation and student self-perception of their skill) to avoid the consequences that a program or unhappy student may bring to their already stressful work site (Bogo et al., 2002). The literature echoed the recommendation made by Williamson et al. (2010) that advocated for field instructor support
and education. Williamson and colleagues most succinctly stated that further education of field instructors will develop their expertise as teachers and ability to truly guide student development in field.

In sum, this group of studies beckons future examination of using agency field supervisors as ‘a sole’ source of evaluating student competency. The use of multiple measures such as agency field supervisor evaluations, student self-reports in an environment with competing and complex demands placed on agency field supervisors in their work settings (including their skills, experience and training as professionals) may be influencing the overall ability to accurately assess student learning in the field.

**Relationship Between the Field Agency and the University**

This next area of the research looks at the relationship between the field agency and the university. More specifically, it asked what is the role of field education within a social work program and how does the field inform the program about what agencies need in terms of skills and preparation to enter the work force. The next group of researchers highlighted the disconnect between academia and the practice world in relation to what these field agencies are minimally looking for in students’ skill sets and what these students may need to be successful when they enter the job market. It also considers how future research can explore whether the curriculum of a program is ‘relevant’ to the needs of the agency and how academia can give a voice to the practice community.

Barton, Bell & Bowles (2005) looked at the value of having internships and students in an agency. They found that field instructors believed the benefits of having students, outweighed the costs to the agencies as the students’ activities were valuable. The relevance of classroom content to field learning (Birkenmaier et al., 2003; Knight, 2000; Lam et al., 2007; Lyter &
Smith, 2004; Sowbel, 2011) was also highlighted in the literature by what skill sets agencies need, and what skills they are looking for student interns to possess and how this might impact their perception of student performance. Knight (2000) looked at student evaluation of field instructors and found that it was important for students that field instructors were aware of what they were learning in the classroom and this was an important variable that effected their evaluation of student performance. Additionally, as Sowbel (2011) pointed out, field supervisors are “volunteer professional educators” (p. 367) where the sole compensation of accepting a student may stem from the value they themselves had placed on their field experience and/or the benefit that some programs offer through tuition vouchers as in-kind service. Lam, Wong & Leung (2007) contended that field supervisors are left on their own to connect theory and practice to field education. Field supervisors are typically not faculty members and are not “consulted by the university in areas of curriculum development and scholarship enterprises” (p. 92).

Student preparedness for internships was looked at by Birkenmaier et al., (2003). Their survey of field instructors on student preparedness for field practicum found that students needed stronger assessment skills and practical knowledge about social service systems. Lyter & Smith (2004) conducted a study that looked at the “barriers to the integration of curriculum and practicum as differing expectations between the academia and field community as well as the subordinate position of the field office within the graduate academy” (p, 36). This disconnect is echoed by student concerns that the competencies and skills taught in the classroom are not what is needed or expected from them by their field placement supervisors (Lyter & Smith, 2004).
Mixed Measurements

The following studies used multiple assessment strategies to assess student learning. Bogo (2011) and her teams engaged in several studies that utilized a mixed method approach to explore student competency. Regehr et al., (2002) also relied on student self-assessment and field supervisors’ ratings as a strategy to assess student learning. The authors learned that different student skills were evident, but were not able provide insight into overall student competency.

Bogo, Regehr, C., Katz et al. (2011) developed an assessment tool that included student debriefing or reflection following their practice. They followed up in a second study by adapting the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) from the medical profession for social work field evaluations (Bogo, Regehr, Logie et al., 2011). Within the OSCE there are scenarios played out by trained ‘actors’ as client for the students to interact with while examiners observe and rate the interactions. The second part of the instrument that Bogo and her team developed was intended to focus specifically on the evaluation of what they termed a “reflective dialogue about the client encounter to assess meta-competencies including critical thinking and reflection on practice” (Bogo, Regehr, C., Logie, et al., 2011, p. 13). Once students had completed their interaction and were evaluated for that interaction, the examiner interviewed the student to collect data on the students’ self-reflection of the therapeutic encounter. Bogo and her team found interaction and conceptualization of practice to be two different skills (Bogo, Regehr, C., Logie, et al. 2011).

Regehr et al. (2002) looked at student learning goal self-assessment as a means to measure 10 skills for interviewing patients and relied on the students to select their own learning goals for assessment. These goals were a compilation of, “students’ self-identified needs, the expectations of the school, the expectations of the agency and the requirements for competent
social work practice” (Regehr et al., 2002, p. 61). They found some positive correlation between the self-assessment of the students and the field instructor ratings but not across the board. The authors felt that field instructors may have difficulty providing ‘negative feedback’ to students (Regehr et al., 2002).

**Pre-requisite Skills That May Predict Educational Achievement in Student Learning**

Some studies focused on pre-requisite skills believed to be necessary foundational skills including students’ sense of empowerment and coping skills, along with pre-admission criteria such as grade point averages (GPA). The studies under review for this section did not demonstrate that pre-requisite skills were linked to competency evaluations and aligned more with the outcomes from student satisfaction studies that were previously noted above.

In studying student achievement of learning goals, Fortune and her colleagues (Fortune, 2001; Fortune et al., 2005; Kaye & Fortune, 2001, 2004) explored foundational skills for educational achievement in field education. Their exploration of educational achievement factors such as coping skills (Kaye & Fortune, 2001), satisfaction with field practicum assignments (Fortune, 2001; Fortune et al., 2005; Kaye & Fortune, 2001, 2004) and motivation to become a competent professional (Fortune, 2001; Fortune et al., 2005) are key links in considering how we can measure competency in practice. Fortune (2001) found that differences in students’ perception of the value of their practicum agencies did not influence their performance. What was key to students’ motivation was their desire to do well which outweighed any preference to practicum sites or practice perceptions (Fortune, 2001).

Mosek & Ben-Oz, (2011) focused on the developmental process that supports the professional socialization of social work students. They highlighted social work professional socialization as occurring within both the academic framework, as well as the field setting in
agencies. These separate settings are overseen by different and often conflicting rules, norms, and expectations (Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011). They believed that the academic realm of values, knowledge and research, can be in conflict with the practice domain which is focused on commitment and intervention. As a result, students are being professionally socialized under two different learning contexts, which compete for their practical and emotional resources. Todd & Schwartz (2009) took an alternate view of accountability in measuring field placements that focused more on a quality or transformational learning models for students versus a “managerial quality criteria,” (p. 393) that they equated with CBE. These authors believed that a transformational learning model leads to student empowerment and the development of their knowledge and skills (Todd & Schwartz, 2009) but their study offered no correlation with CBE models for comparison.

Thomas, McCleary & Henry (2004) and Ryan, McCormack & Cleak (2006) both looked at pre-admission criteria as a predictor of field education success. Thomas et al. (2004) found that “end of first year cumulative GPA and current cumulative GPAs had a significant and positive relationship with the field instruction performance of student” (p. 44). This finding suggested that students could demonstrate and apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom in their field positions. Ryan et al., (2005) found that preadmission criteria did not correlate with student outcomes in field placement. Thomas et al. (2004) found that students who had human service experience and positive reference letters had a noteworthy, positive relationship with their field performance.

**Research Methods: Designs, Samples and Measures**

While the research studies reflected eight categories of data, a review of different methodological approaches and designs on how students transfer knowledge and skills from the
classroom to field practice were also conducted. The studies selected demonstrated various approaches on how BSW students transfer knowledge and skills from the classroom to field practice. Of the thirty-five studies reviewed (see Appendix II: Review of Studies), twenty were quantitative, eleven were qualitative (Birkenmaier et al., 2003; Blom, Nygren, Nyman, & Scheid, 2007; Bogo et al., 2006, 2004a, 2007; Hay & O’Donoghue, 2009; Miller et al., 2005; Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011; Todd & Schwartz, 2009; Tungate et al., 2001; Williamson et al., 2010) and four used mixed methods (Barretti, 2009; Barton et al., 2005; Bogo, Regehr, Logie et al., 2011; Lam et al., 2007). These mixed method studies were included based on their qualitative methods/findings (see attached Appendix III: Review of Qualitative & Mixed Methods Studies).

From the fifteen qualitative and mixed methods studies seven of the studies’ used field instructors as participants and were asked to evaluate social work student performance (Barton et al., 2005; Birkenmaier et al., 2003; Bogo et al., 2006, 2007; Miller et al., 2005; Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011; Todd & Schwartz, 2009). One study examined graduate programs compliance to the CSWE standards for integrating evaluation into field education (Garcia & Floyd, 2002). Out of the fifteen qualitative and mixed methods, only seven studies involved BSW students as participants in the sampling plan (see Appendix IV: Review of Studies with BSW students as sample). Three of these studies specified BSW students as their sample (Barretti, 2009; Mosek & Ben-Oz, 2011; Williamson et al., 2010). Three others did not specify a social work education level, so it is possible that BSW and/or MSW students could be in the samples (Blom et al., 2007; Lam et al., 2007; Todd & Schwartz, 2009); and one study had a combination of both BSW and MSW students as their sample (Tungate et al., 2001).

In looking at the seven studies involving BSW students, all seven relied on student self-reports and none had any competency-based measures to corroborate student self-reports of
achievement. Barretti (2009) sampled BSW students who identified and ranked desirable qualities of their field supervisors. Lam et al. (2007) focused their study on self-reflection surrounding a Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in Hong Kong in 2003 while subjects were students in the field. Todd & Schwartz, (2009) looked at student satisfaction with the quality of their field placement and the students’ perception of their field instructors’ supervisory style. Tungate, Lazzari & Buchan, (2001) examined students’ perception of the social work programs’ strengths and the quality of their field education experience.

Most similar to the proposed research were three studies: Blom et al. (2007), Williamson et al., (2010) and Mosek & Ben-Oz (2011). Blom et al. (2007) asked students to identify the sources of their practice knowledge and how that knowledge applied in their field practice. Mosek & Ben-Oz (2011) focused on the developmental process of professional socialization. Williamson et al. (2010) asked students to identify and reflect on their capacities and assets. These authors asked students to explore more than social work values and ethical issues; they pressed the students to use critical thinking skills to analyze their practice situations and client outcomes (Williamson et al., 2010). From this critical review of the literature, Williamson et al. (2010) research questions came the closest to the ones proposed for this study. However, the absence of a methodology that combines a qualitative method with a competency based education approach to evaluating BSW field education is consistent across all these studies.
Chapter 4 - Learning Contracts & Process Recordings

This chapter reviews key concepts and finding from the literature review on social work specific to the use of process recordings and learning contract assignment in field education. The chapter looks at the theoretical foundations of both assignment models, their effectiveness in providing information on student learning and the transition from process recordings to learning contracts. This includes how constructivism and learning theory frameworks were use to design and evaluate these two assignment models and how it informed the conceptualization of the research questions and methods employed in this study.

Description of Learning Contracts

The term “contract” is commonly defined as a “binding agreement between two or more persons or parties” (“Dictionary and Thesaurus | Merriam-Webster,” n.d.). Basically, this level of agreement represents what is to be accomplished throughout and at the end of the work between two individuals or parties. Seabury (1976) provided the early description of contracts used in social work education as being between the social worker and the client (not the student) that set the ground work for the purpose and plan of their work together. He identified four characteristics of the social work contract: “explicit, mutual, dynamic and realistic” (Seabury, 1976, p. 16). It is from these four characteristics that a set of similar foundations can be seen in a learning contract between faculty/instructors and students. Additionally, Solomon (1992) established that learning contracts were well documented in the interdisciplinary literature as an educational tool based on adult learning principles from the earlier work of Malcolm Knowles. Solomon (1992) introduced the following four additional characteristics for learning contracts with students: learning objectives; resources and approaches required to accomplish the
objectives; evidence or data collected to gauge the accomplishment of these objectives; and a
measure for evaluation.

Learning contracts otherwise known as self-directed learning or learning agreements (Boyer, 2003; Knowles, 1975; C. Regehr et al., 2002a) continued to be examined for their ability to empower students to take responsibility for, and initiative in their own learning (Huff & Johnson, 1998). Huff & Johnson (1998) drew on the earlier work of Knowles, to point out that learning contracts shift the focus of teaching from a didactic transmitter of content and director of knowledge perspective to a facilitator role of self-directed learning with instructors acting as resources for students to bring the classroom to their field practice (Huff & Johnson, 1998; C. Regehr et al., 2002). This shared or mutual undertaking model of learning shifted the power from the instructor to a more collaborative approach that shares power with the student (Fedeli, Giampaolo, & Coryell, 2013; Lemieux, 2001; C. Regehr et al., 2002a). This shift in power fits into Seabury’s (1976) assertion that social work contracts are designed to share a communal goal within this academic relationship as it has the four characteristics he outlined as being “explicit, mutual, dynamic and realistic” (Seabury, 1976, p. 16). Lemieux’s (2001) literature review on learning contracts looked at evidence as early as 1922 to validate communal goal in social work education. Lemieux’s study on learning contracts in her classes, found that self-directed learning through learning contracts resulted in students experiencing improved grades, an increased sense of empowerment over their learning and personal accountability for their learning (Lemieux, 2001). What was interesting to note in Lemieux’s conclusion, was an incident with a student who made a casual comment that ‘their lawyers reviewed’ the contract and it was ‘okay’. This prompted the discussion around learning contracts being morally constructed teaching tools, which are not legally binding (Lemieux, 2001) yet using the term contract may not be without its
risk. Learning contracts continue to be used and seen as a means of student self-directed learning, that students identify their learning needs in the context of the practice setting of the agency and their academic program by meeting the requirements for competency of the CSWE (C. Regehr et al., 2002a).

Only two articles (Boitel & Fromm, 2014; C. Regehr, Regehr, Loeson, & Fusco, 2002a) throughout this literature review on the learning contract, learning agreement or self-directed learning, spoke directly to their application for field education. None of the articles spoke directly to, or examined the use of, learning contracts, learning agreements or self-directed learning as a way to measure competency in students. Fedeli and his colleagues (2013) found the constructivist perspective supported student development of self-knowledge of their personal potential, through the use of self-directed learning processes (Fedeli et al., 2013).

Learning contracts as defined in the literature were intended to follow a more holistic contractual relationship that is typically individualized for the student and specific to their participation in their entire academic program. The notion of self-directed learning sees learning contracts as being global in nature; they embrace the relationship between the student and the whole of a programs’ curriculum including the syllabi in individual courses as part of learning objectives. Process recordings are but one element in the overall academic curriculum that are often associated with field education. The evolution of process recordings over time is examined below. The learning contract assignment, as used in this study, is yet another step in the evolution of a central assignment in field education toward competency based evaluation that embraces features from process recordings.
Process Recordings

Definition & Description

Process recordings have been a part of the social work profession since 1917, when Mary Richmond introduced the notion of written accounts to encourage student learning in social work practice (Black & Feld, 2006). At the turn of the century, charity workers were also asked to document their services and the distribution of resources into written accounts to monitor their work (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995). By the 1920’s social case histories or case work began to take prominence to establish a record for work, documentation of treatment and professional self-reflection (Neuman & Friedman, 1997). Use of social case histories persisted well into the 1950’s, where the interview content within these case study documents was reviewed from a Rogerian perspective (1940-50’s) to base its evaluation of students’ mastery of interviewing skills such as feedback, rephrasing, repeating, clarifying and active listening (Neuman & Friedman, 1997).

This documenting or early process recording technique continued to develop over the next forty years. Dwyer and Urbanowski (1965) analyzed the process recording believing that field instructors needed a more structured tool to assess student abilities in their interactions with clients and to see how students integrated knowledge and theory. Later, in the late 1970’s and into the 1980’s, more established guidelines for the use of process recordings came together in the hope of expediting student learning, field instruction and supervision in field practicum (Bronstein & Kelly, 2001; Graybeal & Ruff, 1995). The work of Urdang (1979) built on Dwyer and Urbanowski’s theory of the value of process recordings as a rich depository for student insights from which teaching material would arise. Urdang considered the process recording as not being a verbatim transcription but first person narratives “describing the essence of the
interactions” (Urdang, 2010, p. 533). It was seen as providing students an opportunity to ‘revisit' their practice experience with clients and use their critical thinking as well as their self-reflective skills to process the experience for self-correction and gaining practice wisdom (Black & Feld, 2006). Urdang saw the process recording as a vehicle to foster self-reflection and allow for students to internalize the ‘processing’ skill itself, to then use later when working directly with clients (2010). Urdang (1979) identified four functions that she believed assisted student progress in learning: concise examination of the client interaction/exchange; focus on actual recounting of the interviewing techniques between the client-student in their dialogue; self-reflection and correction; and student participation in the evaluation of their work with the field supervisor. The earlier work of Urdang was further developed by Wilson in 1980, where seven elements were identified for students to capture their field practice experience:

   a) Identifying information;
   b) Verbatim description of the interview;
   c) A description of any non-verbal activity that occurred;
   d) Feelings and reactions to the client;
   e) Observations and analytical thoughts about the interview;
   f) A diagnostic summary of the student’s impressions; and
   g) Treatment plan (Walsh, 2002, p. 24).

In 1988, Dwyer and Urbanowski, went further to explicate Wilson’s work, to include in the process recording expectation:

   a) A brief description of the purpose of the interview;
   b) Observations and general impressions of the physical and emotional climate of the interview;
   c) Content relating factual and feeling responses of both the student and the client;
   d) Clinical impressions;
   e) The social worker’s role;
   f) The treatment plan. (Neuman & Friedman, 1997, p. 239)

Moving into the 1990’s, process recordings continued to be seen as a ‘practical method’ for faculty to see students’ practice and help to draw the students, field instructors and field
faculty’s attention to student-client interactions and patterns or themes that are teachable moments (Black & Feld, 2006; Bronstein & Kelly, 2001; Graybeal & Ruff, 1995; Knight, 2001). It also was seen as an assignment for self-reflection to develop a conscious or purposeful use of self (Neuman & Friedman, 1997; Pilalis, 1986) as well as a place for establishing a chronological record by the student of their work with clients over the course of their field practicum (Black & Feld, 2006). Tourse (1994) added two more expectations to the cumulative work of Urbanowski and Dwyer. These were to have students identify themes and defenses from their client’s story (Walsh, 2002). Walsh (2002) introduced the emergent strengths perspective to inform the assessment and planning process elements of the process recording. Process recordings were also intended for students to demonstrate the integration and application of theoretical concepts as they move the classroom learning experience into practice in the field (Medina, 2010; Neuman & Friedman, 1997).

What is worth noting from this history are the seeds for CBE of the classroom knowledge being transferred into field practice (Meyer-Adams et al., 2011). The profession’s renewed focus on CBE and performance objectives continued to build momentum and inform the advent of the learning contract assignment under consideration in this study.

**Theoretical Foundation for Process Recordings**

Process recordings have been examined from a learning theory perspective and share some qualities with self-directed learning in that they are student driven and self-reflective which, for adult learners can be beneficial (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995; Neuman & Friedman, 1997). There is similar reliance on Bloom’s Taxonomy domains of learning (Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a) as process recordings provide the ability to be student focused with individualized learning objectives, provide for cognitive learning through observation and reporting, and
facilitate affective skills of self-reflection (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995). Process recordings were also used from a ‘theme teaching’ perspective derived from both internal themes and external themes (Black & Feld, 2006). Internal themes are similar to self-directed learning goals that are unique to the student, as well as their learning styles and life experiences. External themes are what the client, the practice setting and the classroom brings to the learning experience. Together this approach reportedly has flexibility to adjust to changes in themes in both or either area of the learning milieu as well as student competency from beginning levels to more advanced practice goals (Black & Feld, 2006).

**Research on Effectiveness of Process Recordings**

Although process recordings have been a commonly used assignment for field practicum, they have not been without their challenges, in particular related to validating inter-rater reliability when evaluating the quality of student work (Vourlekis, Bembry, Hall, & Rosenblum, 1992). The Vourlekis study utilized the checklist developed in 1981 by Wilson, which was a structured guide to be used by evaluators of process recordings. Vourlekis’ team concluded that reliability depended on the rater’s agreement on the Wilson checklist criteria such as capturing the quality of student work in field practice (1992). Graybeal and Ruff (1995) noted that process recordings were losing support to evaluate field work. Further criticism of the process recording included: the lack of accuracy (truthfulness, and the integrity of recall by student); subjectivity of the report given by the individual and their frame of reference/experience (both of the student and the evaluator); how students represented their intervention/experience or how client/student interactions are framed by the student to put them in a positive light for grading purposes; student comfort and anxiety with their field practice site; and the tedious time consuming nature of writing a dialogue into a narrative (Neuman & Friedman, 1997). The work of Abramson and
Fortune (1990) found that the process recording provided structure to the supervisory relationship which resulted in student satisfaction of their field training, while Knight (1996) recognized the correlation between the process recording’s effectiveness with student preparedness for practice and with satisfaction with their agency field supervision (Abramson & Fortune, 1990; Knight, 1996; Medina, 2010; Papell, 2015; Walsh, 2002).

There is little in the literature about its use for macro level field experience and consistency in evaluating the students’ work based on both the individual student’s maturity as well as their perception of their work and the individual perception and skill set of the evaluator (Medina, 2010; Tourse, 1994). There were also concerns such as field evaluation uniformity of expectations of students and of evaluator reliance on guidelines or checklists to quantify the assessment of student work (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995; Vourlekis et al., 1992).

**Similarities between Learning Contracts and Process Recordings**

Learning contracts as defined in the literature are similar to course syllabi; both outline the expectations, the participants, and the goals for learning and can be seen as an informal agreement between the student and the instructor. Process recordings share the self-directed qualities of learning objectives and are individualized to the students’ academic needs (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995). Process recordings by design require students to recall experiences with clients, focus their ability to write or document their experiences in a coherent and concise manner and engage in self-reflection (Neuman & Friedman, 1997). This current re-iteration of a learning contract assignment (LCA) is a blending of the learning contracts as defined above, with expectations from the process recording. Both the LCA and the process recording share a longitudinal view of student progression toward mastery of the core competencies.
Transition from Process Recordings

Given the subjective nature of evaluation of process recordings and the variability of practice experience of evaluators, generalizability is not strong. The vast variability of field education across all domains of its design complicates evaluation of student progress (Boitel & Fromm, 2014). From the review of process recording literature, Neuman et.al (1997) recommendation is central, that process recordings could be enhanced if they were more closely linked to course learning objectives (competencies) and practice skills. From this recommendation, combining process recordings with the self-directed nature of learning contracts and learning theory, led to the learning contract as a standalone or central assignment for field education to facilitate the focus on the transfer and integration of knowledge from the external source or explicit curriculum to field practice (Boitel & Fromm, 2014; Papell, 2015).

The Learning Contract Assignment

The Learning Contract Assignment (LCA) as a stand-alone assignment was developed in 2009 by a small BSW program as part of their reaccreditation process following the release of the CSWE 2008 EPAS. Their decision evolved from a comprehensive academic perspective which saw the value in a learning contracts approach that involved the students in self-directed experience but adapted the learning contract into an assignment for field education. With the program’s decision to change their major field education assignment in the field practicum course from the traditional process recording format into the LCA, its design moved each of the 2008 EPAS ten Core Competencies and related 41 practice behaviors onto a table for the students to complete. By doing this, the program created an assignment that embraced its historical use of the process recording that also engaged students in taking an active role in being responsible for their learning goals in field education (Knowles, 1975). When this LCA was
initially used, students were asked to report on each implementation of the practice behaviors, and then at the end of each core competency, to describe what happened when working with the clients, and reflecting on how these interactions helped them to operationalize the practice behaviors. Lastly, they were asked to assess what they needed to do to strengthen their performance on this competency. This initial LCA provided the program and the student an opportunity to assess the students’ transfer of knowledge from the classroom to practice, as they collaboratively set goals for students’ individual learning needs (Boitel & Fromm, 2014). This process helped highlight any prior learning the student brought to this stage in their academic preparation, including their individual learning styles and cultural factors that may influence their learning (Boitel & Fromm, 2014). The intention, facilitated by its design of listing the 10 core competencies and the 41 related practice behaviors directly as prescribed by the 2008 EPAS into a table format, was to help students focus on the individual practice behavior and to see a closer connection between the social work core competencies that represent social work theories, skills and concepts (classroom content) to their field practice (application of skills).

The LCA under consideration for this study is the second revision of the form, which evolved in 2011-12 when a new Field Director (this author) was hired. Over the first year of its use, it became clear that the LCA of 2011-12 needed to be developed further and informed by the evidence practice of field education curriculum and learning theory. The new Field Director who was also the Field Faculty Liaison, had fifteen years of experience teaching across the BSW classroom curriculum as an adjunct faculty prior to taking this position and over 25 years’ experience working in the practice field. Teaching field education with the revised 2012-13 LCA was informed by the field education literature, adult learning theory and incorporated feedback from the students in the 2011-12 cohort. The revision to the 2012-13 LCA started with a
reconceptualization or re-ordering the sequence of core competencies in a way that created congruence and consistency with the different aspects of social work practice and reflected a more logical flow, similar to a case study framework. This 2012-13 design retained the initial directions as noted above, but when taught in the classroom students were asked to take ownership of their learning by setting their individual learning objectives and goals in their field setting. In doing this they could demonstrate their competency of the practice behaviors by integrating and applying classroom content that validated their understanding of the connections between critical thinking, and purposeful use of self, as they engaged in the practice behaviors with clients and colleagues in the field.

As discussed by Boitel and Fromm (2014), the LCA became an integrated learning contract assignment as the field faculty used the LCA to guide the student in re-conceptualizing the classroom learning to address the complex nature of practice. The 2012-13 LCA also continued to ask students to purposefully self-evaluate their practice, use supervision and faculty as a resource and re-evaluate their goals as they move forward in field education. By doing so, the LCA embraced the adult learning literature and the use of learning contracts as it highlighted the characteristics of empowerment, shared power and accountability (Huff & Johnson, 1998; Lemieux, 2001; Solomon, 1992).

**Theoretical Foundation of the Learning Contract Assignment**

*Constructivism*

As Padgett (1998) points out constructivism sees “knowledge as not discovered but as created, a product of perspective of the observer” (p. 90). The field affords students a place to re-conceptualize their classroom experience into professional behavior and to create new meaning from the classroom work to support their field practice and future career goals. Constructivism
believes that people create their own reality from their interpretations of social interactions and base their behaviors on these interpretations. The expectation of the field education experience is similar to a rite of passage or a developmental stage that requires a student to create the identity of the professional or perform their new role of being a social worker in their live experience of practice (Mohammed, 2010; Tungate et al., 2001). As students observe their agency field supervisor, engage in the expected practice behaviors and reflect on their experience, they are in effect, learning to organize their interpretations of the attitudes of those around them in the agency and those of the service community their agency interacts with (Wallace & Wolf, 2006) as well as that of the social work profession in that setting. This perspective is based on the work of George Herbert Mead’s development of self, during the professional socialization that field placements offers, are the expectations of the profession, and in other words where the concept of the generalized other becomes internalized (Wallace & Wolf, 2006). When you consider that the field functions as a professional stage on which the intern is required to practice the roles of the professional social worker and use reflective skills, they begin to create their new professional reality or identity. Through reflective learning students draw on their classroom learning while applying this learning to their practice of social work. By adapting what they experience to what they know or creating generalizable knowledge about themselves as social workers and about the profession in order to learn to adapt with the dynamic nature of the practice environment, they begin to create what is known as practice wisdom (Lam et al., 2007). This can create a consciousness changing experience that leads to learning more about themselves as they begin to identify as a professional within the profession (Tungate et al., 2001).

Constructivism reminds us that as students observe and question their field supervisor and colleagues regarding practice experiences, they begin to build on these reflections and
develop new perspectives. This becomes a product of their learning and from this they create social work practice identities for themselves (Padgett, 1998). The field affords students a place to re-conceptualize their classroom experience into professional behavior and to create new meaning from the classroom work to support their field practice and future career goals. Constructivism, as a basis for field education, enables the self-directed nature of the LCA as an assignment and a means of measuring how students build on their knowledge through experiences, discovery, exploration and re-constructing previous held knowledge with new experiences toward competency.

Social work education places critical thinking skills as a cornerstone of its curriculum (Blom et al., 2007; Boitel & Fromm, 2014; Holloway, 2009) and relies on students’ ability to think critically. The ability to integrate evidenced based knowledge to support skills, and its codified set of ethics and values to guide decision making, relies on how we prepare students to be trained observers and to critically think and integrate their knowledge and skills to provide services (Lyter & Smith, 2004; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a). Learning integration occurs when the curriculum stimulates the students’ internal process of cognitive integration (self-awareness) of classwork and field (Boitel & Fromm, 2014). This higher-level learning relies on this reciprocal process to build mastery and confidence in the application of new knowledge to practice. The accumulation of professional practice experience over time enriches social work practice wisdom which becomes an integral part of practice. Both Padgett (1998) and Patton (2002) have pointed out what is perceived or interpreted by individuals as real is their reality and as such, holds the consequences therein. What students experience in their classrooms and move into their field practice becomes how they envision themselves as social workers. As they
interpret the reality of field, it becomes the reality of the work they are preparing themselves to do.

_Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning & Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy_

The LCA incorporates both Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning and the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (RBT) by Anderson and Krathwohl in 2001 (Anderson et al., 2001; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956; Clark, n.d.; Randall, n.d.). Bloom’s original work was expanded upon by Anderson and Krathwohl and includes the domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor and for the purposes of this study will utilize and reference the RBT.

Field education requires students to draw upon knowledge (cognitive) from the classroom, to be self-reflective (affective or emotional domain) of social work values and use skills learned in the classroom in practice with clients (psycho-motor) (Anderson et al., 2001; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a). The LCA also embraces Bandura’s concept of self-efficacy’s four types of experiences (Ahn et al., 2012) as a parallel construct to RBT (see attachment- Appendix V: Comparison of Field Education and Learning Theories) which includes the domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor. These four types are (1) indirect experiences in which the student observes a field supervisor or field colleague model the performance of assigned tasks or skills; (2) student practices the skill to gain mastery; (3) students receive verbal encouragement and support from field supervisors or field colleagues; and (4) students learn to self-monitor and moderate their physiological and affective reactions in field, through self-reflection and correction to be self-supporting while protecting these arousal states from becoming harmful and interfering with practice (Ahn et al., 2012). As Bandura (1997) pointed out, individuals have a sense of how well they are performing a task or ability to manage the daily demands of their lives, as well as have some innate understanding of how much control they can have over future
aspirations, their goals in life and their sense of who they can become. This idea of self-efficacy, is encouraged through the LCA as it empowers the student to take on the responsibility of practice in a purposeful and self-directed manner. The LCA establishes an assignment that is a meeting point for the student, the field supervisor and field faculty. It includes, by design, a number of constructs: the literature’s discussion on the importance of an adult learner having clear learning objectives; available resources such as colleagues, classroom peers, field supervisors and faculty to discuss their practice and their approaches needed to accomplish their objectives; a place for self-reporting of narratives or data collected to measure their estimation of accomplishment of these objectives; and finally a place for field supervisors and faculty to measure growth and competency for evaluation (Huff & Johnson, 1998; Lemieux, 2001; Solomon, 1992).

All this is aimed to help focus the student on self-reflection/correction, skill development, and building self-efficacy and confidence in their abilities. To see their field experience not as just something they ‘paid for’ through tuition or are entitled to as a consumer, but as a valuable learning environment to prepare them for their future careers (Barton et al., 2005; Kaye & Fortune, 2004). The LCA design is self-directed in that it returns control to the student to share what they observe, how they interact with clients and what they are thinking about. They are empowered to focus on opportunities to deepen and gain confidence in their skills, and transition from the role of the student to practitioner (Knowles, 1975). Similar to the process recording method, the LCA design “becomes a record of change and growth for the students” (Bronstein & Kelly, 2001, p. 28) and it is designed for students to use as a vehicle for tracking their professional growth, measuring their competence in practice and developing ongoing professional goals.
**Knowledge from Classroom or Cognitive Domain**

The LCA measures a student’s ability to draw reasonable connections between the core competencies and the classroom curriculum to build proficiency as they begin to practice the competencies in field education (Holloway, 2009). The LCA is a focal point for students in their individual meetings with the field education faculty (FEF), with their agency field supervisor in supervision, joint meeting with the FEF and their agency field supervisor and in regular Field Education Meetings (FEM) with their cohort. In doing this, the FEF engages and educates the agency field supervisor on the core competencies that the student is focusing on in their LCA and how they can help translate these into practice at the agency. This model of academic and field faculty collaboration is supported by Birkenmaier and his team (2003) in their belief that the responsibility to integrate theory and practice is seen as important and is equally shared among all parties (Birkenmaier et al., 2003).

A similar relationship as mentioned above between the field and the academic faculty collaborating can be applied in a mentoring relationship between the FEF and the agency field supervisor, that enables the FEF to further train and develop agency field supervisors while sharing the responsibility for monitoring the quality of the student’s field experience and supervision (Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010). This practice draws support from Barretti (2009), who found that faculty who provide support to students and field agencies alike are putting themselves in a position to be seen as “productive members of the professional community that educate as well as act” (p. 62). The design of the LCA also incorporates a mechanism for, “field instructors to provide the conceptual frameworks for what the student is doing through explicitly referencing larger frameworks, using practice theory, relating examples to principles and
recommending reading materials…focusing on both substantive content and emotional reactions” (Fortune & Kaye, 2002, p. 26).

**Self-reflective, Affective or Emotional Domain**

RBT includes an affective domain, where learning is arrived at through self-reflection and interpretations of the emotional reactions that comes with discovery (Anderson et al., 2001; Bloom, 1956). As Goldstein, (1993) pointed out, the field is an uncertain place, with no recipe to follow. Through reflection the ‘knowing process’ is at the foundation of professional judgment, use of knowledge, and skills of the profession. The integration of a reflexive component in social work education, otherwise understood as the ‘thinking about thinking’ process, is where students and practitioners challenge themselves with the fundamental questions they have about their assumptions generated by the knowledge, theories and concepts they have acquired over time and represents the embracing of one’s self in the process of knowledge construction (Lam et al., 2007). Over time, the ‘mature self’ arises as the structure of the professional expectations exercises influence over the behavior. In addition, students’ competency develops while performing their new role and gaining clarity in their understanding of that role (Bronstein & Kelly, 2001). As George Herbert Mead pointed out in 1934, the knowledge that we hold about who we are, and our sense of self, expands to see ourselves as part of a larger picture. It is from that sense of belonging to a community that we understand who we are and for our purposes, the development of the social work identity arises (Wallace & Wolf, 2006). Through the reflective learning component of the LCA, students are asked to self-assess their practice skills to explore their strengths and weaknesses (Lam et al., 2007) and identity as a professional social worker. The LCA was designed (Appendix VI: LCA Form) so that students would focus their attention on achieving the CSWE’s ten core competencies and forty-one practice behaviors (CSWE,
This design acknowledges and embraces the psycho-motor component of adult-learning theory, as it asks the student to become an active participant in their learning (Chan, 2010; Davenport & Davenport, 1988; Knowles, 1972, C. Regehr et al., 2002a). As Chan (2010) pointed out, adult learners require teaching strategies that do not rely solely on the passive transfer of knowledge. Adult students need to be involved in dynamic ways, to construct their own knowledge and through application of the knowledge gained in the classroom, they can interpret and make sense of its value to their professional preparation and identity.

**Application of Skills Learned in the Classroom or Psycho-motor Domain**

RBT examination of learning also includes psychomotor learning that asks students to ‘do’ something with their knowledge, to apply it in practice (Anderson et al., 2001). Given the emphasis placed on critical thinking skills, the ability to transfer knowledge in the field is the foundation of field education’s role in the curriculum (Blom et al., 2007; Holloway, 2009). This is the application of classroom and evidenced based knowledge by students to support their skills while drawing on the profession’s codified set of ethics and values to guide decision making. The opportunity that the LCA provides students is to use this repetitive cycle of engaging in field practice and reflection (self-reflection, field supervision and field faculty feedback) to learn to be intuitive observers, to critically think and use their knowledge and skills to provide services (Lyter & Smith, 2004; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b a). In addition, there are regularly scheduled site visits in the field with the student and the agency field supervisor. These site visits are purposeful discussions that rely on case presentation dependent upon the psychomotor elements of learning by asking students to integrate and bridge classroom learning to the field setting. In doing this the four characteristics of the social work contract: “explicit, mutual, dynamic and realistic” (Seabury, 1976, p. 16) are engaged and active in the learning process. Finally, students
participate in field education meetings with the field faculty liaison to process their experiences and further discuss and apply curriculum through readings and assignments. These meetings provide supervised peer-to-peer consultation for collective learning that is consistent with adult learning theories (Wayne, Julianne et al., 2010) and incorporates Shulman's standard of student-to-student accountability for field education (Shulman, 2005).

Field education is part of the explicit curriculum designed to be a critical point of change for students. LCA is part of the field education course and explicit curriculum as it is the central assignment for students and for the field agency replacing the process recording model that makes students’ reflection in field visible. Mosek & Ben-Oz (2011) looked at the developmental process of professional socialization and found that the formation of a peer group or cohort model reduces stress and enhances student coping, “with the developmental and adaptive difficulties and tasks associated with the educational experience” (p. 106). Given the cohort model design of the program, students have the support necessary to transform their practice behaviors from layperson to professional based on the preparation from the explicit classroom curriculum and in discussion with a consistent group of peers. The LCA is also consistent with Fortune, Lee & Cavazos (2007) who found, “repeated input and guidance from the field instructor appear as important to student performance as practicing skills” (p. 257). Finally, similar to process recordings, the LCA can measure student change or growth over time; help to connect knowledge that assists the student to see beyond the concrete services (i.e. taxi vouchers; food pantry lists, child care information etc.) they provide to clients; and clarify the complexities of the problems of clients’ lives, as well as the students’ own professional roles, and enhanced skill development (Boitel & Fromm, 2014; Bronstein & Kelly, 2001)
Conclusion

The rationale for conducting a literature review in qualitative research, presents the researcher opportunities to clarify what is known on a topic but also creates a risk of bias when the researcher analyzes data (Patton, 2002). Having completed an earlier pilot study on the LCA, this study’s work offers this researcher of the opportunity to compare new data to existing pilot data (Ciarfella, 2012). The findings from this review provided valuable information on the depth and breadth of the literature that explores how to measure student achievement in field education and, for this researcher, it confirmed the value of further testing the LCA as a potential qualitative measure of competency.

The CSWE EPAS states that field education is the signature pedagogy and with this designation, it holds the same significance as the explicit curriculum of the classroom (CSWE, 2008; Holloway, 2009; Holosko et al., 2010). The significant findings and the limitations of current research establishes the necessity for future study. The continued examination of how students integrate the explicit curriculum in their field practice is supported by Barretti (2009), when she found that students “….do not artificially fracture classroom faculty from their overall practicum learning” (p. 58-59) but transfer these relationships between the two settings. This finding is encouraging of an earlier pilot study under taken by this writer that also found that the LCAs used in the program did assist students in incorporating their classroom learning into the field experience. That students are less prone to keep their academic experience as isolated silos of information, rather they are more likely to integrate their experience with their knowledge base (Ciarfella, 2012).

Support to continue research in this area also comes from Fortune (2001) when she stated, “monitoring students’ progress, educators should separate students’ attitudes and
satisfaction from their performance” (p. 53). Moreover, Garcia & Floyd (2002) echoed this in their conclusions of a study that reviewed 48 programs to find an “over reliance on tools that focus on perceptions and attitudes” (p. 380) and nowhere in their study did they report or discuss finding any measures of the integration of practice and field education.

Moving forward, Hay and O’Donoghue (2009) remind us of the need for field education to establish reliable outcome measures that will assure a level of, “moderation to ensure equity and consistency” (p. 52) among accredited programs. Although the idea of equity and consistency in assessing achievement speaks to these authors’ main goal of establishing regulatory or accreditation standards in New Zealand, it also prompts consideration for broader application of social justice in gate keeping and clearer expectations for student outcomes. Additionally, it becomes a starting point to stabilize the complexities and variabilities in evaluating field education, empower students to be self-directed as learners (Boitel & Fromm, 2014; Knowles, 1975; Papell, 2015) and develop students’ ability and skills to be life-long learners as ethical and competent future social workers (Solomon, 1992).

The importance of exploring measures of competency in field education represents another critical tool for gate keeping (Sowbel, 2011). Findings from this literature review also remind social work educators that this responsibility cannot fall heavily on agency field instructors or at the eve of graduation (Cole, 1991; Cole & Lewis, 1993; Fortune, 2003; Sowbel, 2011). Equally important are the CSWE EPAS that require ongoing program assessment and reporting on student outcomes on the established ten core competencies for the profession as a means to hold academic programs accountable in public way for the quality of individuals that are graduated and working in the field (CSWE, 2008; Holloway, 2009).
The obligation to graduate competent new social workers is underscored in maintaining enrollment practices that are consistent with the NASW COE for social justice in times that programs find themselves challenged by economic down turns and philosophical debates on the value of higher education. Barton, Bell, & Bowles, (2005) provided incentive to think about the future of the social work profession. Their review of the literature made it abundantly clear that there is a need to look at how programs support social work students in their field placements, support agencies and field supervisors to provide quality supervision (in-kind supports such as research and training) and most importantly, how programs promote the public’s perception of the value of social work as a profession. This is a significant discussion for the social work profession as it reflects on the impact and role that consumerism plays in students’ and parents’ selection of colleges, while public opinion is holding colleges accountable as it defines a degree as a product and an entitlement (Sowbel, 2011). Given the cost and benefits along with the challenges of the public image of social work (Barton, Bell & Bowles, 2005), these authors provide an inspiration to engage in further research to explore how as a profession, we can become more proactive and visible within the human services sector by identifying the marketability, “value, efficiency and effectiveness of social work contributions” (Barton et al., 2005, pp. 302-303).
Chapter 5 – Research Design

How do social work programs properly and fairly evaluate the outcome of field education through how students transfer their new knowledge from the classroom to practice? To examine this question an in-depth examination of a field education assignment was done using a qualitative content analysis case study research design. In this chapter I outline my research questions and provide an explanation and details of the research design. First, I review the research questions. Next, I describe the research, the rationale behind the choice of methods, the sample, how data was generated and analyzed using selected Identifiers including RBT. Lastly, I will explore the trustworthiness of the research study and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process that protected the confidentiality of the students’ work that was used in this study.

Research Questions

The research questions were generated based on the literature review and framed in the context of constructivism and learning theory. From the literature review on student assessment and competency based models of assessment for field education the research questions for this study generated information on student perceptions of how they moved classroom knowledge to the field and how they operationalized the related practice behaviors. The research questions ask,

Q1) How do students move core competencies and their related practice behaviors from the classroom to field practice?

Q2) How do students operationalize the core competencies and their related practice behaviors in field education?

The purpose of this study and the two research questions was to examine how students move their classroom curriculum into field practice using a LCA. The LCA in this study is an assignment used in field education that offers students a place to demonstrate and identify, in
their practice settings, the practice knowledge and skills that they learned in the classroom. This study contributes to the ongoing discussion of whether field education can be called the profession’s signature pedagogy given how it examines the operationalization of student knowledge.

**Research Methods**

To address these two research questions, a qualitative content analysis of a recent end of an academic year’s LCAs was used to focus on identifying criteria that represents classroom learning being applied by students in their field practice setting. Content analysis allows using narrative data for the exploration of questions such as what, why and how (Heikkila & Ekman, 2003; White & Marsh, 2006).

A qualitative content analysis design to explore the content of the final LCA from a recent academic year was chosen based on its hermeneutic orientation which looks to establish the context and meaning of the actions take and reactions that students have as they capture their experiences in their LCA (Krippendorff, 2013; Patton, 2002; White & Marsh, 2006). This design approach is also inductive as the research questions guide the data collection and analysis and allowed for new themes or other questions to arise and be considered (White & Marsh, 2006).

White and Marsh (2006) characterized qualitative content analysis as being inclusive of the following; (1) sampling what is relevant to the study; (2) unitize text by using specific words, direct quotes or examples; (3) contextualize what the researcher is reading in light of what they know about the circumstances surrounding the text; and (4) have specific research questions. In qualitative content analysis the sampling plan is purposeful in that it selects a final LCA from a recent graduated cohort of BSW students (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006). This sampling plan further is explained in the section below on sampling. The second characteristic of
qualitative content analysis are the units of analysis. Given the exploratory nature of the research questions, individual learning contracts constitute a unit (Neuendorf, 2002; White & Marsh, 2006). Qualitative content analysis allows for the flexibility to code both deductively and inductively in order to derive meaning from the material being examined (Cho & Lee, 2014; White & Marsh, 2006). The analysis technique for this research began with a deductive approach because the guidelines for coding were established in an earlier pilot study (Ciarfella, 2013) and, as such, align with content analysis’ a priori design as the coding guidelines were established prior to or before this current study (Neuendorf, 2002).

An inductive approach was used to identify data that did not fit into the developed categories. The analysis explored the meaning of the data from both the established codes and any new categories that arose. Consequently, this method allowed the researcher to draw from her experience with this assignment while discovering what is in the data that informed the researcher’s understanding of how students move their knowledge from the classroom to their experiences in their field settings and how they operationalized competencies and behaviors in their field placement. It then involved a second deductive approach or run through to further examine the categories based on constructed set of rules and expectations for the practice behavior and how they can be demonstrated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Finally, the study’s research questions (noted above) initially guided and influenced the data to be collected from the students’ LCA to learn how students move knowledge from the field to the LCA and how they operationalized core competencies and related practice behaviors in field education settings. As the researcher identified concepts and patterns both predicted and not, other patterns arose that provided recommendations for future exploration of these new patterns (White & Marsh, 2006). Krippendorff (2013) calls this process a “hermeneutic circle”
(p. 88) as it allowed the researcher to revise or create new research questions as the answers arise through the process of “re-conceptualizing, re-interpreting and refining the research questions until satisfactory interpretation is reached” (p. 88).

This idea of a hermeneutic circle also assisted in understanding the quality of and the meanings that students may have associated from their field experience within their LCA. Qualitative content analysis provided an opportunity to hear the students’ voices on what is meaningful about their classroom experience as they apply their knowledge in field (White & Marsh, 2006). The LCA was a vehicle to hear the students’ voice in how they express this learning specifically in relation to the EPAS core competencies, and held evidence on the diversity of these voices (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006).

Qualitative content analysis also considers the nature of the data syntactic or the way students use language (words) to describe their experience (phrases). It provides a method for the researcher to explore meaning in the data (semantic) and the logical elements of linking theory to practice (White & Marsh, 2006). By examining students’ perspectives, use of language, and reflections of how they integrate theory and concepts to their practice in the LCA, an estimate of the value of the LCA has on student learning can be attained. Including the use of frequencies of student responses to explore for meaning from the data as it relates to addressing the research questions (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006).

**Sampling Plan**

A multiple stage sampling plan was used in this study. From the convenience sampling frame, as the pool of twenty-two students from this academic year was readily available, a purposeful random sample was done by selecting eight or 57% of the archived LCA from the traditional aged students who were less than 23 years old (N=14) and eight or 100% of the adult
aged students. This strategy has been selected to provide equal distribution of the adult and the traditional aged students in the sample and for an estimation of the overall academic performance of the senior social work students in a selected graduating year (Patton, 2002). The decision to select eight from each cohort of students for a total of 16 LCAs was made to ensure equal representation of the traditional and the adult students for this analysis. All of the students from both cohorts were eligible to be selected, as they all passed their final field practicum course and graduated in this specific year.

This sampling plan also included collecting only the final LCA because this assignment represents their overall competency just prior to graduation. It is also a temporally convenience sample as the data were drawn from a cohort of students who were enrolled in their senior year field internship in a small BSW program (Patton, 2002; Rubins & Babbie, 2008) and readily available academic data to the academic year that is chosen as the source data. All LCAs collected for this period were assigned a “T” designation for traditional age students and an “A” for the adult cohort and finally an assigned number from 1-22. The traditional age students’ LCAs was assigned a random number, which will be written onto a slip of paper and placed into a hat for random selection. Eight from the traditional program students’ LCAs were selected by drawing number from a hat. This strategy has been selected to support equal distribution of the adult and the traditional aged students in the sample and for an estimation of the overall academic performance of the senior social work students in a selected graduating year. (Patton, 2002).

Additionally, both in qualitative research and in qualitative content analysis the final sample size is determined by what information is being sought and by purposefully selecting cases that will be useful, that can achieve theoretical saturation (Fortune & Reid, 1999, Patton,
2002), and will provide answers to the research questions (White & Marsh, 2006). To clarify, what was sought was evidence of student application or reflection of their learning in the LCA from their field practice. With these research questions in mind the choice of using the final LCAs for this sample was purposefully done as each contain a repository of rich data for exploring if/how students moved their classroom learning and if/how they operationalized this learning in their practice. Qualitative studies typically have small sample sizes, as the intent is to provide rich, in-depth insight into the holistic nature of the learning experience (Patton, 2002).

Increasing the sampling beyond the originally selected eight LCAs from the traditional aged student population was not needed, as the data demonstrated that theoretical saturation had been achieved, meaning that there is no new information being gained by the addition of new LCAs (Patton, 2002), and the research questions are answered to the satisfaction of the researcher (White & Marsh, 2006). Patton (2002) recommended that qualitative studies establish a minimum sample number to assure that a reasonable coverage of the available data is included in the final sample. For this study, the minimum was sixteen to afford equal representation of data from both the traditional and adult student experiences. There was no new information found in/by the sixteenth LCA (meaning the eighth traditional student LCA as entire sample of eight adult student LCA would have been included at this point), additional LCAs from the traditional student pool was not added as noted above in the alternating selection plan, and it was not necessary to go beyond the original sixteen or 72% of the LCA population by drawing from the remaining six cases from the traditional aged student group to expand the sample until saturation can be assured.

Finally, an examination of the sample was also done to ensure equal representation of experiences by looking at the types of agencies or populations where the students were placed.
for their internships. Table 1, below, is a summary of the entire population in this sample (N=22) with field placements categorized by the type of agency that the students were placed. It is notable, that one of the adult students was placed in a school for the first semester and had her placement changed to a health care facility in the second semester. This will account for the increase in health care setting in Table 2, which is a summary of the sample used for this analysis. There is relatively little difference in field placements between the population (N=22) and the cases that were a part of this analysis (N=16). There is reasonable representation of each of the categories of the agencies between the selected sample and the total population of cases.

**Table 1: Field Placement Summary for Population (N=22)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Field Placement</th>
<th>Child Welfare (community based and residential)</th>
<th>Education/Schools (community based and residential)</th>
<th>Health Care (Acute, subacute &amp; community Based)</th>
<th>Community Based Case Management (mental health; chemical dependence, special needs populations; &amp; the homeless)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (n=14)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Field Placement Summary for Analysis Sample (N=16)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Field Placement</th>
<th>Child Welfare (community based and residential)</th>
<th>Education/Schools (community based and residential)</th>
<th>Health Care (Acute, subacute &amp; community Based)</th>
<th>Community Based Case Management (mental health; chemical dependence, special needs populations; &amp; the homeless)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (n=8)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No other demographic information was collected regarding age, race, ethnicity, gender or any other identifiers as it is not directly relevant to the research question of how knowledge is transferred. Once the sixteen cases were reviewed, the remaining six cases were reviewed for any unidentified themes. After this review, the researcher found that the sixteen cases that were
selected for this study were sufficient and that no new information would have been gained by coding the remaining six cases.

It is important to note, that the sampling plan that was selected, was done so to ensure an equal number of students from both the traditional and the adult cohorts solely for the purpose of equal representation. It was not done to examine any comparison between the adult cohort to the traditional cohort, as this held no relevance on the research questions in this study.

**Data Collection**

A pilot study that utilized the final LCA from a fall semester of a graduated class in one given academic year was completed by this researcher in August 2012. The findings from that pilot study showed evidence that the LCA provided students with a forum to demonstrate that they were applying social work theory and concepts in their field placement leading to this more expansive study. Building on the pilot, the current study expanded its data collection to include RBT in its coding and re-defined Identifier 2 by creating three subcategories for course readings (see Table 3 below). Consequently, the pilot supported that the LCA as a viable means to garner student perceptions and experiences in moving classroom content into the field setting and in operationalizing core competencies.

The LCAs are a yearlong assignment for students in their senior field placement and the final LCA entry in the spring semester has been collected. Data from LCAs are considered archival data because the information was initially collected for a purpose outside of this study. Students uploaded their LCA into an academic computer based platform designed for individual sections of a course. This educational platform has a variety of private and open forums for students to engage with the faculty in the day to day business of the course. LCAs were uploaded
into a private area called ‘Assignments’ that was only accessible to the individual student and the faculty.

The two (of the ten) core competencies selected for analysis (see Appendix I) were specifically selected for use in this study as they represent generalist micro and macro level competencies. As an exploratory study, the two selected core competencies represented where the clearest link between course content and application could be seen. The Social Work Program Competency 8: “Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services”, along with its two related practice behaviors, was selected because it is grounded more directly in a social welfare policy (macro level practice) course in the curriculum. Social Work Program Competency 3: “Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments”, with its three related practice behaviors, was selected because it is reflected throughout many of the micro courses within the curriculum (theory, models and documentation skills).

An exemption application was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the college where these data are located. Their IRB approved use of the data for this study and the archival data were obtained after the final grades for this course were submitted to the Registrar’s office and after this cohort of students graduated with their BSW from the program. The data were downloaded from the academic institution (data source) learning platform into this researcher’s password protected, private computer. Only information related to the two selected competencies under study had been cut and pasted from these LCAs into a new Microsoft (MS) Word document, all identifying data have been removed and each LCA had a case number assigned (as noted above). Once this was completed, these new documents were saved into a new separate file and as individual cases in this researcher’s password protected computer that
was later uploaded and saved in MS Word format into NVIVO, a qualitative data analysis software.

**Data Analysis**

A content analysis technique that was used for this study followed the work of White and Marsh (2006) and Krippendorff (2013). It began with a deductive approach given that the guidelines for coding that had been established in an earlier pilot study by this writer. This approach aligns with content analysis’ a priori design as the coding guidelines were established prior to or before this current study (Neuendorf, 2002). The use of a qualitative content analysis coding scheme supported the process of reading the data in an attentive and repetitive manner to identify significant concepts and patterns (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006).

As stated in the literature review, the LCA has an open design that may allow students to show” how” they document their learning, affording them the broadest choice to communicate their understanding from the class room as it applies in their field experience. Specifically, the design of the LCA is a place to capture the “how” students’ learn as they translate their experience through examples of cognitive, self-reflective and/or psychomotor methods (Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b). This allows each LCA to be explored to see if it can provide information on “how” students understand classroom concepts and theories in their field education practice as well as to allow for the diversity of their voices to be considered in the interpretation of the data (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006).

Coding of this dataset began with a broad review of the data from the perspective of the first five Identifier criteria (later adding the seventh) that are concrete in nature (Table 3) and were easily recognizable as they were concrete in nature; they are operationalized in Table 3. Then, a second review for the sixth category affords the researcher the opportunity to be flexible,
to capture their subjectivity, and to be open to different points of view or diversity in the students’ voices (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006). Next, building on the initial pilot

**Table 3: Definitions for coding Identifiers 1-5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier 1 - Name of a Professor from a Social Work Course</th>
<th>Student refers to or names a professor who taught a course that was relevant to their experience in the field.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifier 2 – Course Reading</td>
<td>Student refers to or names a course reading that is relevant to the experience in the field. This was further defined into 3 subcategories below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifier 3 - Course Assignments</td>
<td>Student refers to or names a course assignment that was relevant to their experience in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifier 4 - Any Social Work Concept or Theory</td>
<td>Student refers to or names a social work concept or theory that informs or informed their thinking relevant to their experience in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifier 5 - Course Name</td>
<td>Student refers to or names a course that informed their thinking relevant to their experience in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifier 6 – Other</td>
<td>Identifier six categorized as ‘other,’ was included to allow for the possibility explanation(s) for how students demonstrate their understanding of the core. This category affords the researcher the opportunity to be flexible, to capture subjectivity (i.e. researcher’s perceived idea or different interpretations then which are their truths or values), and to be open to different points of view or the students’ voices (Krippendorff, 2013; White &amp; Marsh, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifier 7</td>
<td>Students refer to not having any opportunity to practice the core</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

study conducted by this researcher in 2012, coding in this study included a review of the data to capture the demonstration of the three domains of learning from the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy
Table 4 provides both the operational definitions of the original Bloom’s Taxonomy and RBT domains used to inform the coding (Anderson et al., 2001; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956; Clark, n.d.; Randall, n.d.).

**Table 4: Definitions for Coding Identifiers for Bloom’s Taxonomy and RBT Domains of Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Seeks evidence that students drew upon knowledge from the classroom that demonstrated their insight into their ability to integrate evidenced based knowledge to support the profession’s practice skills.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;RBT - Recall information; apply learning to solve a problem; partialize a problem into parts;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Self-reflection or affective learning by seeking entries that demonstrate the integration of a reflexive component to self-correction.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;RBT - Paying attention to non-verbal cues; recognizing a reaction to a situation; valuing ideas; recognizing ethical problem/dilemmas when values are different; recognizing their own values as well as the value system of the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychomotor</td>
<td>Explore is how students become an active participant in their learning; take steps or act to implement a strategy or relevant task.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;RBT - Recognizing when to act; ability to perform a specific skill or task- initially guided by a faculty/agency supervisor; ability then to perform the task without supervision; the ability to alter an act to respond to a new situation or change in the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction of Domains</td>
<td>Evidence of this interplay, or the integration of learning styles can be seen by how student applied all three learning styles in their practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A fourth code called ‘interaction of domains’ was developed and added to the coding protocol to demonstrate where students demonstrated all three domains of RBT learning.

Evidence of this was defined as seeing students demonstrate a relationship among the three domains by how a student applied all three learning styles in one example from their practice.

For example, forming a chain of cognitive recognition (use of motivational interviewing), reflection (recalling how in the classroom the roles plays were empowering the client) and
application in a self-directed manner to inform their practice (at next session student used motivational interviewing or discussed it further with their agency field supervisor).

The second broad review of the data for coding took on an inductive approach that went deeper into the data to explore whether there were concepts that did not fit into the developed categories. This inductive approach did identify data that did not fit into the developed categories and led to some further delineation of Identifier 2 – course reading. This Identifier revealed that students referred to other sources of reading material that were of equal relevance and contained further specification as to how this reading material demonstrated their experience in field practice. Identifier 2 was broken into three sub-codes: general course readings that were identified by the assigned reading in a course; a reference to legislation or public/agency policy being cited or referred to; and third subcategory were references to articles that were peer reviewed and/or references for readings either provided by the agency or used by the student to further understand the population and/or to ensure ethical practice. Additionally, a new code labeled Identifier 7 was added to capture a new theme representing when students report not having any opportunity to practice the core competency. Identifier 7 was only noted in SWPC 8 and not evident in SWPC 3.

Finally, an additional review of the data sought to explore the data using both the established codes and the new categories that arose (noted above). This method allowed the researcher to draw from her experience of teaching with this assignment and to discover what was in the data that informed her understanding of how students moved their knowledge from the classroom to their experiences in the field. This was particularly useful for the 6th Identifier of ‘other’ and information regarding the decisions made during coding for this category are explained in the findings. Additional discussion of what was discovered from this review of the
data will be described in the section on theoretical underpinnings, and specifically regarding the hermeneutic circle.

Additionally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out, content analysis can assert “the rules and procedures be formulated before the analysis is under taken” (p. 337). The data analysis was also informed by three domains of the RBT of learning, cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a), setting an additional framework for the coding. This framework follows the earlier discussion regarding Marion Bogo’s team’s 2011 findings of how students’ ability to conceptualize their practice; identify the values, principles, and ideas that underlie their judgments (affective) and actions (psychomotor); and share their understanding of the interrelationships between theory and practice (cognitive).

Data collection and analysis focused on finding evidence of cognitive learning styles by seeking student entries in the LCA that draw upon knowledge from the classroom that demonstrates their insight into their ability to integrate evidenced based knowledge to support the profession’s practice skills (Ahn et al., 2012; Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Gibbons, & Grey, 2004; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b).

Following this data analysis protocol also allows for the researcher to be open to finding evidence of self-reflection or affective learning by seeking entries that demonstrate the integration of a reflexive component to self-correction. Goldstein (1993) pointed out that field is an uncertain place, with no recipe to follow. He believed that through self-reflection, students establish the ‘knowing processes’ which he believed is the foundation of professional judgment (Goldstein, 1993) and independent practice. Given this description, RBTs second domain of learning that utilizes affective or emotional responses addresses the requirement of self-reflective learning or how students develop self-reflective skills and self-awareness (i.e. boundaries, biases,
physiological arousal, etc.) that unites social work knowledge with values and leads to self-correction (Ahn et al., 2012; Bogo et al., 2011; Gibbons, & Grey, 2004; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a). The third area that data collection and analysis will explore is how students become an active participant in their learning (Chan, 2010; Davenport & Davenport, 1988; Knowles, 1972; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b), also known as the psychomotor domain of learning.

Data analysis also focused on finding evidence of self-reflection/awareness, organized and critical thinking by seeking student entries in the LCA that describe the application of knowledge, skills and action in their practice. The LCA is open in its design and as such it engages students to be self-directed in capturing and documenting their learning. It requires students to document their skills as trained observers, to think critically and use their knowledge and skills to provide actual services to clients (Ahn et al., 2012; Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Gibbons, & Grey, 2004; Lyter & Smith, 2004; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b). In doing so, they begin to appreciate the benefits of self-reflection as a means to include self-examination as part of the “process of knowledge creation” (Lam, Wong, & Leung, 2007, p. 96).

Additionally, discovering the relationship of these three domains of learning (cognitive/critical thinking, affective/reflective and, psychomotor) through students’ use of these three learning styles (Anderson et al., 2001) provided insight into the second research question that sought to further understand how students operationalize the two core competencies and their related practice behaviors that are under consideration. Evidence of this interplay, or the integration of learning styles can be sought that show a student using all three learning styles in their practice. For example, initially identifying/recognizing an example of social work knowledge that exemplifies a core competency (cognitive learning); once identified a student then reflects about it (affective learning) self-correction can be examined (self-reflection/critical
thinking) all of which then informs them to then act on it (psychomotor learning). This chain of cognitive recognition, reflection and application in a self-directed manner to inform their practice, would be considered evidence of how a student operationalizes a core competency.

Qualitative content analysis’ utilizes both inductive and deductive approaches allows for constant comparison of the LCA text to allow for the discovery of relevant categories that can capture (1) descriptions of how students moved classroom content to field and (2) student’s descriptions of how they operationalized core competencies in practice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; White & Marsh, 2006). This constant comparison process is designed to explore whether the identified relevant categories support a relationship between how the student expresses their learning and the core competency. This allows the comparison of student responses in the LCAs on emergent themes and may potentially capture student preference in certain micro or macro areas of study or curriculum content. Additionally, this data analysis protocol may identify relevant information about an assignment that helped prepare students to engage in competent practice within their agency setting.

The data is presented in both a narrative format to hear the actual voice of the students on how they move their knowledge to practice and in frequency tables. Frequency tables in qualitative content analysis are acceptable and included as White and Marsh (2006) pointed out, as long as the “simple tabulations or in cross-tabulations show relationships” (p. 39). This is also supported by Krippendorff (2013), who stated that "counting is justifiable only when the resulting frequencies mean something... and whether is leads to answering a research question" (p. 189). For program evaluation purposes and understanding the frequency that students demonstrated their knowledge added clarity in answering the research questions and helped to
illuminate areas of strength, areas that need strengthening and student preference (micro versus macro level of practice).

**Trustworthiness of the Research Study**

Qualitative content analysis relies on several strategies for evaluating trustworthiness that are consistent with the general rules of qualitative research design. These are established through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Padgett, 1998; Rubins & Babbie, 2008; White & Marsh, 2006). Credibility or internal validity was established through prolonged exposure of the researcher, through a peer de-briefer and the use of an audit trail (Heikkilä & Ekman, 2003; White & Marsh, 2006). Transferability or external validity was established through diversity in the sample (diversity in life experience of traditional vs. adult aged students). Dependability was established through the use of both concept and theory memos (to be explained further below) by the researcher. These memos can reveal patterns in the researcher’s interpretation and understanding of patterns or constructs within and/or from the data (White & Marsh, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally confirmability related to objectivity and whether the data support the conclusion as assessed by conceptual consistency between the text and the conclusion that is drawn (White & Marsh, 2006).

Prolonged engagement may be a factor as the primary researcher has shared the academic year with the students. Her interactions with students may have influenced the data or she may have developed a bias based on being familiar with the students’ writing and work. The familiarity of the primary researcher with the students and her experience with this assignment also brings potential for strengths. These strengths include the knowledge of the teaching process, that the researcher was the faculty responsible for this assignment, and how the core competencies under consideration were operationalized for these students to apply in field...
practice. These strengths and weaknesses will be explored in more depth later, in limitations (Padgett, 1998; Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

The use of peer debriefing is a mechanism to explore the data analysis experience while conducting this study and evaluate bias on this researcher’s part that may arise and influence the trustworthiness of this study (Padgett, 1998). Peer debriefing was used to establish the categories for coding in this study and was initially done as part of the previously discussed pilot study in 2012. The peers who provided debriefing (Ciarfella, 2012) were the faculty of the social work program at the time of the pilot. Since that time, they have not been nor are they currently involved in any way with this stage of the research. The feedback from these peers have been recorded in a summary document and will be utilized as part of audit trails in relation to the core competencies under consideration.

Throughout the coding and analysis process the use of peer debriefing was utilized to ensure the credibility of the findings (White & Marsh, 2006). It began with an initial meeting with Dr. Weldon from the College of Saint Rose in New York, to discuss the operationalization of the codes from our parallel coding process of a small sample of LCAs. She brings expert knowledge in the area of the CSWE Core Competencies as she is on the faculty of a CSWE accredited social work program. Dr. Weldon’s peer debriefer role aided in testing the clarity of coding definitions, the similarities between us of coded data that potentially could be combined under one theme and when discussing the need for additional codes. Throughout the data coding and analysis process, telephone contact was made as needed to discuss data, coding and connecting the data to the research questions.

To enhance the trustworthiness and rigor of this study (Padgett, 1998), Dr. Weldon’s function as a peer de-briefer also addressed and monitored for the effect of researcher reactivity,
experience with this assignment over time and any bias that may arise. Additionally, Dr. Weldon was instrumental in assessing for the criteria of confirmability that the data support the conclusion (White & Marsh, 2006).

To ensure credibility and dependability of this research, an auditing strategy was utilized. White and Marsh (2006) describe two types of memos that are common in qualitative content analysis. Concept memos focus on emerging concepts and the interpretation by the researcher of these concepts. The second type of memo are theory memos. The researcher will use the note feature of NVIVO and maintain personal notes on the research process, on feedback, and on decisions throughout this research project (Padgett, 1998; Rubins & Babbie, 2008; White & Marsh, 2006). This will formalize research decisions and produce an audit trail that will help to ensure dependability of the results.

The multiple stage plan in sampling for equal representation from the traditional age and adult cohort of students ensured the data collected represents diversity in student experience. However, the generalizability of this research is limited as this study will only be looking at the data of one graduated group of students, in one small BSW program at one point in time.

From the above outlined process, the findings from this study may be able to contribute to a program’s self-evaluation process to be used each year for future program improvement and consequently improvements in student outcomes. Depending on the results of the data analysis the LCA and use of RBT may prove to be an effective pairing for other programs to consider including it into their assessment strategies and self-evaluation process.

**Consent, Confidentiality and Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

Students were informed frequently, both verbally and in writing via program manuals, that data was being collected on various assignments throughout their time as a social work
major as a part of the programs’ assessment practice for continuous program improvement. This means of informing students was a method of notification and served as the consent protocol for that academic institution. All identifying information was removed and the data collection process had taken all necessary steps to maintain student confidentiality as no participant identifier or demographic information was to be collected. There is no direct or indirect harm or deception (Padgett, 1998) to the students from this study and as such this research study qualified for an expedited review, “as it poses no more than minimal risk of harm or discomfort to the subjects” (OHRP, n.d.). A consent process would have created the only identifiable link to the student and, rather a waiver of consent was sought from and granted by the IRB at the college where the data are stored. A second exemption application for this study was granted by the University at Albany IRB for the dissertation.

Confidentiality is maintained by following the NASW Code of Ethics (2008) for research. Only the primary researcher (who is was at the time an employee of the college and instructor in the course that the LCA is based) collected the data for this study by transferring the LCA electronically from the college secure internet learning system onto a password-protected computer for analysis. Additional steps to protect participants was conducted by the primary/sole researcher who extracted the two specified SWPCs under consideration from the LCA and removed any names or personal identifiers to protect the identities of students and field settings. As noted above, each LCA was assigned a random number prior to being uploaded into the NVIVO qualitative analysis software. Only the aggregate data will be reported in the dissertation, future presentations, future publications, and to the department for its continuous program evaluation purposes.
Chapter 6 – Research Findings

This chapter presents the research findings from the data collected on the final semester learning contract assignment (LCA) from a cohort of social work students who have graduated with their BSW. It is organized first with the findings from the content within the LCA grouped by the seven Identifiers for SWPC 3 then SWPC 8; second the findings are then presented for SWPC 3 and SWPC 8 from the RBT perspective. These two areas of the findings are directly linked to resolving the two research questions but a final comparison of the adult to the traditional student cohorts is provided. This was done to offer another perspective of the data and to stimulate further research recommendations. Tables have been compiled for visual representation of the data and quotes from the students are included to demonstrate how they moved their classroom education into field practice. Finally, results of the study will be discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

Findings

As stated in the preceding literature review and methodology sections, the LCA has an open design that may allow students to show how they document their learning, affording them the broadest choice to communicate (operationalize) their understanding of classroom content as it applies in their field experience. Specifically, the design of the LCA is to capture “how” students’ learn by how they translate their experience through their reports of cognitive, self-reflective and/or psychomotor activities (Anderson et al., 2001; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b). The findings will first be presented from the more concrete Identifiers (1-5), then Identifier 6 for rival explanations and finally, the combined Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (RBT). A seventh Identifier was also created based on a new theme that emerged from this data and that was only present in SWPC 8. A comparison between the two
cohorts of students will be done at the end of the discussion section. The choice to present the
two cohorts’ data separately and with combined totals was done to inform future
recommendations for the LCA’s use.

The data related to SWPC were reviewed in their entirety and not separated by individual
practice behaviors. By not looking at each practice behavior, but instead examining each SWPC
as a full competency, it allowed for evidence of the Identifiers to be in multiple places within
each case and for each LCA to be explored as a ‘whole’ experience on “how” students
understood and applied classroom concepts in their practice setting. This aligns with the 2015
EPAS where evaluation of the student should be made on the competency not individual practice
examples. This approach allowed for the diversity of their voices to be considered in the
interpretation of the data (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006). Finally, due to the limited
amount of data and single point in time of its collection, there were not sufficient data available
to examine the individual practice behaviors. The two above noted analysis decisions were made
to keep the exploratory nature of this study open to finding evidence of the movement of
classroom knowledge to practice. Potentially, a recommendation for a future exploratory study
utilizing these data would survey each of the individual practice behaviors with a research
question that examines the quality of the data as it pertains to that specific practice behavior.

Social Work Program Competency – 3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate
professional judgments (CSWE, 2008)

SWPC 3 asks student to apply their critical thinking skills to inform and communicate
their developing professional judgment. In field practice the expectation set forth for this cohort
of students was to identify the knowledge from the classroom they used to inform their thinking
and actions. Although, this competency is applicable for both the micro and macro levels of
practice, this writer’s experience with students’ use of this SWPC in the LCA, typically focuses more on micro level practice. The students are asked to reflect through self-assessment an estimation of their level of competency in this area and set goals for themselves as part of ongoing professional development. Table 5 is a summary of the data. Identifier 4, which asks students to use a social work concept or theory demonstrated the greatest application of knowledge. Identifier 5, which asked students to identify a course by name was the second most likely way to show how students moved their learning to practice. With Identifier 2 (a combination of the three sources of reading), which asks students to apply a course reading being the third. The analysis to follow explores the Identifiers with the least to most evidence.

**Table 5 Summary of SWPC 3 Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier Codes – SWPC 3</th>
<th>Identifier 1</th>
<th>Identifier 2</th>
<th>Identifier 3</th>
<th>Identifier 4</th>
<th>Identifier 5</th>
<th>Identifier 6</th>
<th>Identifier 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifier 1 Name of a Professor from a Social Work Course</td>
<td></td>
<td>Legislation or public or agency Policy is cited or used</td>
<td>Peer Rev Outside Articles or references</td>
<td>Any Social Work Concept or theory taught in the classroom</td>
<td>Course Name</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Report no opportunity to practice SWPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults (n=8)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (n=8)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub total</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Identifier 1 students are asked to reference a name of a professor for their social work courses that informed their thinking or self-reflection. The names of these professors were changed to ensure their confidentiality at the time of data collection. One student reported that “… Prof. X discussed approaches of use in his practice (Solution Focused Therapy & Motivational Interviewing)” and another who reported an experience from their field agency “… was very interesting and it further enhanced the knowledge I acquired while writing my paper on kinship vs. traditional foster care for my Research Class with Dr. Z”. Both examples
demonstrated that an experience with a classroom faculty helped them to move knowledge about theories to practice.

Identifier 3 sought evidence of how students used knowledge gained from or refer to a course assignment. This appeared three times in the data where specific assignments were noted. One student commented that “…assignments like literature review in social work theory and practice helped me gain knowledge and skills on conducting research to guide my practice.” Students do search outside literature to learn more about the populations that they are working with or therapeutic techniques that the agency uses in its delivery of services. Another student noted that “…dialogues assignment in methods 1 helped me with written and oral communication skills.” While the third student noted how “The family assessment assignment in methods 2 helped me to gain more skills in acquiring knowledge about families.” These two assignments are cornerstones in social work practice and for students to express insight from their experience in field practice as evidence that students do move the classroom knowledge to field practice.

Initially Identifier 2 was examined solely for course assigned readings but based on the preliminary review of the findings, students were citing other sources beyond their assigned readings and text books. A decision was made to refine the data analysis to split this Identifier to include other sources of readings that students were drawing from to inform their field practice. Data were divided into three sub-categories during the second round of coding to see if any themes were more dominant than others. For Identifier 2, course readings were coded in only one case where a student cited the author of a text book in their LCA, “Motivational Interviewing is an approach that attempts to encourage motivation by reducing client ambivalence and encouraging the motivation to change (Walsh, 2006, p. 229)”.
public/agency policy evidence was found in four instances in the data. Students talked about agency policy for consents to release information as exemplified here, “…in the cases where the client has signed the release at local service provider, I still have them sign one on my end for my file just to cover all my bases.” In the next narrative, the student addressed pertinent laws as a review in recovery groups; “Next group sessions topic is going to be on the law and the new DWI limit” to teach the consequences of driving while under the influence of alcohol. Students also had the experience of importance of certification audits by governing bodies, one narrative talked about an experience during “quarterly audits, in which they went over my notes to see if the notes were completed correctly and they have questioned me about the program and the individuals within the program.” These narratives highlight student awareness of policies that structure how services are delivered.

The third subcategory looked for evidence of references to peer reviewed articles or references that were outside the required reading or text book for the course. Students demonstrated the skills to find these articles as seen in this example, “Then, I looked articles up on Academic Search Elite. Keywords that I used were Developmental Disabilities, Spinal Bifida, and strengthen-based theory. I distinguished and appraised the articles and focus on some articles that would help client.” They also critiqued the information that they found with what they were learning in their field practice and in the classroom, “Solution Focused Therapy & Motivational Interviewing, which is consistent with what I have read in the literature and consistent with Ronald H. Rooney, author of Strategies for Work with Involuntary Clients.” The LCA is a place to capture these activities and demonstrates students were applying what they read, as well as their ability to find relevant and peer reviewed articles to inform their practice.
The combination of all three sub-categories for the Identifier 2 coding provided evidence that students use reading materials to inform their practice. All three sub-codes are indicative of learning from the classroom and by students taking initiative to be self-directed and engaging in their own professional development. Combined evidence of this is found seven times in the data and suggests there is a relationship between how students move their knowledge to field practice. They do this by using the reading material to inform their thinking and their practice.

Identifier 5 asks students to name a specific course names that helped inform their thinking or actions in field practice. Evidence of this occurred in nine cases and students named classes such as these four examples: Method I (a practice course), Methods II (groups and communities course), Social Service Theory and Practice, and Senior Integrative Seminar (the capping course) which focuses on ethical decision making. Understanding the influence of macro level practice in practice settings was demonstrated in this narrative, “Methods II class (macro level practice course) and field practice internship (practice-wisdom) talks about the silos of Federal Policies and their trickle-down effects. It also talks about the silo and the trickle up effect.” This narrative was a student’s attempt to explore how policies change and can work in a vacuum from each other. The understanding for social work knowledge and perspective was demonstrated by this next narrative, “self-determination and resilience, I have learned that the strengths theory/ perspective I learned in SS/TP (social service and theory practice course) has really helped me empower all my clients.” Another narrative that focused on the use of engagement skills is, “My teacher also integrates practice skills I learned in Methods I (micro practice course) on how to engage and work with clients when she is doing individual therapy”. And a narrative that considered how ethical dilemmas or problems can arise in their practice setting, drew on knowledge from “… seminar [where] we used the example of children in foster
care’s reproductive rights. OCFS states clear laws on dealing with ethical dilemmas including pregnancies and prevention especially if the laws are not familiarized by the social worker.”

Although the specific course name itself was not coded individually, a return to the data revealed that students did identify more closely to Methods I course for SWPC 3 (mentioned four times) but also touched on a wide array of their program courses (Methods II with one mention; Research Methods with one reference; Social Services Theory & Practice with two references; and Human Behavior in the Social Environment with one reference). From these examples students did connect a classroom experience to their thinking about events or services at their agencies.

Identifier 4 had 30 examples of any social work concept or theory taught in the classroom informing the students thinking or practice in field. Social work concept such as this student’s narrative, “Used genogram to assess client’s relationship with family members” or the use of behavior modification with, “… guests being put on behavior contracts. This is similar to the contracting work we do with clients in order to reach mutually agreed upon goals.” These are both examples of specific social work concepts or skills being used in their field practice.

Equally true are these next two examples of students recognizing social work models of practice, such as identifying, “Task oriented approaches are most definitely utilized quite a bit at my agency. The goal is to keep parents focused so that they can accomplish all of their goals and meet the requirements set by DSS or the courts.” The next student identified their understanding and use of interviewing skills by being engaged with their client in “active listening, reflecting content and feelings, showing empathy, having the client come up with solutions and asking open ended questions”. As seen in the above narratives from students’ LCA, theoretical and/or intervention (either may work here) models and perspectives are clearly identified. Having
evidence of this occurring on 30 occasions reveals that this is one of the consistent methods of how students demonstrate their learning.

Identifier 6 was categorized as “other” to detect and categorize themes that did not fit in the preceding five Identifiers and those which might present rival explanation of how students move their classroom experience to field practice. This category afforded the researcher the opportunity to be flexible and open to different points of view or diversity in the students’ voices (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006). Data that related to learning from the classroom experience and field practice but were not associated with the more concrete Identifiers 1-5 resulted in the following three themes that were coded in Identifier 6: student insight development, how their work has direct/indirect impact, and how they applied use of self.

One student that demonstrated insight wrote, “Critical thinking is very important in the group home, as people’ lives are being directly impacted by the choices made. With regards to SWPC 3, I think that this was biggest realization; the choices I make in the office only tend to indirectly affect consumers, or directly impact them in ways I do not see”. In my experience, students look for obvious or direct cause/effect relationships between actions and a change or result. For this student, the narrative demonstrated a higher level of learning about intended and unintended consequences of decision making. This narrative demonstrated a student’s realization of the insight into how what he/she is doing has real consequences for their clients. Another narrative demonstrated a student’s insight of what they bring from their life experience to their professional development, “My experience with DV [domestic violence] enables me to see through the manipulation the perpetrator attempts to weave and, I hope enables me to be more effective in reaching the victims” and provides for deeper exploration of the use of self in supervision. This narrative would be an opportunity for faculty to be sure the student is not being
triggered by their past experiences either of being someone who experienced domestic violence or a history of providing services in this area of practice. In both cases, this narrative is an opportunity for the agency and/or the faculty field supervisor to explore how our life experiences can be effective in practice and to ensure self-care. This narrative is the realization that our personal histories or stories are relevant to ethical and informed practice when used effectively.

In sum, the findings from Identifiers 1-6 all revealed evidence of how students were moving their classroom knowledge to field practice. Evidence was found across all the categories as indicators of ways students moved knowledge to field practice. The combined traditional and adult cohort narratives that contained Identifiers for course readings (n=7); course concepts/theory (n=31) and course names (n=9) were the most prevalent.

**Social Work Program Competency 8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services (CSWE, 2008)**

SWPC 8 asks student to engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services. In field practice the expectation set forth to students for this competency was to consider the larger macro level systems influence on their work and the work of their agencies in providing services to clients. Each competency in the LCA has a requirement to reflect and engage in self-assessment of their level of competency and their goals for their ongoing professional development. Given the broad level of direction described earlier, the data for this SWPC were the lightest. This finding may be indicative of how students view themselves as being more clinical or micro and less macro level social workers. Analysis revealed that entries were brief, more general in tone and less purposefully related to the competency. Table 6 and the examples that follow will support this observation.
The same Identifiers 1-7 were used to code SWPC 8 that were used to code SWPC 3. No evidence in the data was found in two Identifiers for either cohort, Identifier 1 students are asked to reference a name of a professor for their social work courses that informed their thinking or self-reflection; and in Identifier 3 asked the same regarding a course assignment. There was also an absence in two of the three subcategories of Identifier 2 for course reading or peer reviewed outside article; The absence of data in these areas indicates students may not have been able to connect the work that they do in the classroom, from the macro level courses to how it informs their practice.

In Identifier 2, the subcategory that coded for evidence of legislation or public/agency policy did reveal eleven narratives. This was seen in students’ narratives referred to legislation such as “The Violence Against Women Act recently got reauthorized in congress. This act has provided huge amounts of resources to the mothers of many children. Domestic Violence is not only a spousal issue, but a family issue as well.” This narrative demonstrated a student’s understanding of how a piece of legislation allocates funding to agencies to provide services to people who have experienced domestic violence. Another narrative, “I can think back to when TANF was created and can see how many of my clients are taking advantage of the policies that

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**Table 6: Summary of SWPC 8 Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier Codes –</th>
<th>Identifier 1 Name of a Professor from a Social Work Course</th>
<th>Identifier 2 Course Reading</th>
<th>Identifier 3 Legislation or public agency policy is cited or used</th>
<th>Identifier 4 Peer Rev Outside Articles or references</th>
<th>Identifier 5 Any Social Work Concept or theory taught in the classroom</th>
<th>Identifier 6 Course Name</th>
<th>Identifier 7 Other</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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were put in place...” demonstrated a similar insight on a federal policy’s influence on the services a student’s agency is providing.

SWPC 8 also seeks evidence of advocacy from students, these next two narratives are examples of students involved in advocating for a companion dog program for support to vulnerable population when they are involved in court appearances. This does so by describing actions taken, “Helping Senator X’s aide write the law proposal using information about the case, and knowledge that I have gained about the children of my agency has allowed me to advocate for policies that advance the social well-being of the children who have to testify in court against their families.” The next demonstrates thinking about social change, “One of the policies that I would advocate for is the Mental Health Act of 2007 because most of the clients we serve have mental health issues” given the experience they have had in working with a population that they are serving.

Identifier 4 had two narratives that demonstrated an application of theory/concepts from the classroom by students. “The trip to state capital, is a way to get people involved in legislation for policies to research a cure, address the needs and rights of PWD (persons with dementia) and their families. This is a chance to persuade elected officials to address those needs through legislative action.” The social work concept of advocacy and social justice was seen in this narrative as well as also seen in the next narrative. The student shared her experience of attending the annual “NASW conference gave me insight to all the policy actions that are currently underway. I was able to advocate for some of my own clients as well as learning how other professionals advocate for theirs.” This narrative demonstrated the student’s understanding of the role of the social work professional association the National Association for Social Work’s (NASW) and its legislative agenda.
Identifier 5 asks students to refer to a specific course name that helped inform their thinking or actions in field practice. Evidence of this occurred in eight cases with the majority being associated with Social Welfare Policy and Analysis (SWPA) course (n=4) and one case for each of the following other courses; Methods II, Research Methods, Senior Integrative Seminar II and Field Education Seminar. One student shared the following drawing on the Research Methods course, “[1]…recently attended an in-service presentation about kinship foster care. It was very interesting, and it further enhanced the knowledge I acquired while writing my paper on kinship vs. traditional foster care for my Research Class.” This narrative captured both Methods II and Field Education Seminar, “Methods II class and field practice internship (practice-wisdom) talks about the silos of Federal Policies and their trickle-down effects. It also talks about the silo and the trickle up effect”. Students next reference to SWPA in the narratives were insightful, “In policy class, we learned that policy is put in place to fix problems and dictated by the greater society but when they don’t fix problems and conflict with what we do as social workers we should challenge those policies to benefit our client’s needs”. This led students to consider what action steps are needed when policies are no longer accomplishing what is needed or intended to do since first being adopted. This next narrative is another example of the requirement to demonstrate their thinking (if not able to engage in action) about this competency, “Policy and policy action dictate much of what the service providers at my agency can and cannot do… because policy (SWPC 8) creates and regulates services that my agency needs/ uses. We learned about this in depth in our Social Policy class”. The student was making the connection between what they learned in the classroom to how their agency sustained itself in the community.
Finally, Identifier 7 was noted solely in SWPC 8, due to the frequency of students who reported not having an opportunity to practice this competency. This researcher determined it was important to highlight evidence of students’ lack opportunity as it held relatively equal evidence in both the traditional and the adult cohorts, \((n= 6:5 \text{ respectively})\). This conflicts with the findings from Identifier 2 subcategory for evidence of legislation and public/agency policy. When comparing to evidence of students citing legislative or public/agency policy eleven times but also citing they did not have an opportunity to practice this competency eleven times, suggests there were student who were either not actually having the opportunity or students who might not have been aware that they were demonstrating knowledge associated with macro level practice.

Traditionally, macro level or policy practice is more challenging for students to grasp. SWPC 8 was also frequently discussed with students throughout the academic year. It was the one that they reported the most struggle despite the encouragement, direction provided at multiple points in time during the semester on this SWPC, and the broad nature of the directions provided to students. The expectation asked students to consider/share ‘what would you do if you could’ engage in advocacy or look outside the agency for opportunities to learn more about where funding comes from or who regulates their agency and encouraged students to be aware of or participate in events that would demonstrate these practice behaviors. Yet, they were reporting no opportunity to practice this SWPC while demonstrating this knowledge by citing legislation or public/agency policies in the LCA that contradicted these reports. As noted above, a broad and liberal arena of options were discussed with students both in the classroom and at field visits but this did not change their ability to understand that they were in fact were sharing experiences that demonstrated their understanding of this competency. This will be explored further in the
conclusion section when discussing recommendations for how to further develop the LCA in the future.

Identifier 6 was categorized in order to identify themes that do not fit the preceding five Identifiers and those which may present rival explanations of how students move their classroom experience to field practice and allowed for broader, subjective interpretation (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006). There were two examples of narratives taken from the LCA, that were coded as other. One narrative demonstrated student insight into their field experiences by writing, “I thought the DMR [Demographics on Minority Report] presentation to the courts was well received. I wish I could stay a bit longer and be involved in the process of critically analyzing policies and collaborating for policies that are fairer to all clients.” This narrative was coded as other, as it indicated a level of commitment to the work that this student had. For this researcher, it marked a change in maturity for this student by seeing that tasks in field practice agencies do have meaning and can lead to change. Concern or interest in seeing how this change happens suggests a sense of stepping beyond traditional academic learning to professional practice. The second narrative, “Me and my colleagues have invited the local senators to attend the end of the of the year picnic at IDT [Intensive Day Treatment] to allow them to come see one of the many programs that help children who have mental health issues and get them to make awareness of the needed services in this county, especially within the school setting.” This narrative is an example of a student reaching beyond her classroom or field experience to engage elected officials to create change.

In sum, Identifier 2 (legislation or public/agency policy), and Identifier 5 (course names) clearly demonstrate students’ preference and ability to move classroom knowledge to practice.
Identifier 7 (not able to demonstrate this SWPC) was only present here in SWPC 8 and contradicts itself by the data that were seen in Identifier 2 noted above.

**Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (RBT) of Learning: SWPC 3 & 8**

The following data analysis was informed by three domains, cognitive, affective and psychomotor of RBT of Learning (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b). A summary of how these domains were defined was provided in Table 4. This summary included Blooms’ original taxonomy, the integration of RBT and moving forward collectively will be referred to as RBT (Anderson et al., 2001; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bloom, 1956). RBT of learning sets forth objectives for designing and evaluating students’ achievement of course goals. This framework is being used for coding to examine the data from another perspective or provide an alternate view on how students demonstrate competency. A summary of this data is seen below in Table 7.

**Table 7: Summary of Bloom’s Taxonomy & RBT Data for SWPC 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RBT SWPC 3</th>
<th>Cognitive Domain</th>
<th>Affective &amp; or Reflective Domain</th>
<th>Psycho Motor Domain</th>
<th>Three domains of learning were demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (n=8)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy - SWPC 3**

**Cognitive Domain**

Data analysis focused on finding evidence of the cognitive learning domain by identifying student entries in the LCA that drew upon knowledge from the classroom and demonstrated their ability to apply evidenced based knowledge to support their practice (Ahn et al., 2012; Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Gibbons, & Grey, 2004; Goldstein, 1993; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b). The cognitive domain also includes the development of intellectual skills
that can be seen in the students’ reasoning process. This incorporates the recall or recognition of specific facts, following assessment protocols, agency policies and concepts that serve in the development of their intellectual abilities and skills (Rambaree & Karlsson, 2012; Rovai, Wighting, Baker, & Grooms, 2009; Teater, 2011). Of the three domains for learning, the cognitive domain was detected the most in the data. There were 37 instances of students demonstrating this. Below are some narratives that display how students used their knowledge in field practice. The first example shows a student confronted with an unfamiliar diagnosis and how she used her skills at conducting a literature review to assess and locate a peer reviewed article to help gain this knowledge in working with someone who is diagnosed as having Spina Bifida.

Not knowing much about spinal bifida, I decided to look at multiple sources to obtain more information to better education myself about a client. I first started looking at Google search to find the right websites. I distinguish between the most accurate medical sites and amateur sites. Next, I looked in the college Library for more information. I appraised a book that focused on health care research on spinal bifida. Then, I looked articles up on Academic Search Elite. Keywords that I used were Developmental Disabilities, Spinal Bifida, and strengthen-based theory. I distinguished and appraised the articles and focus on some articles that would help my client.

Throughout this narrative, the student demonstrated a logical progression necessary to partialize the problem. First, she acknowledged her need to know more about Spinal Bifida, then she took steps to learn more by researching the diagnosis and being ready to apply this new information in working with her client.
In another example, a student drew on knowledge from various sources to accomplish a task. Critical thinking skills are captured in the cognitive domain in this example:

Creating surveys for agency has involved me using various sources of knowledge: the CQL [Council on Quality Leadership] handbook, our CQL committee (particularly the opinion of our residential liaison who I met with personally), my supervisor, my knowledge from my research methods class, surveys used my agency in the past, and even some consumers at our day habilitation program who I test ran some of the questions with. These sources came together and helped me develop the best survey possible [sic].

Here the student spoke directly to the practice behaviors in SWPC 3 that ask students to think critically and to apply this to their work, in this case it was to design a survey that would assess quality of care experienced by the population this agency serves.

A final example of a narrative that demonstrated a student’s efforts to apply new learning was seen by a student sharing their experience of learning about motivational interviewing, as “an approach that attempts to encourage motivation by reducing client ambivalence and encouraging the motivation to change (Walsh, 2006, p. 229). Although a novice at implementing these approaches, I have found them to be effective.”

The above narratives are examples of students using the LCA to show how they move new knowledge to practice that demonstrate the use of the cognitive domain. These narratives show how students are developing insight into their new skills as well as confidence by their own self-assessment of their level of competency with the practice behaviors in SWPC 3 and these narratives are consistent evidence of RBT objectives for the cognitive domain in teaching field education.
Affective Domain

Data analysis also focused on finding evidence of affective or self-reflection domain of learning by identifying student entries in the LCA that demonstrates the integration of a reflexive component to self-correction. Self-reflection on practice and through supervision provides students an opportunity to self-assess and correct which Goldstein (1993) believed to be the foundation of professional judgment and independent practice. Given this description, RBT’s second area, affective or emotional domain, addresses the requirement of self-reflective learning or how students develop self-reflective skills and self-awareness (i.e. boundaries, biases, physiological arousal, etc.) that unites social work knowledge with values and leads to self-correction (Ahn et al., 2012; Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Gibbons, & Grey, 2004; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001a). It also includes the way we deal with our experiences emotionally, such as our feelings, our values, what we appreciate, what motivates us and, reflects or a challenge to our sense of right or wrong; in general our attitudes about life (Rambaree & Karlsson, 2012; Rovai et al., 2009; Teater, 2011). The affective domain of learning also helps teach students to learn how to pick up non-verbal cues of communication and interpret these in working with our clients (Anderson et al., 2001). Evidence of students being self-reflective or demonstrating this awareness as a learning objective of the affective domain was found fourteen times in the data. For example, one student wrote:

I continue to be aware of different vocabulary that I use with clients, different age groups, along with clients who have limitations. I also am very aware of how I speak with my clients. Lately I recognize that when I am leaving and the adolescents ask why I am leaving I try not to say, “I’m going home” or “I have to go eat dinner with my family.”
Instead, I say something that wouldn’t be insulting or remind them that they are not home with their family like, “I have to leave now, because I have homework.

The insight that the student has brought forth could be related to the student paying attention to non-verbal cues, being sensitive to the meanings of basic behaviors and language found in residential care. That workers who are simply coming and going that are associated with the work can mean something different to the client in a residential program, who is not ‘going home’ the same as we do. The reflective quality of how students engage with their clients is seen in attempts to be sensitive to show dignity and respect for the client which is a core value in the social work code of ethics (National Association of Social Workers, n.d.).

The next narrative is an example of the self-reflective component of the affective domain and how this leads to self-monitoring in decision making:

Reflection and evaluation: Looking at the ECO-Map Model of intervention there may be help for this individual that the neighbor talks about. It can NOT be shared with the neighbor that the police have now contacted us regarding this person. This would be great to tell the neighbor that they are making progress, but confidentiality prohibits it. Here the student recognizes the boundaries of professional relationships and considers this ethical problem of wanting to help the neighbor be assured that progress is being made. The student recognized the solution or ‘right answer’ to the ethical problem is to maintain confidentiality as per the social work code of ethics (National Association of Social Workers, n.d.). Knowing who her primary client is and maintaining their confidentiality is in keeping with the NASW code of ethics.

These narratives demonstrate how students use models of assessment, their use of language and the values of the profession to reflect upon, to guide and to evaluate their work.
How students share their self-reflection or affective learning is informative for faculty. These entries demonstrate that students are preparing to engage in self-correction, and aligning their work so that it follows the profession’s standards and practice in an ethically responsible manner.

Psychomotor Domain

RBT’s psychomotor (or kinesthetic) domain looks at physical skills that are taught in the classroom or can be seen in CSWE’s social work curriculum focus on competency based skills and practice behaviors (Anderson et al., 2001; Clark, n.d.; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010a; Rambaree & Karlsson, 2012; Randall, n.d.; Teater, 2011). This area of data analysis explored how students were active participants in their own learning (Chan, 2010; Davenport & Davenport, 1988; Knowles, 1972; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b). Analysis explored how students ‘did’ something with their knowledge, and how they applied a model or used an assessment protocol or followed up an interaction with documentation in their practice. There were 23 instances of students’ narratives that demonstrating this.

The first narrative shares how a student ‘used an eco-map’ to engage a client in seeing relationships in her life from a more holistic perspective.

Used an eco-map to show my client where her strong, tenuous and stressful relationships in her life comes from. In past session, she has been feeling down about her life. I wanted to show her what was affecting her and making her feel depressed. During a session, we listed all her primary social systems and represented them as circles. We put client’s name in the middle and started talking about her family, the workshop, her favorite activities, and where she lives. We found out that her dad is a positive thing in her life; her step-mother is a negative.
It is clear in this narrative that the student was actively engaged with the client, and empowering the client to list the relationships and supports that she has around her. The student was able to perform the task of completing an eco-map outside of the classroom in actual practice with a client in their field setting and was able to help the client interpret their findings to validate positive relationships in her life.

The next narrative demonstrates a student following through on multiple steps or tasks in serving the needs of their client and protocol for the agency.

Recently I was talking with a client who was getting very worked up at the front desk at my agency. I spoke with her in an even and relaxed tone of voice in an effort to calm her down. Afterwards, I documented the exchange in an appropriate manner in HMIS [Health Management Information System]. I also told my supervisor.

Here the student engaging in dialogue with a client, employed an effective listening technique of remaining calm and lowering her tone to help de-escalate a situation and then followed through with the appropriate notification to her agency field supervisor and documented the exchange in the client’s record. All action steps that would be appropriate in this situation. The final narrative shared below is another example of action steps taken that are consistent with competence for SWPC 3, the student reported;

I used effective oral and written communication with working with her. I communicated and helped her with a conflict she had with her step-mother. I helped the client write down some happy memories that we are putting into a book about her life. This interaction went well.

This narrative was an example of a student engaged in a supportive dialogue, and teaching a client about journaling her feelings. These three narratives are a sample of the 23
instances that were identified in coding, that align with what the competency was seeking to see demonstrated (i.e., documentation skills, using models or theories to guide practice) and align with or represent the psychomotor domain appropriate for the competencies in SWPC 3.

**Integration of Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy’s three domains of learning**

Evidence of students connecting all three domains of RBT in practice is defined as an interplay, or the integration, of all the domains of learning. That is, after an encounter with a client or field supervisor or experience at the agency, the student would demonstrate an integrated understanding of an acquired new skill, knowledge, and attitude. The LCA is taught with the overall goal of having students see how all the core competencies work in unison, informing each other to guide our practice. This integrated domain would be examples that recognize how the core competencies are not isolated from each other as skills but integrated in how a professional social worker engages in practice. For this to happen or be seen, a chain of events that occur that could be linear or circular demonstrating how a student moved through critical thinking, reflecting, doing, and evaluating their interaction is documented in their narratives. There were fifteen instances of students demonstrating this and the first narrative is highlighted in bold to show how the student used all the domains in one interaction with a client:

When I started working with one of my client’s I saw in our intake assessment that bringing up traumatic events from the past had a negative effect on her emotional and mental wellbeing. I distinguished this behavior from her other behaviors and knew from my knowledge of human behavior and the social environment that opening up old wounds is not always easy for some people. Next time I met with that client I did not bring up issues from the past unless she brought them up first, and if we did talk about the past we kept it focused on positive topics.
The bold highlighting in the student’s narrative draws attention to affective domain of self-reflecting that one of the behaviors the client is demonstrating is related to trauma, then the knowledge (cognitive domain) gained about working with people with trauma in their histories came from the student’s course on human behavior and the action plan the student put in place for themselves as they engaged in the preparatory stage of planning (psychomotor domain) their session with the client.

The next narrative offers another example of this interplay of a student’s learning:

I find myself reflecting in the moment, at times, and asking a client if they know what something means. At times, talking professional becomes instinctual, so I have worked to become cognizant of that. I found myself working with a young lady. Although I do not remember what I said, I recall the expression on her face. Her expression (body language) was telling me that she did not understand what I had mentioned. I took her cue and asked her and sure enough, she was not able to make sense of what I said. In working with clients that are limited, it is also important to tailor the way you communicate, so that the individual is able to comprehend the information you are relaying.

This narrative began with a student reflecting (affective domain) on an experience of working with a client that may have had some cognitive limitations (cognitive domain). Being aware of non-verbal cues (affective domain) helped this student recognize that the client was not fully understanding their conversation and the student engaged (psychomotor domain) in message checking (cognitive skill). The student then validated for herself a method to ‘tailor the way you communicate’ as a way to move forward in her practice.
The final narrative example will be highlighted to see the interplay of the domains in the LCA:

An hour **before play therapy begins we discuss each client** and the needs that is presented in their file. This allows us to better our treatment with them through play. For example, a young boy who was **ripped out of his home with 3 other siblings shows signs of attachment issues**. When he arrives at play therapy it takes coercion to even get him in the room. **He also always wants to leave his jacket on showing that he doesn’t want to get comfortable enough to stay here.** With this client, we must **show extra attention, but not too much** that will make him uncomfortable. He expresses a lot of anger towards his mother when playing with the doll house. The mother always gets thrown through the house and sometimes even across the room. **We have recently consulted with his social worker about the relationship** and had found out that there is an order of protection against his mother. This information and observation in play therapy **helps Dr. C with his treatment plan** when he meets with this client one on one for weekly therapy sessions in his office.

In this narrative, there are active steps prior to the session of preparatory planning (psychomotor domain); knowledge regarding attachment theory (cognitive domain) to inform the student in what they may be observing given this preparatory stage of chart review, and reflection (affective domain) on what these behaviors mean. The student modified the level of her interaction with the child as seen by her reference of balancing the amount of attention (psychomotor and affective domain) given to the child and his behaviors but not too much that might lead to his feeling ‘uncomfortable’. The student also acted on the experience from this session to consult an agency social worker and the agency psychologist to inform their work with
this child. What is also notable is the language the student used to write this narrative ‘ripped
from the home’ may hold the student’s values and feelings about this child’s presence in care and
feedback from the field faculty here would have been provided to explore the meaning this term
‘ripped’ holds for the student.

In all three of these examples students are reflective, drawing on knowledge of their
specific populations and then acting on that knowledge in their next steps such as communicating
findings/impressions of services or consulting or message checking with a client. These
examples were consistent with the remaining twelve instances of students moving through
critical thinking, reflecting, doing, evaluating their interaction in their LCA narratives.

**Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy – SWPC 8**

The data analysis for SWPC 8, followed the same definitions of the three domains of
RBT of Learning (Anderson et al., 2001; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Petracchi & Zastrow,
2010b). A summary of SWPC 8 findings (Table 8) shows that evidence was found across all the
individual domains. The traditional students were the only cohort that provided narratives that
demonstrated how the domains are integrated as the competencies, guiding their practice with
critical thinking, classroom learning, the use of self-reflection and applying them to field
practice. Further exploration of why this occurred and the difference between the cohorts will be
discussed in the conclusion section of this study.

**Table 8: Summary of RBT Data for SWPC 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RBT</th>
<th>SWPC 8</th>
<th>Cognitive Domain</th>
<th>Affective &amp; or Reflective Domain</th>
<th>Psycho Motor Domain</th>
<th>Three domains of learning were demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults (n=8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (n=8)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cognitive Domain

Data analysis focused on the cognitive learning domain by identifying student entries in the LCA that demonstrated their ability to integrate evidenced based knowledge from the classroom to support the profession’s practice skills (Ahn et al., 2012; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Bogo, Regehr, Logie, et al., 2011; Gibbons, & Grey, 2004; Goldstein, 1993; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010b; Rambaree & Karlsson, 2012; Rovai et al., 2009; Teater, 2011). There were seventeen instances of students demonstrating this domain with the first narrative showing how a student moved a specific piece information regarding legislation from being academic to applied knowledge that she used to inform a project that she was interested in doing at her field agency.

Lobbying for legislation to not allow the Funeral Package Pricing bills A08132 (Weprin) and S5627 (O’Mara) to pass [will help protect] …. the grieving consumer not to be financially taken advantage of and [to] continue to receive an itemized choice of services is one outlet, but there must be more. Not having practice-wisdom experience in this field has allowed me to see where I could become more active in legislation [sic].

This student was interesting in advanced funeral planning for people prior to their death and to protect their families who are making these arrangements in a time of grief. The student took the initiative outside of any program courses, to locate this information by searching the legislative databases for the above noted act.

The next narrative was an example of a student following direction that was given to ‘think about what they could do if they had the opportunity’ to engage in policy formation. This direction was given to all students to balance out concerns that agencies did not have a lobby day or opportunity to consider macro level practice. This narrative speaks to the direction given in the classroom for completing the LCA for SWPC 8 and demonstrates that she did have
knowledge from completing a separate task to establish a workshop which could lead to a new agency policy that requires this training in family court.

…but I can imagine that policy formation in the family court unit might involve the incorporation of a group that is required. For instance, I am working on putting together some information to establish a Victim Empathy Workshop or Panel and / or a Bullying Workshop. If this comes to fruition and the department felt that it was effective, they could implement a policy that might require certain juveniles attend.

The final narrative follows the similar direction as the prior account and displays how the student was thinking ‘what would I do, if I could’ as she came to recognize the needs of the people she was serving in her agency.

One of the policies that I would advocate for is the Mental Health Act of 2007 because most of the clients we serve have mental health issues. This act gives our clients the rights to services that are needed and support services that wouldn’t be provided if they didn’t have a mental health problem. Some of our clients need to be hospitalized for serious issues and with this Act being in place we can get them the services they need that are in hospitals.

The above narrative drew on knowledge gained in advocacy skills and how legislation helps create the services that are needed and that might need protection or expansion. A final example of a narrative that captures the cognitive domain is how a student explored a judicial decision that lead to regulations regarding care for people who live in an institutional setting.

Looking at this policy, I first define what the Olmstead Act was about. This ruling from the Supreme Court in 1999 states that individuals with developmental disabilities have the right to live in the community rather than in institutions. This policy effect the [name
of an institution] and many individuals on campus are moving to community houses.

New York State has created the New York State Olmstead Implementation Plan. This plan deals with integrated housing, integrated employment, transportation and community services. This Act will promote the well-being of those isolated within institution and will provide a better quality of life for them.

The student learned of the Olmstead Act and recognized that it was critical to how her internship was changing how they provided services. To increase her knowledge on this act, the student took the initiative to learn more through her research.

There is evidence for both cohorts of students in the LCA that students were demonstrating their knowledge in SWPC 8. The four examples provided above were consistent with the remaining thirteen instances of where students spoke about legislative and agency policies and applied it to their understanding of the context under which their agency functions and how the agency provides services. The cognitive domain seeks evidence for faculty to evaluate, and the data in SWPC 8 supported that students used the LCA to communicate how they moved their knowledge of macro level practice from the classroom to better understand services they are providing and how their agency functions.

**Affective Domain**

Data analysis also focused on finding evidence of self-reflection or affective learning by identifying student entries in the LCA that demonstrates the integration of a reflexive component to self-correction. This domain looks for evidence of paying attention to one’s reactions, values and the values of others. SWPC 8 is about advocacy and policy, and the students were directed to consider how social welfare polices align with current values of larger society or those who hold the power to influence them. There were 15 instances of students demonstrating this, the first
narrative is an example of understanding the importance of human rights, “…social policy that I believe is worth formulating regarding my population is something for childcare or the right to daycare.” This student felt that day care is critical to success in helping the parents who she was working with return to school or work themselves. That without accessible and safe daycare it was a social injustice, a value that she held due to her concern for these families who are trying to improve their quality of life but struggling given the limitations of the daycare system around them.

The second narrative comes from another student who was aligned with the rights of older people in her community. She was referring to a promotional and public service message to raise awareness about Alzheimer’s disease. Her values are evident in the regret that there was not sufficient time between having this idea and the time to make it happen for when the agency was going to lobby at the state capital.

I wish that the idea came sooner so that they would be ready for the Albany trip to raise awareness, but maybe I can just think that they are ready for next year. Maybe by the first Walk for Alzheimer’s events on the walkway over the Hudson they will be ready for……

The next example of a student’s narrative shows how a student developed insight into her learning experience as whole, “…what I am starting to realize with all the different things I still have to show her, is that I really have operated independently. I’ve actually surprised myself while going back and looking at all the work I’ve done.” The student is referring to her agency field supervisor and her recognition that SWPC 8 may not be as ‘easily seen’ as other core competencies, as it may be more about thinking ‘if I could I would do’ plans. That in reflecting on the body of work this student had done, she could validate her gains in this competency and the need to share these with her agency field supervisor.
The last narrative shows how insightful a student was when considering SWPC 8 and recognizing that social workers do valuable work that can lead to improving the quality of the lives of our clients.

I feel like advocating is one of those great things we do as social workers and advocating for change to effectively help our clients is more a greater reward because we challenge what has been in place and sometimes policies that have been put in place disconnects with some agencies missions.

The student talked about how helping our clients is a ‘greater reward’ and this association captures the objective of social work education of instilling the values of the profession as worthwhile. Evidence of students meeting objectives of self-reflection in the affective domain was seen for both cohorts of students and well supported in the narratives provided. Using RBT’s affective domain to set objectives for evaluation in the LCA is successful in seeing how students demonstrate this learning in their field practice.

**Psychomotor Domain**

Data analysis explored how students ‘did’ something with their knowledge, and how they applied it in their practice (Rambaree & Karlsson, 2012; Rovai et al., 2009; Teater, 2011). This domain held four indications in SWPC 8 of students acting on their learning or moving their critical thinking into decisions after self-reflection to correct or guide their application of skills.

The first narrative demonstrated a student who took on the task of creating a manual for families considering becoming foster care parents.

I will analyze the current policies at Department of Social Services and formulate a foster care packet for families residing in [the county]. This will advance the social well-being of the parents and children involved. I have made a lot of progress with this
manual and it has helped me to find interest in the macro view of practice. It has allowed me to promote and advance social well-being. I have learned more about policies and best practices for foster care. The manual helps to advance social well-being for both the agency and parents.

The student demonstrated drawing on various sources of information to create a manual and then connecting this with the larger mission of the foster unit in her agency.

The next two narratives both have students attending a public forum, “I attended the forum with my peers from the social work cohort at Community Voices Heard and the Community Partnership in which we were able to hear our (state) representatives as well as Congressperson (X)”; and participating in a lobby day by going to the state capital, “… is a way to get people involved in legislation for policies to research a cure, address the needs and rights of PWD (person with dementia) and their families. This is a chance to persuade elected officials to address those needs through legislative action.” Both of these were examples of students acting on this competency by attending two different forums where advocacy can occur.

All the narratives were examples of students acting on knowledge. From attending forums or lobby day to creating a new manual for their agency. Of the three domains, this domain held the least evidence and potentially presented a larger challenge for them to conceptualize. This will be explored further in the conclusion section to validate that although there was evidence of capturing this domain in the LCA, recommendations may help students further expanded upon what they are doing in regard to this SWPC.
Demonstration of RBT’s three domains of learning

There were three instances of students demonstrating all three learning domains in SWPC 8. The first narrative demonstrated how a student took knowledge on therapeutic companion dogs to an elected official after meeting this representative at a retirement party of a companion dog that celebrated her service to children and the value this program holds for the future (bold is used to highlight the students use of the three domains to the reader, and is not done by the student).

…provided Senator (Y)’s aide, (YZ), with information on court house dogs that Dr. XX asked me to give to him. I worked with [Dr. XX] after the [dog’s] retirement party to write up a proposed law that will be given to the Senator to try and get passed. I continue to work with Senator (Y)’s staff, Dr. XX, and the courthouse dog people to get a policy passed for the use of facility trained service dogs in family court…. I am very excited to be involved in advocating for this piece of legislature.

This narrative held all the evidence of meeting the objectives of all three domains. Students demonstrated the cognitive domain by preparing a brief to be given to an elected official and the psychomotor domain is seen in her continuing to work with the Senator’s staff by engaging in advocacy and follow up. The affective domain was seen in the intent of this student to promote this program by sharing her belief in its value.

The next narrative also has evidence of meeting the objectives for all three domains: Since the caregiver fairy cannot be around much longer in the future unless they continue with the idea, the car sunshade is the next idea to get people to support Alzheimer’s Association and its purpose. They are interested and are having the branding and communications department contact me to approve the prototype. With approval
from that department the national resource center will get a price for producing these shades. **They have requested that I too get a price for comparison.** I have discussed this with my colleague, DD, who has a person that can price it. National would like our chapter to order them, test run them and then report the stats back to them. If it goes well then, they will mass market them on their website... **I wish that the idea came sooner** so that they would be ready for the Albany trip to raise awareness, but maybe I can just think that they are ready for next year.”

This student created a promotional character or prototype of ‘the caregiver fairy’ to raise awareness about the population her agency serves. Its success as promotional prototype demonstrated that it provided a contact and referral information source for people to reach out for assistance. The student’s design involved researching and ‘branding’ the message in alignment within the agency mission (cognitive domain); creating of a prototype (psychomotor domain) and her expression of regret that she was not able to complete this for a lobby day that she participated in (affective domain).

In sum, there was evidence of three instances of RBT domains being expressed together. Students did use self-reflection, their cognitive knowledge and applied their skills in their interactions in single interactions or experiences they shared from the field.

**Comparison of Adult to Traditional Cohort**

The sampling plan was purposeful in selecting equal numbers of adult to traditional aged students, to ensure diversity and balance in life experience of the students. Although, to compare the two cohorts held no relevance to the resolution of research questions, the comparison presents another view of the data and it provides an additional view of the use of the LCA as a way student of different ages demonstrated their learning. Table 9 compares the two cohorts on
Identifiers 1-7 and Table 10 compares cohorts when using the criteria defined by RBT. These tables were created to compare responses of adult to that of traditional students to provide this additional viewpoint from the data. The choice to sample an equal number from both cohorts aided in avoiding an over representation of one group over the other.

**Comparison of Adult to Traditional Cohort in Application of Classroom Content**

In looking at the data, in Table 9 there is evidence in the combined data from SWPC 3 and SWPC 8 with the adult and traditional cohorts for all Identifiers 1-7 with one exception of Identifier 3-course assignments. In looking at the subcategories of Identifier 2 – course readings, there is a greater absence when the codes are further defined for the traditional cohort where the only evidence is seen in student citing the use or are considering legislative or public/agency policy in their practice. The adult cohort had evidence across all the subcategories except for evidence missing in SWPC 8 for assigned course readings and peer reviewed outside articles or references. The absence of evidence of data in these area is explored in the discussion section.

**Table 9: Comparison of Adult to Traditional Cohort**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier Codes –</th>
<th>Identifier 1</th>
<th>Identifier 2</th>
<th>Identifier 3</th>
<th>Identifier 4</th>
<th>Identifier 5</th>
<th>Identifier 6</th>
<th>Identifier 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name of a Professor from a Social Work Course</td>
<td>Legislation or public/agency policy is cited or used</td>
<td>Peer Rev Outside Articles or references</td>
<td>Any Social Work Concept or theory taught in the classroom</td>
<td>Course Name</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Report no opportunity to practice SWPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 3 Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 8 Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Sub total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 8 Traditiona 1 (n=8)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 3 Traditiona 1 (n=8)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Sub total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both cohorts have areas that held no evidence for several individual Identifiers. In the adult cohort, this was Identifier 3 – course assignment and for the traditional cohort it was seen in two subcategories for Identifier 2 – course readings and peer reviewed articles. In Identifier 2, the subcategory that coded for evidence of legislation or public/agency policy did reveal eleven narratives with an even split between the adult and traditional cohorts (n=6:5 respectively). Students’ narratives referred to legislation that demonstrated an area of connection that is shared by both groups.

Neither cohort provided robust information regarding Identifier 1 – professor’s name (ratio 1:1); Identifier 2 subcategories – assigned course readings (adult cohort 1: traditional cohort 0); peer reviewed articles (adult cohort 2: traditional cohort 0); Identifier 3 – course assignment (adult cohort 0 and traditional cohort 3); and Identifier 6 – other (adult cohort 1 and traditional cohort 6). Identifiers 2’s subcategory found evidence of both cohorts of students using readings related to the legislative and/or public/agency policy that demonstrated students moving knowledge to the field (adult cohort = 10; traditional cohort = 5). This contradicted the evidence found in Identifier 7 where there was a close to equal noting of ‘not having opportunity’ to practice SWPC 8. This is interesting when you consider in Identifier 2 subcategory, of legislative policy, where students did show evidence of macro practice thinking in the LCAs. The curriculum and the directions for LCAs’ SWPC 8 were the same for both cohorts (same field faculty), both cohorts had completed a community assessment in their Social Work Methods II course that focused on macro level group practice and an agency assessment assignment for this field practice course.

In sum, the differences between the Identifiers for the two cohorts is notable in Identifier 2 with adult cohort having more evidence of reading across the categories (n=13) than traditional
students (n=5). For Identifier 4 the traditional cohort (n=20) had more evidence of using social work concepts and theory than the adult cohort (n=12). Finally, Identifier 5, the traditional cohort (n=12) associated their knowledge with a courses’ name more than the adult cohort (n=4). For these Identifiers, both cohorts of students demonstrated knowledge. The reasons for these variations on how they demonstrated their knowledge will be explored in the Discussion section.

**Comparison of Adult to Traditional Cohort in Operationalizing Core Competencies**

In looking at the data, in Table 10 there is evidence found in LCAs for both the adult and the traditional cohorts for all RBT domains. From the perspective of RBT there was strong evidence of students moving knowledge, practicing skills and reflection upon practice experience in both cohorts.

The traditional cohort demonstrated evidence in each RBT domains that was nearly doubled that of the adult cohorts. The use of RBT to code the data resulted in strong, consistent evidence of how students demonstrated their learning in both age groups and how they operationalized knowledge.

**Table 10: Comparison of Adult to Traditional Cohort: RBT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RBT</th>
<th>Cognitive Domain</th>
<th>Affective &amp; Reflective Domain</th>
<th>Psycho Motor Domain</th>
<th>Three domains of learning were demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 3: Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 8: Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 3: Traditional (n=8)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 8: Traditional (n=8)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

In sum, observing these two cohorts of students and having regular contact with them as individuals and as groups, the findings make it clear how adult students interact with the LCA is comparable to how traditional students demonstrated knowledge. The use of the Identifiers as a means was more successful with the traditional age students with their overall frequency (n=53). The adult student overall frequency was noted as being about a little more than half as much (n=36) as the traditional aged students. When looking at which cohort did demonstrate more evidence in each RBT domains the traditional students (n=80) was nearly doubled that of the adult cohorts (n=48).
Chapter 7 – Conclusion

The research questions were generated based on the literature review, framed in the context of constructivism and the data that was coded using seven Identifiers and three domains in RBT of learning. The discussion of the findings for the first research question are based on the analyses related to Identifiers 1-5 and 7, while discussion of the findings for the second research question are based on Identifier 6 and RBT (Anderson et al., 2001; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Although, the research questions did not seek to explore a comparison between the two cohorts of student the decision to present the two cohorts data together will resolve the research questions was done first. Secondarily, the decision was also made to explore the data separately as a comparison between the cohorts was added to explore recommendations for the future use of LCA and in doing so may contribute to generalizability (transferability).

Research Question 1 - How do students move core competencies and their related practice behaviors from the classroom to field practice?

The first research question asked how do students move their knowledge from the classroom in a way that aligns with the profession’s core competencies. The choice to frame Identifiers 1-5 and Identifier 7 in a concrete manner helped to focus the coding in a way that could locate evidence in both SWPC 3 and SWPC 8 to show a basic connection between the program’s classroom experience to application in field practice. In looking at the data from Identifiers 1-5, it is clear students are moving knowledge from the classroom to their field practice. Table 11 (below) is a summary of Identifiers 1-7 with the two SWPCs separated, subtotaled and then with a combined total.
Table 11: Summary of SWPC 3 and SWPC 8 combined

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier Codes</th>
<th>Identifier 1</th>
<th>Identifier 2</th>
<th>Identifier 3</th>
<th>Identifier 4</th>
<th>Identifier 5</th>
<th>Identifier 6</th>
<th>Identifier 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name of a Professor from a Social Work Course</td>
<td>Legislation or public/agency policy is cited or used</td>
<td>Peer Rev Outside Articles or references</td>
<td>Course Assignments</td>
<td>Any Social Work Concept or theory taught in the classroom</td>
<td>Course Name</td>
<td>Other Report no opportunity to practice SWPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 3 Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 3 Subtotal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 8 Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 8 Subtotal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examining the data, three of the Identifiers provided stronger evidence of how students moved core competencies and their related practice behaviors from the classroom to field practice. These included: Identifier 4 evidence of social work concepts/theories (n=32), Identifier 2 subcategory that discussed legislative or public/agency policies (n=15), and Identifier 5 evidence of course names (n=16). When looking at a comparison between SWPC 3 to SWPC 8, except for Identifier 7, students identified more evidence in SWPC 3. This may be related to SWPC 3 being micro focused practiced behaviors. Identifier 4 having the most instances in both SWPC 3 and SWPC 8 combined (n=32), is also an indication that students could integrate
knowledge and engage in models of assessment, practice, evaluation and documentation of their work with their clients within their agency.

SWPC 3 looks for social work skills, concepts and theories that are prevalent throughout many of their courses and a focal point at field site visits with program faculty and agency field supervisors. Social work skills, concepts or theoretical frameworks are part of the language that is spoken in the classrooms, at field visits and in the written feedback to students. It is apparent that SWPC 3 is a good indicator of how students move knowledge from the classroom to field practice. Identifier 4 also aligns well with RBT’s cognitive domain which also saw the greatest amount of evidence (n=54) as compared to the other two RBT domains.

Identifier 7 found students reporting no opportunity to practice was only evident in SWPC 8 (n=11) which is interesting when compared to the number of times students cited legislation, public/agency policy (n=15). This might suggest that students struggled with conceptualizing their knowledge yet did find ways to express it in Identifier 2 by citing public or agency policies. This may be explained by a general sense of ‘aversion’ to the idea of courses on social welfare policy; this was shared by students with this writer. This aversion to macro level practice was made apparent from this writer’s experience of teaching Social Welfare Policy and Analysis for many years and from the Field Education course, when we discussed their struggles with SWPC 8. Yet, the evidence in Identifier 2 may have been influenced by this writer’s interest in macro level practice or persistence in helping students make that connection.

As noted above, a broad and liberal field of options were discussed with students both in the classroom and at field visits asks what constituted a demonstration of SWPC 8’s competencies, but this did not change their ability to share experiences that demonstrated their understanding of this competency. Examples used, such as having students explore the
connection of eligibility requirements to service provision and how these are connected to the regulations that drive funding was used to help students to understand and for them to demonstrate SWPC 8. Students generally grasped the first part of eligibility process for services but often did not make the next level connection that legislation or public policy was implemented that created the funding (i.e. Medicaid waiver programs; child abuse and maltreatment laws, etc.) to deliver those services.

As an additional note, field hours were awarded when students identified and attended professional conferences, webinars or trainings and were acceptable to discuss these in demonstrating competency in the LCA for SWPC 8 as well as other core competencies (i.e. ongoing professional development, cultural competence, etc.). In broadening the opportunities, these conferences, webinars and trainings could also be on other professional topics that may or may not be related to their field placement area of practice and could be sufficiently liberal to include self-care. Students did avail themselves of these opportunities and from my experiences, some recounting of attending these conferences did find their way to be reflected upon in the LCA.

Given the evidence above, the LCA using the Identifiers used for coding, did show how students moved their knowledge from the classroom to field practice. This is most clearly found through students documenting evidence of social work course names, skills, concepts and theories and how they used legislation or public/agency policy to understand the work that they were doing.
Research Question 2 - How do students operationalize the core competencies and their related practice behaviors in field education?

In answering the second research question, the information students provided that was used in Identifiers 1-6 also informed the coding of the RBT’s three levels of learning, (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) as it demonstrated how students operationalized the core competencies in their field practice. The LCA was examined for examples of how students became active with or put into action something they learned in the classroom. The criteria established in Identifiers 1-6, correlates with the evidence coded in RBT. The discussion below will provide clarity as to how this view of the data resolves this second research question regarding how students operationalized the core competencies.

The operationalization of the core competencies was well demonstrated, and are present for both cohorts across all three domains and when all the domains occurred simultaneously, a fourth domain that was created through the coding process by this writer. Beginning with the cognitive domain, Table 12 is based on Anderson and Krathwohl’s (2001) definitions and further explained by the six products or tasks/skills that demonstrate skills form this domain.

It is evident from the overall totals that the cognitive domain was the most noteworthy (n=54) with affective (n=29) and psychomotor (n=27) domains being relatively close in occurrences. To support this, a comparison of the Identifiers that connect to each RBT domain is provided, as correlating evidence of students demonstrating how they operationalized their knowledge and skills gained in the classroom in practice. Table 13 is a summary of the data of the three RBT domains and the fourth integrated RBT domain created because of the analysis of the data. The forth domain where students demonstrate all domains simultaneously validates the educational building blocks in an undergraduate social work program. Each domain being a
building block that grows over time to the next stage in learning where students are
demonstrating all three domains could be evaluated as mastery or readiness for independent practice.

Table 12: Cognitive domain’s six products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anderson and Krathwohl’s (2001) definitions of six products or task/competencies that are connected to the cognitive domain</th>
<th>Identifiers that informed student demonstration of the affective domain of learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) the ability to recognize or recall knowledge</td>
<td>Identifier 2 – course readings and Identifier 4 – any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) the ability to understand that knowledge and demonstrate that understanding by re-counting or relating it to the task before them or in supervision</td>
<td>Identifier 4 - any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) application of academic material to solve a problem or answer a question</td>
<td>Identifier 4- any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom (skills or models such as active listening; crisis intervention, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) ability to break down a problem into its essential parts and to begin to prioritize it</td>
<td>Identifier 2 – course readings and Identifier 4 – any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) appraise value or applicability of an idea using clear criteria;</td>
<td>Identifier 2 – seek information on legislation and public/agency polices to inform practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifier 4 – choosing skills after assessing a client’s needs or anticipatory preparing to engage clients in work together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combined three domains of RBT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) restructuring knowledge to fit changing contexts.</td>
<td>Identifier 6 and evidence of all three RBT domains in an LCA entry. Evidence of the interplay, or the integration of learning styles can be seen by how student applied all three learning styles in their practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beginning with the cognitive domain, Table 13 provides a corresponding interpretation of this domain in three of the Identifiers. These three Identifiers represent knowledge acquired in the classroom that was demonstrated in the LCA correlated to evidence of the cognitive domain in practice. These are Identifier 4 social work concepts or theory taught in the classroom (n=32),
Identifier 3— a course assignment (n=3) and Identifier 2—all three subcategories of professional reading materials (n=18) which collectively is a total of 53 instances. By doing this comparison of the cognitive domain (n=54) to the total instances of the above mentioned three Identifiers (n=53) it is reasonable to see the alignment between these codes, that support how students operationalize cognitive learning as evidenced by these Identifiers of classroom knowledge to field practice. The three Identifiers noted above held evidence of social work skills (use of social work models), language, concepts and theories that are the expected outcome of social work education.

Table 13: Summary of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy for SWPC 3 and SWPC 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RBT</th>
<th>Cognitive Domain</th>
<th>Affective &amp; or Reflective Domain</th>
<th>Psycho Motor Domain</th>
<th>All domains simultaneously</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 3:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (n=8)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 8:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults (n=8)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (n=8)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field education at the BSW level is a foundation course with expectations for students to be at a beginning level of practice. Identifier 6 category of ‘other’ was another opportunity to see the transformation from foundation year critical thinking to the next step or readiness for advanced or second year course work. There were seven instances captured in the data analysis where the flexibility afforded to this category and my ability to view the data from a subjective viewpoint was useful. It noted where students were documenting and reflecting on their ‘body’ of work at their agency and not seeing field as a contrived or artificial learning experience (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006). Identifier 6 was a demonstration of the higher level
of cognitive learning as connections were being seen in the students’ thinking that would potentially lead to other RBT domains or products of learning.

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) identified five products or outcomes to achieve in the affective domain, these informed the analysis of this domain. Table 14 provides a corresponding view of these five products or outcomes in affective domain to the four Identifiers that would represent evidence of the affective domain or reflective learning in the LCA. These are Identifier 4  social work concepts or theory taught in the classroom (n=32), Identifier 2  all three subcategories of professional reading materials (n=18), Identifier 5 course name (n=16) and Identifier 6 other (n= 7) which collectively is a total of 73 instances. Within these 73 instances, there was evidence of overlap with the affective domain (n=29). It is reasonable to see the intersection between these codes of how students operationalize their classroom knowledge to field practice through their self-reflections and self- monitoring of their interactions with clients.

These were seen in the earlier narrative examples of this study where students noted being “surprised by myself… looking at all the work I’ve done.” Or how “continuing Education will help provide that outlet for me I’m sure.” Or “I find myself reflecting in the moment, at times…” and “I think that this is the biggest realization; the choices I make in the office only tend to indirectly effect consumers, or directly impact them in ways I do not see.” Again, these are all examples of the affective domain. For this researcher, the narratives that were coded in Identifier 6 also correlated with affective learning as they reflected on the value to and importance of what they were doing and how it contributed to improvements in the local community agencies and the people that they served. Additionally, the connection to the affective domain noted students documenting their use of self-reflection, as they prepared for practice and or processed their experiences in field. In reporting out on the narrative examples
from the data on Identifier 6, it was important to note that the context of choices made when coding was done to highlight the evidence that students were being self-reflective and processing their feelings regarding their field experience.

Table 14: Affective domain’s five products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anderson and Krathwohl’s (2001) definitions of six products or competency that are connected to the affective domain</th>
<th>Identifiers that informed student demonstration of the affective domain of learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) use of observational skills and attention to non-verbal cues;</td>
<td>Identifier 2 – course readings and Identifier 4 – any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) being aware of how to respond or react to these observations or non-verbal cues in a therapeutic and safe manner</td>
<td>Identifier 4 - any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (3) valuing and validating clients’ feelings and goals; | Identifier 4 – any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom  
Identifier 6 – acknowledging values of clients, professions and society. |
| (4) acting in an ethical manner as per the NASW Code of Ethics, being respectful of different values, and resolving conflicts in an ethical manner, and beginning to develop/identify with the NASW Code of Ethics in their professional practice | Identifier 4- any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom  
Combined three domains – or fourth code for RBT |
| (5) commitment to the professions core values and code of ethics | Identifier 4 and Identifier 5 where a student noted their course on Social Work Ethics  
Combined three domains of RBT- Evidence of this interplay, or the integration of learning styles can be seen by how student applied all three learning styles in their practice. |

The psychomotor domain was noted in 27 instances in the data, collectively for both SWPCs. The psychomotor domain is about skill development, being able to carry out assigned task first with supervision and moving toward independence in the field setting. Anticipatory preparation for work with clients is an action step, as well as students taking the next steps by using their insights from self-reflections to prepare for practice. As students gain confidence in
their skills, they can be more creative and intuitive in their future application with clients and improve their outcomes with clients. For the psychomotor domain, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) identified six products/tasks or outcomes of learning and these too have been used in this study and are consistent with field education models of supervision. The products of the psychomotor domain are action oriented, such as taking the next steps in their work and demonstrating mastery through initiating independence in their assignments. This domain correlated with evidence of three Identifiers. As seen in Table 15, these are Identifier 2 all three subcategories of professional reading materials (n=18), Identifier 4 social work concepts or theory taught in the classroom (n=32), and with Identifier 6 (n=7) which collectively is a total of 57 instances. By doing this comparison of the psychomotor domain (n=27) to the total instances of the above mentioned three Identifiers (n=57) it is reasonable to see the intersection between these codes of how students operationalize their classroom knowledge by actively applying their knowledge to practice.

The psychomotor data showed 27 instances of students applying knowledge by doing tasks with supervisors and becoming more independent to the point of covering for their agency field supervisors. Again, it is important to note the researcher’s experience with the LCA and the expectation that initially students will shadow their agency field supervisors or agency co-workers in the fall semester. As agency field supervisors feel more confident about the students’ skills, they are gradually moved toward greater independence by the second semester (for both cohorts), to having the ability to work as independently as the agency would permit students to do so. It was notable to see this progression of shadowing to independence (as noted above in the six products) both in action at field visits but also noted by the students in their narratives.
Table 15: Psychomotor domain’s six products
Anderson and Krathwohl’s (2001) definitions of six products or competency that are connected to the psychomotor domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Identifiers that informed student demonstration of the affective domain of learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) awareness and/or assessments that indicate a need to act or react;</td>
<td>Identifier 2 – course readings and Identifier 4 – any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) ability to perform a specific task under the supervision of a field or task supervisor;</td>
<td>Identifier 4 - any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom (i.e. using assessment skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) the ability to perform to gain mastery of a task and perform it without supervision</td>
<td>Identifier 4 - any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom (i.e. using assessment skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) the ability to perform a manage multiple steps to complete complex tasks or assignments;</td>
<td>Identifier 4 - any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom (i.e. using assessment skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) the ability to be adaptive to react to unpredictable nature of profession and to new situation;</td>
<td>Identifier 4 - any social work theory or concept taught in the classroom (i.e. using assessment skills)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6) the ability to integrate knowledge and practice wisdom toward ongoing professional development and/or advanced practice skills. | Identifier 6 – other and 4  
Combined three domains – or fourth code for RBT  
Combined three domains, evidence of the interplay, or the integration of learning styles can be seen by how student applied all three learning styles in their practice. |

When looking at the narratives that demonstrated all three learning domains (n=18), the evidence of students reflecting, thinking critically and acting on their insight was seen in the examples of student narratives noted in the findings. This was another way for students to operationalize their classroom learning and turn it into practice and doing so at a more advanced level. The evidence of their connecting these domains of learning answers the second research question, as the LCA was a place to see students’ voices and their lived experience of their field education. In seeing students making the connections between this experience and their developing social work practice knowledge and wisdom it validated their steps toward mastery of the competency.
Hermeneutic theory also guided the analysis to explore for the meanings that students may have associated to, or how they operationalized, their classroom learning to their field experience. Krippendorff (2013) explained the iterative process of re-contextualizing, reinterpreting, and redefining the research data continues until satisfactory interpretation is reached; this is known as the hermeneutic loop. From this iterative process, preference between the two SWPCs did emerge (Krippendorff, 2013; Patton, 2002). There are 53 instances in SWPC 3 (micro level practice) of data for the Identifiers 1-7 versus 35 instances in SWPC 8 (macro level practice). This may indicate a preference for the more client-centered practice skills represented in SWPC 3 over the policy and community level practice skills in SWPC 8.

Additionally, there were 54 instances of students demonstrating their cognitive skills over a clear split between affective (n=29) and psychomotor (n=27). What may be inferred from this is students’ ability to provide evidence of concrete knowledge over their confidence in themselves to share their sense of self-awareness or feelings related to the affective domain. This may also be evidence of something else, such as hesitancy (i.e. fearful it may influence evaluation of the assignment), lack of awareness, or unwillingness to report their application of knowledge in their interactions in the field.

In sum, students did move knowledge from the classroom to the field. They did operationalize this knowledge within the expectations for the competencies selected for this study and in some cases, they exceeded these expectations by the integration of the domains. There was evidence found in the LCAs that supported how this knowledge is moved from the classroom to field and how the core competencies were operationalized. The variety of Identifiers used and the correlation with RBT, resolved both research questions from this study.
As the LCA demonstrated what students were thinking about, the knowledge that they held, that they reflected on and applied their knowledge in their field practice settings.

**Comparison of Adult to Traditional Students**

The research questions sought to explore how students move and operationalize knowledge from the classroom to field practice. As expected, comparing the two groups of students did not provide any information to the resolution of the research question, nor was it supposed to. What it did add was another view of the data that could contribute to future research. The explanations below are based on conjecture as they are derived from the experience this researcher had as the faculty assigned to these two cohorts of students for their field program. There was no follow up to this study or debriefing with the participants to gain insights in the similarities or differences with either students to explore the findings.

Framing of the discussion for the comparison between the adult and traditional cohorts of students begins with acknowledging the difference in the structure of their programs. First, this researcher was the faculty who taught the field education course and supervised these two cohorts in their field placements, teaching the traditional 15-week model while also teaching the same course content in a compressed 10-week model. From this experience, it became apparent that the adult students tended to blend their recollection of the course names (Identifier 5) and course assignments (Identifier 3) together; meaning they often could not remember which course held which assignment. The adult cohort had a condensed time in the 10-week model, with two weeks between courses and held work/family responsibilities that the traditional student did not. Demands on adult students’ time could have resulted in less effort to make the connections with course content to field practice in the LCA.
Additionally, the adult cohort tended to schedule or use office hours’ time less often than the traditional students. This may have resulted in closer links to their professors and additional conversation regarding course content being discussed, which could explain why the traditional students provided more evidence for Identifiers 4 course concepts and 5 course names. It may be reasonable to hypothesize that traditional students may have felt more connected to the program than the adult cohort, perhaps explaining why the adult cohort relied more on reading materials (Identifier 2 combined, adults = 13; traditional students = 5) to support their work in field practice. As for the data on course readings for the traditional students, again based on inference, traditional aged students may have not been as capable or inclined as their peers in the adult cohort, to connect reading to practice. Additionally, the potential that the traditional students may not have completed course readings or taken the initiative in the same way as their peers in the adult cohort, to seek outside readings to supplement their experience in the field. This area is a concern for teaching in general, engaging students to complete assigned reading and then apply it in their assignments is a consistent goal across the curriculum.

In review of the evidence of student learning, through RBT coding, both cohorts had ample evidence of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains present. The difference in the evidence of RBT domains between the traditional cohort over the adult cohort could again be related to several factors: (1) the structure of the program (15-week versus a compressed 10-week model); or (2) it could be related to how each respective student prioritized their time to study outside of the classroom; (3) the traditional age students may hold jobs at some level of employment in contrast the adult cohort may have been working more hours (i.e. full time), while also juggling family/children and financial strains (often commented upon by the adult students is the cost of the program, even with its ‘discounted’ tuition structure, it is still
predominantly paid for in the form of student loans); and (4) consideration of the students' individual work ethic and dedication to using the LCA as a way to journal their experiences for future learning could have also effected the quality of the narratives.

In sum, when comparing traditional aged students to adult students for both Identifiers 1-7 and RBT, there is strong evidence of course content being found and operationalized in the LCA for both cohorts. The reasons for the differences between the two cohorts in frequencies may be related to the influence of the individual students’ abilities, the structure of the two programs and individual student efforts based on the reasons provided above. In general, traditional students garnered more codes than the adult cohort as seen in Table 16. Reasons for this can only be based on conjecture, based on what has already been ventured as possibilities and may be related to the individual commitment of the student in their use of the LCA as a learning tool.

**Table 16: Coding Totals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Identifier 1-7 total for both SWPC 3 &amp; 8</th>
<th>RBT plus fourth category of all domains were demonstrated total for both SWPC 3 &amp; 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This comparison does provide impetus to consider future research based that would compare similar program structures or a mixed cohort with adults and traditional aged students together to see if the adult cohort would become more aligned with the traditional cohort. What is clear, is that the LCA is a good assignment for both adult and traditional aged students to demonstrate how the move knowledge from the classroom to field practice.
Limitations

To begin the process of exploring the limitations of this study, the first limitation is the small sample size. The LCAs were collected from only one graduating class at one point in time. The LCA was not designed by this writer for the goals of this research, and information regarding the use of evidence based research in its design was not made available. Instructions given to students on its use as a field assignment may have varied as the writer continued to draw on field research to inform its evaluation. This included drawing on the writer’s own self-reflection, on student feedback and engaging in independent research into field education. Based on this judgement, this writer believed that the LCA would have the capacity to measure how students moved or operationalized knowledge. Recognizing that RBT was being applied in interpreting the data, a new instructor or one using the LCA for the first time as well as agency field supervisors, may not have evaluated students’ work through this learning theory model. This may have presented a conceptual challenge for students and affected what experiences they were recording in the LCA. For these reasons, it is noted as a limitation, as this process may have led to difference in how it impacted student experiences (data) and recording in the LCA.

A second limitation is the differences in course structure and student composition between the cohorts. Important to note, is that the traditional students had a longer period in their field placements, including a two-week continuous block placement, while the adult cohort had the 10-week, two semester structures and were balancing this with families and often employment. This difference of exposure to the field setting and content may have influenced the data that resulted in the LCA. Instruction on how to view, record and reflect their student field experiences could have varied, such as class discussion, instructions; or feedback from the faculty which may have affected the students use or understanding of the LCA; or the potential
topics/questions that arose in classroom discussions and field settings. This may have altered the situation or experience for the student from which the notes in the LCA was being reported and sub-sequentially in the data that was generated from these documents.

Also, the final LCA was used for this study, and may not have been the best representation of student learning. Due to the repetitive nature (adults having completed 4 LCAs and traditional students having completed 5 LCAs) students may have not put forth their best efforts. As a final assignment, it may receive the least amount of diligence, as students often report mental exhaustion, are occupied with the termination process from their field placement relationships and each other as graduation is literally weeks away. The sum of the differences noted in the teaching environment influences the LCA as a ‘tool’ to collect students’ experience and the data of this study.

As noted in the methodology section, qualitative research relies on several strategies for evaluating the trustworthiness or rigor. For this study the trustworthiness or rigor relied on: prolonged engagement, peer debriefing and support, auditing, and ensuring that this study was carried out in an ethical manner (Padgett, 1998; Rubins & Babbie, 2008). Given the use of these strategies, and the representation of the students’ voices, it is believed that the findings represent, as closely as possible, the practice experiences of these students.

Prolonged exposure of the researcher, to this LCA, including actions that resulted in a revision of the original LCA from the previous academic year. This revision included: designing and adapting the LCA, evaluating student work, classroom time with the students as a group, one-on-one during office hours, and time spent with the students and agency field supervisors at site visits. This was all done and focused on the use of the LCA, was key to establishing the study’s credibility and internal validity. Additionally, although at the time new to this writer role
as faculty field professor, this writer had taught the field component of the program the previous year, as well as being familiar with the matriculated BSW curriculum for 16 years prior to this position. Therefore, this writer had knowledge of the teaching process, this writer was the faculty responsible for this assignment, and understood how the core competencies under consideration were operationalized for these students.

Prolonged exposure to the program could be a benefit, both in interpreting the core competencies and familiarity with the curriculum the program uses to prepare students for field education. This benefit of consistent operationalizing the core competencies with the students and agency field supervisor, starting in junior field through senior field internship, addresses the literature citing that a lack of clarification or uniform operationalized core competencies (Holloway, 2009; Holden et al., 2011) could result in inconsistent messages or expectations. Although the literature is clear that there is no universal correct answer on how to interpret the core competencies, having a consistent field faculty both as liaison and instructor interpreting the CSWE core competencies could be mitigating this concern in the literature (Holloway, 2009: Holloway, Black, Hoffman & Pierce 2009).

Finally, on the topic of prolonged exposure, this writer also interviewed and placed these two cohorts of students in both the junior field placements as well as their senior field placement. This three-semester relationship overseeing their work in both junior and senior field practice could have been a benefit, as the individual goals set by the student, and the agency field supervisor is informed by the experience this writer had with these students. To be fair, this could also be a weakness if there was any bias, on either the students’ or this writer’s part in the quality of the professional relationship, being familiar with their writing and work ethic, and the nature of ‘power’ of the grade and graduation.
Peer debriefing in the current study was done with Patricia Weldon, Ph.D. from College at Saint Rose in New York. She brought expert knowledge in the CSWE Core Competencies as she is on the faculty of a CSWE accredited social work program and has experience in qualitative research and coding practices. As noted previously, Dr. Weldon’s role as peer debriefer was used in developing and maintaining consistency in the coding of the data. Along with this, Dr. Weldon also addressed and monitored for the effect of researcher reactivity, given this writer’s experience with this assignment and any bias that may arise. Additionally, Dr. Weldon was instrumental in assessing for the criteria of confirmability that the data supported the conclusion (White & Marsh, 2006). Having her assistance in this process was helpful, and informative especially when this writer may have ‘spent too much time’ reading into the data or ‘not enough time’ to have missed opportunities of new themes.

The use of an audit trail was also done, by keeping a hand written journal of decisions when coding that confirmed and maintained coding integrity with the decisions that were made in the process of analysis (Heikkilä & Ekman, 2003; White & Marsh, 2006). As noted in the sampling section, transferability or external validity was established through diversity in the sample mainly seen in the types of field placements, the age range of the students and that no students disqualified from participating in this study.

Dependability was established by using both concept and theory memos that lend to the development of subcategories for Identifier 2 course reading and for Identifier 7 being created when there was a consistent theme in SWPC 8, of reports by students of ‘not having the opportunity to practice’ this competency. In reading over the LCAs for this study, additional factors such as the difference in structure of the program that these two cohorts experienced, review of the course syllabi to be certain content was equal and to refresh memory of the
assignments criteria as it related to the SWPCs under consideration. These all helped frame my interpretation and understanding of patterns or constructs within and from the data (White & Marsh, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As for confirmability of this study, the data did support the conclusions drawn regarding answering the research questions. This was seen in the comparisons of Identifiers 2, 3 and 4 to the RBT domains. These two different coding practices were similar enough in definitions and supported by the evidence from the coding that there was consistency in the findings in the individual categories and again, apparent when the data was compared to each other.

Transferability or external validity was established through diversity in the sample, as seen by the diversity in field experiences, age and different program structures (10-week versus the 15-week program models). With the multiple stage plan in sampling there was an equal representation from the traditional age and adult cohort of students and this assisted in making the comparisons that lead to answering the research questions and conclusion of this study.

Finally, generalizability of this study is not strong, as the findings are isolated to one program, two cohorts of students during one academic year with no previous or subsequent cohort data available. The findings do encourage further study that can generate the needed data on how the curriculum informs practice, and could become a part of a programs’ self-evaluation process to evaluate how students move and operationalize knowledge for student outcomes. Given there are no previous studies that followed the same protocol and under the same conditions, the use of the findings of this study as a comparison require future research to build any potential for generalizability.
**Implications**

The research findings and review of the literature lead to several suggestions for field education, competency based learning and field education as the signature pedagogy of social work education. What was learned from this study is how a simple design, such as the LCA, that lays out the core competencies, can be used to focus/direct/guide student learning in such a way that it allows students to demonstrate how their classroom experience is being operationalized in their field practice.

Future research on the use of the LCA, by specifically selecting a LCA that was completed midway through the semester rather than the at the end if the semester is recommended. This may influence the data collected as the students may have been more motivated at that point in time with this assignment, and still be more engaged in their learning process versus more focused-on terminations that occur at the end of a final semester and graduation.

The shift to competency based education and evaluation in 2008 which continued in the 2015 EPAS, defined the requirement for programs to develop methods of assessment that can capture students’ attainment of the profession’s core competencies. Findings from this study demonstrate that the LCA is beneficial in identifying students’ learning and growth. The LCA could be enhanced by being more open and direct with students regarding the principles of RBT. This may lead to the LCA becoming a more meaningful and useful tool that can assess the transfer/application of knowledge that faculty seek.

Noteworthy is an assigned reading of Roberta Wells Imre’s book, *Knowing and Caring: Philosophical Issues in Social Work* (1982), which asks students to challenge positivism in social work and look deeper into the meaning of their practice. A theme in this book, taught in the
Senior Integrative Seminar II course and reinforced in Field Practicum I and II, is the idea of using her call for social workers to be ‘thinking, feeling and doing’ (Imre, 1982, 1991). Although not referenced by Imre, her ‘thinking, feeling and doing’ (1982) aligns well with Bloom’s original taxonomy of cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Bloom, 1956). Imre (1982) is an assigned course reading that is a central piece of the senior year course work and together with RBT would be a parallel CBE construct for field education in a more visible way. As seen in the findings from this study students were able to share their thinking (cognitive), feelings about their experiences (affective) and tell the story of their completing tasks (psychomotor) in assisting clients or in projects for their practice setting. The use of qualitative content analysis allowed for counting the frequency of these behaviors to show the relationship of the domains of RBT to how students moved classroom knowledge to practice (Krippendorff, 2013; White & Marsh, 2006). This simple tabulation was helpful to see preferences in students’ knowledge that they applied in the field setting and assisted in answering the research questions in this study (Krippendorff, 2013). The use of tabulation in content analysis can provide guidance on how to operationalization the core competencies of the profession in a more consistent manner for all parties.

This study’s use of RBT and correlating these with the concrete Identifiers 1-7 was helpful to operationalize the core competencies and provide validation of the evidence found in the LCA. The Identifiers were more explicitly mentioned to students throughout their field education to help them perceive how their classroom and course work informs their field practice. Directions or guidance that drew students’ attention to their classroom experience and course work reinforced with students that their field experiences is the same as a medical residency. It sets the expectation that students need to make visible and explicate their
knowledge in their practice. This may be a sound recommendation that responds to the profession’s renewed focus on CBE and performance objectives as RBT can clearly operationalize the core competencies required. This will hold true for the 2015 CSWE EPAS expectations in their new assessment standards, as it did in this study with the 2008 EPAS. Future use of the LCA and direction to students that incorporates RBT to inform the use of the learning contract as an assignment would support the logical linkage from learning outcomes to program objectives to educational outcomes or competencies that are observable in field (Holloway, 2009; Meyer-Adams et al., 2011; Teater, 2011). A consideration for future exploratory studies that utilize these same data, could be designed to look at students’ competency by utilizing a data collection method such as a Likert Scale rubric. This study could explore a new research questions utilizing this data as it pertains to finding depth of competency achieved by students related to their practice.

Although the primary purpose of the current study was not to compare the adult to traditional cohorts, it did provide some possibilities for a future study. The differences between the two cohorts included; the age differences (under and over 22 years of age), the structure of the programs (10-week versus a 15-week model) and the individual experience variation within the classroom. A recommendation moving forward, would be to consider comparison of traditional age and adult cohorts who are in the same semester structure. This would ensure the same amount of time in the courses, exposure to the same discussions/guidance in the classroom and have equal access to faculty time as office hours may be more available if both cohorts were involved in the same 15-week model. The traditional students were the only cohort that provided narratives that demonstrated how RBT domains are as integrated as the competencies themselves, guiding their practice with critical thinking, classroom learning, the use of self-
reflection and moving these into the actions that they are taking in field practice. This evidence being absent in the adult cohort, could be related to the structure of the 10-week semester, that leaves the adult cohort feeling less committed to challenge themselves but to do what is necessary to complete their assignments. What also maybe only conjecture at this point, is the possibility that adult students may already be thinking in this integrated way, just not conceptualizing it in a way to document it in a visible way. This may also be related to the difference in the time pressures adult students are feeling balancing a 10-week model of semesters and their responsibilities outside of the program.

In closing, it is worth noting the literature review and the findings from this study that the LCA does hold the potential of becoming an assignment that can both be used as a competency based education (CBE) assessment of student classroom knowledge being transferred into field practice (Meyer-Adams et al., 2011) and provide valuable information to the program on what information from the classroom is being used by students for program assessment (Holloway, 2009; Meyer-Adams et al., 2011) and allow for curriculum review. The self-directed nature of the LCA and how it was taught can further place the responsibility onto the students to be involved in their learning in a way that can later translate to on-going professional development. The LCA provides a format for journaling that could be helpful for self-monitoring and goal setting that an independent professional is expected to do.
References


Mohammed, M. R. (2010). Don’t Give Me a Fish; Teach Me How to Fish: A Case Study of an International Adult Learner. Adult Learning, 21(1/2), 15–18.


Appendix I: Social Work Practice Competencies and Related Practice Behaviors

SWPC 1: **Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.**

1.1 advocate for client access to services
1.2 practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development
1.3 attend to professional roles and boundaries
1.4 demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance and communication
1.5 engage in career long learning
1.6 use supervision and consultation

SWPC 2: **Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.**

2.1 recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice
2.2 make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, IFSWI, Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work
2.3 tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts;
2.4 apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions

SWPC 3: **Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.**

3.1 distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom
3.2 analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation
3.3 demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, groups, families, organizations, communities, and colleagues

SWPC 4: **Engage diversity and difference in practice.**

4.1 recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate or create or enhance privilege and power
4.2 gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups
4.3 recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences
4.4 view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants

**SWPC 5:** Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

5.1 understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
5.2 advocate for human rights and social and economic justice
5.3 engage in practices that advance social and economic justice

**SWPC 6:** Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

6.1 use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
6.2 use research evidence to inform practice

**SWPC 7:** Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

7.1 utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation
7.2 critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment

**SWPC 8:** Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic wellbeing and to deliver effective social work services.

8.1 analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being
8.2 collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action

**SWPC 9:** Respond to contexts that shape practice.

9.1 continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services
9.2 provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services
SWPC 10: Engage assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

SWPC 10(a) —Engagement

10. a. 1 substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
10. a. 2 use empathy and other interpersonal skills
10. a. 3 develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes

SWPC 10(b)—Assessment

10. b. 1 collect, organize, analyze and interpret relevant information
10. b. 2 assess client strengths, competencies and limitations
10. b. 3 develop mutually agreed on intervention goals and objectives
10. b. 4 select appropriate intervention strategies

SWPC 10 (c)—Intervention

10.c.1 initiate actions to achieve organizational goals
10.c.2 implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities
10.c.3 help clients resolve problems
10.c.4 negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients
10.c.5 facilitate transitions and endings

SWPC 10(d)-Evaluation

10.d.1 critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions
## Appendix II - Review of Studies: Designs, Samples Measures, Findings & Theories (n=35)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors &amp; date</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Linkage to BSW students &amp; limitations</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Theory utilized by the study (if declared)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahn, B., Boykin, L., Hebert, C., &amp; Kulkin, H. (2012).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>BSW students (n=43)</td>
<td>Foundation Practice Self-Efficacy scale (FPSE)</td>
<td>Focus on self-efficacy in relation to practice skills; Student self-reports</td>
<td>“Social work curriculum may be effective in advancing student self-efficacy...field internship students reporting higher levels of self-efficacy: (p. 495)</td>
<td>Explanatory approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barretti, M. A. (2009).</td>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>BSW Students (n=20)</td>
<td>Standardized interviews &amp; observation of practice; Clinical Instructor Characteristics Ranking Scale (CICRS); Ranking desirable or important characteristics of field instructors</td>
<td>BSW student self-reports; Nothing correlated to student achievement or competency in field education</td>
<td>That faculty needed to, “...support students while supporting the contexts within which they practice....when faculty support students and the field instructors who train them, they posture themselves as involved, productive members of the professional community that educate as well as act” (p. 62).</td>
<td>Exploratory - undeclared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Barton, H., Bell, K., & Bowles, W. (2005). | Mixed methods | SW Field supervisors (n=43) | Structured survey; Interview; Scaled questions; background questions & activities | Field supervisors; Nothing correlated to student achievement or competency in field education | “results clearly demonstrated that benefits outweighed the costs to the agencies in relations to all of these activities {areas of work in which students were involved}” (p. 306) 

Field educators question regarding if practicums made a contribution to the SW profession, “98% said they thought it did make a contribution” (p. 310). | Exploratory - undeclared |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors &amp; date</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Linkage to BSW students &amp; limitations</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Theory utilized by the study (if declared)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birkenmaier, J., Wilson, R. J., Berg-Weger, M., Banks, R., &amp; Hartung, M. (2003)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Field supervisors (n=45)</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Field supervisors to provide feedback on their perceptions of student preparedness for practicum. Goal to develop a Integrative Seminar model for theory-practice in field.</td>
<td>“Students needed stronger assessment skills; additional knowledge about the social service system; and an understanding of managed care” (p. 172)</td>
<td>Descriptive paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blom, B., Nygren, L., Nyman, C., &amp; Scheid, C. (2007)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Swedish Social Work Students in their last semester of training (n=144)</td>
<td>Short written narratives</td>
<td>Social work students self-report via completed narratives that were evaluated by researchers.</td>
<td>“Social work education is the stated source of knowledge in less than a fourth of the cases (23%) and that the students’ own similar experiences are stated as the source of knowledge in a fourth (25%)” (p. 58).</td>
<td>Interpretation theory inspired by Paul Ricoeur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogo, M., Globerman, J., &amp; Sussman, T. (2004).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>MSW recent graduated students (n=18)</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Researchers evaluated data in relation to Competence of Field Instructor to provide group supervision. Student perception of a successful field experience</td>
<td>“when there was little time for reflection or too much reporting without processing the information, or linking theory &amp; practice, students felt dissatisfied, bored and ambivalent about the extent of their learning” (p. 207).</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Bogo, M., Regehr, C., Hughes, J., Power, R., &amp; Globerman, J. (2002).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1st year MSW students, 2nd year MSW students (n=227)</td>
<td>5-point Likert Scale; skill acquisition</td>
<td>Field instructors' student performance evaluations from 1992-1998</td>
<td>“association between GPA and field performance is consistent with other findings in the literature; gender and age were not significant” (p. 395).</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogo, M., Regehr, C., Logie, C., Katz, E., Mylopoulos, M., &amp; Regehr, G. (2011)</td>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>2nd year MSW students (n=11), Recent MSW graduates (n=7), SW with minimum of 5-year experience. (n=5)</td>
<td>Objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) Five standardized client simulations for evaluating competence; observation w/client by examiner; reflective dialogue with examiner</td>
<td>Experienced field instructors, practitioners and field liaison were the raters</td>
<td>“the ability to interact effectively with a client and the ability to reflect effectively on that interaction and its implications for an individual’s conceptualization of practice appear to be identifiably distinct skills” (p. 14)</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogo, M., Regehr, C., Power, R., &amp; Regehr, G. (2007).</td>
<td>Qualitative (4 studies)</td>
<td>Field instructors (n=100)</td>
<td>Scaling student behaviors; sorting vignettes, focus groups and in-depth interviews</td>
<td>Focus on field instructors’ skills</td>
<td>“This study illuminated the challenges experienced by field instructors in providing corrective feedback related to their own professional values, the nature of the student supervisor relationship and the context in which the instructor and student both work” (p. 114).</td>
<td>Grounded theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogo, M., Regehr, C., Woodford, M., Hughes, J., Power, R., &amp; Regehr, G. (2006).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Field Instructors (n=18)</td>
<td>Interviews to identify themes of what constitutes exemplary versus problematic students</td>
<td>Field instructor categorization of an exemplary versus problematic students in field</td>
<td>Themes: Personal qualities of the student; approach to learning; ability to conceptualize practice and practice abilities; procedural/operational abilities; Impact on field instructor; dilemmas created</td>
<td>Grounded theory</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Fortune, A. (2001)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>MSW students who completed at least one field practicum; clinical practice (n=69)</td>
<td>Satisfaction with Practicum scale; 2 questionnaires (pre/post field experience) Field Practicum evaluation forms; completed by agency field instructors</td>
<td>MSW students completed a Self-evaluation of performance and satisfaction with field practicum Data compared to Field Instructor evaluations of students</td>
<td>“...students’ initial impressions (with field) were not related to performance…. [and] ... students’ learning goals were not associated with rating of skills”, (p50) “the lack of relationship between initial impressions and performance is an important finding.... may be a problem in the study .... field instructors’ standard may have varied’ (p. 51)</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortune, A. E., &amp; Kaye, L. (2002)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>MSW students (n=118)</td>
<td>Satisfaction with field practicum Frequency of practicing a skill – and scale on quality of the skill set Role Model Scale</td>
<td>MSW students completed a Self-evaluation of performance, satisfaction with field practicum learning opportunities</td>
<td>“Practicing specific skills is related to self-evaluated performance” (p. 26).</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortune, A. E., Lee, M., &amp; Cavazos, A. (2005).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>MSW &amp; BSW students (n=188)</td>
<td>Questionnaire/survey Builds on Kaye &amp; Fortune (2003) by adding self-efficacy using: SW Skills in Self-Efficacy Scale Second outcome measure - field supervisor evaluations were used for</td>
<td>MSW &amp; BSW students completed end-of semester questionnaires Agency field supervisors’ evaluations.</td>
<td>“Significant relationship between students’ satisfaction with field and all motivation variables” (p. 120). The field instructor’s evaluation of student performance is not explained by concepts from theories of achievement motivation” (p. 122) “Their achievement motivation – and self—ratings- are not,</td>
<td>None declared</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fortune, A. E., Lee, M., &amp; Cavazos, A. (2007).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>MSW &amp; BSW students (n=188)</td>
<td>Questionnaire; Satisfaction with Field Practicum survey Second outcome measure; field supervisor evaluations were used for comparison (FEI)</td>
<td>MSW &amp; BSW students completed a self-assessment of performance; skills, professional attitudes; values &amp; ethics; knowledge &amp; skills for agency based work; community skills, assessment skills and intervention skills. Agency field supervisor evaluations</td>
<td>“Repeating skills enhances student education. Further, while practicing specific skills such as exploring emotionally charged issues with a client or working with a resistant client are important, patterns of association reinforce the importance of self-reflexive practice and the role of the field instructor in guiding learning from practice” (p. 260).</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garcia, J. A., &amp; Floyd, C. E. (2002).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Deans and MSW Program directors Survey (n=30) &amp; survey and self-study report (n=18)</td>
<td>Questionnaire/survey Primary aim was to measure program success in meeting CSWE standards, specifically standards 1.4 (identification of measures) and 1.5 (integrate evaluative data into program planning)</td>
<td></td>
<td>“survey revealed an array of outcome measures is being used, there appears to be an overreliance of tools that focus on perceptions and attitudes (i.e. alumni survey, field surveys, student course evaluations) and on measure whose reliability and validity have been called into questions (such as grades and GPA)” (p. 380)</td>
<td>None declared</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hay, K., &amp; O’Donoghue, K. (2009).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Social work programs (n=6)</td>
<td>Total of 4-5 assessment methods were required from the student – Assessment on Content analysis done</td>
<td>Assessment process and documents for a content analysis</td>
<td>“Students were always required to provide a self-assessment of their work and competencies, and indicate the level and extent of their learning through a range of assessment methods” (p. 45) No evaluation on validity of any of the measures used by various programs to measure achievement.</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holden, G., Anastas, J., &amp; Meenaghan, T (2003).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1st year MSW students; convenient sample Pretest (n=260) Post (n=229)</td>
<td>Foundation practice self-efficacy scale (FPSE); social work empowerment scale (SWE)</td>
<td>1st year MSW students self-report on perception of self-efficacy</td>
<td>“evidence was obtained that supported the psychometric properties of data gathered using the FPSE” (p. 434) “Self-efficacy is not as strong of a predictor of complex task performance” (p. 435)</td>
<td>Self-efficacy theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holden, G., Barker, K., Rosenberg, G., &amp; Onghena, P. (2008).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>MSW Advance concentration Students (n=111)</td>
<td>Evaluation Self-efficacy scale (ESE); Social worker empowerment scale (SWE); pre-test – post-test self-report scale</td>
<td>MSW Students self-report</td>
<td>“the results of the current study provide additional evidence that supports the psychometric properties of data obtained using the ESE” (p. 45) “the ESE or any other self-efficacy measure used in social work education, is not an all-encompassing assessment solution” (p. 45)</td>
<td>Self-efficacy theory</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Holden, G., Meenaghan, T., Anastas, J., &amp; Metrey, G. (2002)</td>
<td><strong>Quantitative</strong></td>
<td>MSW students Cohort 1 Pretest (n=173) Post (n=322) Cohort 2 Pretest (n=220) Post (n=328)</td>
<td>Social work self-efficacy scale (SWSE) and social work empowerment scale (SWE); Pre-posttest design</td>
<td>MSW students self-report on confidence; skill acquisition</td>
<td>“these findings can be taken to mean that there was consistent evidence of improvement in students’ rating of self-efficacy in all domains of social work examined” (p. 124)</td>
<td>Self-efficacy theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaye, L., &amp; Fortune, A. E. (2001)</td>
<td><strong>Quantitative</strong></td>
<td>MSW students (n=118)</td>
<td>Survey questionnaire; coping strategies related to student performance of their SW skills Not compared to other outcome measures.</td>
<td>MSW students self-report on their perception of their coping skills; confidence in ability; social work skills</td>
<td>Focus on coping skills and stress management in field settings. “Coping strategies were not associated with a sense of internal motivations or social work skills...coping skills were significantly related to sense of confidence in one’s ability...better coping strategies were associated with more confidence in one’s ability to accomplish tasks” (p. 37) “Coping strategies were not related to self-rated social work practice skills “ (p. 40)</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaye, L., &amp; Fortune, A. E. (2004).</td>
<td><strong>Quantitative</strong></td>
<td>MSW students (n=116)</td>
<td>Survey questionnaires Not compared to other outcome measures.</td>
<td>MSW students Self-rated Social work skills; motivation for achievement</td>
<td>“students with greater intrinsic motivation, more confidence in their ability to succeed in field and less perception of difficulty in field rated their SW sills higher than those with less achievement motivation” (p. 7).</td>
<td>Expectancy-value theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Knight, C. (2000).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>BSW Students (n=75)</td>
<td>Questionnaire - rating using a Likert Scale evaluating the field supervisor by the student Evaluating field supervisor's helpfulness</td>
<td>Students evaluate field supervisors on supervisory activities &amp; understanding of their agency, clients and student's self-report of their performance</td>
<td>“The field instructors’ ability to help the student integrate theory with practice also was an influential determinant variable. Finally, the field instructors’ awareness of what the student was learning in the classroom also was associated with all four measures” (p. 185).</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lam, C. M., Wong, H., &amp; Leung, T. T. F. (2007).</td>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>Social work students (n=114)</td>
<td>Reflective logs; and interviews Questionnaire measure sense of risk engendered by a SARS crisis while students were in field placement No measure of competency or skill achievement.</td>
<td>Social work students’ self-reports Personal competence; values; professional values; competence</td>
<td>Disturbing events experienced by students in their fieldwork were a catalyst to their reflective process. “nature of critical reflection and reflexivity does not fit the competence-based social work training model: (p. 101)</td>
<td>Reflective-reflexive framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyter, S. C., &amp; Smith, S. H. (2004)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Field instructors for Advanced year MSW students (n=34)</td>
<td>Likert scale rating of skill required to engage in practice competencies &amp; rate the degree to which students were prepared on that competency No correlation to actual student evaluations.</td>
<td>Field Instructors evaluated students come prepared to field practicum; social work practice competencies are desired by agencies.</td>
<td>Field instructors judged students to be under prepared in 6 of the 14 areas “Field instructors valued a generalist practice model for students in line with ‘contemporary practice realities’ while the curriculum favored an advance “clinical” model” (p. 37).</td>
<td>None declared</td>
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<td>Miller, J., Kovacs, A., Wright, L., Corcoran, J., P. J., &amp; Rosenblum, A. (2005).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>MSW students (n=100) Field Instructors (n=80)</td>
<td>Used Kolb’s Learning Cycles 2-hour experiential exercise</td>
<td>MSW students and field instructors evaluate Kolb’s Learning cycles use in field learning process. No correlation to competency or skills – just how learning occurs.</td>
<td>“Field instructors reported that it was thought-provoking exercise... students indicated they had a heightened awareness of their own learning approaches and had broadened their repertoire by listening to others and engaging in model building” (p. 144).</td>
<td>Hermeneutically (introspective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosek, A., &amp; Ben-Oz, M. (2011).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>1st thru 3rd year Social work students (n=88) Field instructors (n=116) 3-year program longitudinal study</td>
<td>Seven qualities and assets that they bring to the program at the time of the study. Factor analysis completed on this data</td>
<td>Social work students &amp; Field instructors were asked to write down the 7 qualities and assets that they bring to the program</td>
<td>“the devaluation of knowledge by students and field instructors alike, is a cause for concern” (p. 104) Study’s focus was on the developmental process that supports the professional socialization of social work students. There was no correlation with competency or skill attainment.</td>
<td>Post-modernist constructivist orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regehr, G., Bogo, M., Regehr, C., &amp; Power, R. (2007). Study 1</td>
<td>Quantitative and Scale development</td>
<td>Field instructors (n=43)</td>
<td>Practice Based Evaluation (PBE)</td>
<td>Field Instructors recall most recent MSW students and rate them with the PBE</td>
<td>No evident that the PBE was any more effective than other competency based tools.</td>
<td>Grounded theory</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Regehr, G., Bogo, M., Regehr, C., &amp; Power, R. (2007). Study 2</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Field Instructors (n=28)</td>
<td>Vignettes; Likert scaled</td>
<td>Field Instructors select a vignette that is most similar to their student</td>
<td>“Traditional numeric scales may not be effective tools to assess student performance in the field” (p.336).</td>
<td>Grounded theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regehr, C., Regehr, G., Loeson, J., &amp; Fusco, L. (2002).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1st year MSW students (N=37)</td>
<td>Self-evaluation form selecting 10 learning goals and raking those goals</td>
<td>1st year MSW students’ self-evaluation to rank 10 learning goals on level of difficulty</td>
<td>Self-directed learning</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan, M., Cleak, H., &amp; McCormack, J. (2006).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>BSW student records (n=474) from 1997-2002 included in sample</td>
<td>Admission criteria; Academic records; GPA; work experience; life experience; academic references</td>
<td>Agency Admission records for BSW candidates</td>
<td>“students who will be ‘identified as problems in a social work program or fail a field placement, or both, are unlikely to be identified at admission” (p. 82).</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sowbel, L. R. (2011).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>field instructors (n=121)</td>
<td>Vignette Matching Evaluation (VME); Likert scale</td>
<td>Field instructors rating (n=126) 1st year MSW students’ performance (January &amp; May) using the VME</td>
<td>“Having supervisors select stories or vignettes to represent student’s suitability for social work practice might prove more discriminating than a CBE.... VME outcome measure is a valid outcome measure for the</td>
<td>None declared</td>
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<td>Thomas, M., McCleary, R., &amp; Henry, P. (2004).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>MSW students (n=68)</td>
<td>Survey questionnaire; pre-admission data; field instructor evaluations; GPA scores Faculty rated applications</td>
<td>MSW pre-admission applications; Faculty rating of applications MSW applicants Field supervisors</td>
<td>“undergraduate GPA was not significantly related with field performance” (p. 42) “only relevant human service experience and quality reference letters had a significant, positive relationship with field performance of graduate student “(p. 42) ” Both the end of first year cumulative GPA and current cumulative GPAs had a significant and positive relationship with the field instruction performance of student... this suggests that students are able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom to their field situations” (p. 44).</td>
<td>None declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd, S., &amp; Schwartz, K. (2009).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>SW Students (n=11) and field supervisors (n=7) convenience sample</td>
<td>Questionnaire; Interview Experiences of alternative and mainstream field placements</td>
<td>Students self-report regarding quality of placement; learning goals were met; congruence between their learning style and</td>
<td>Assess quality of field based learning; five themes arose, “quality in terms of congruence of expectations, opportunities to integrate theory with practice, quality of supervision, diversity of placement opportunities and the</td>
<td>Grounded theory approach</td>
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<td>Tungate, S., Lazzari, M., &amp; Buchan, V. (2001).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>MSW &amp; BSW students (n=363) 1993-1997</td>
<td>Exit surveys/narratives; student perception of department strengths and field education Not linked to CBE – findings are more focused on satisfaction</td>
<td>their field instructors supervisory style; &amp; agency field supervisors; aspects of placement that affected its quality; nature of supervision, certification of field supervisors and their relationship with the school.</td>
<td>relationship between the university and the field setting” (p. 392)</td>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Williamson, Hostetter, Byers, &amp; Huggins, 2010)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Graduated BSW students (n=38)</td>
<td>Interviews using strength-based approach Draw out student capacities and assets</td>
<td>BSW Students self-reports</td>
<td>“Context where they were able to apply and to integrate theory with practice (Hand-on experience and relevancy) (p. 107) “The importance of relational connections between students and instructors, along with the connection between classroom concepts and the world of practice, illustrate the logic of connected learning and teaching” (p. 109).</td>
<td>Grounded theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Measures</td>
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<td>Themes: Niche in Social Work; strengths and weaknesses; coping strategies; confidence; self-awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Their knowledge and skills went beyond identifying values and ethical issues...demonstrated a strong ability to analyze practicum situations and how unethical approaches might adversely affect the client or themselves” (p. 242).</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>No CBE measures</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix III: Review of qualitative and mixed method studies (n=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors &amp; date</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Key variables or limitation of study</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Theory utilized by the study (if declared)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barretti, M. A. (2009).</td>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>BSW Students (n=20)</td>
<td>Standardized interviews &amp; observation of practice</td>
<td>BSW student self-reports</td>
<td>That faculty needed to, “…support students while supporting the contexts within which they practice. …when faculty support students and the field instructors who train them, they posture themselves as involved, productive members of the professional community that educate as well as act” (p. 62).</td>
<td>Exploratory - undeclared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birkenmaier, J., Wilson, R. J., Berg-Weger, M., Banks, R., &amp; Hartung, M. (2003)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Field supervisors (n=45)</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Field supervisors to provide feedback on their perceptions of student preparedness for practicum and goal to develop a Integrative Seminar model for theory-practice in field.</td>
<td>“Students needed stronger assessment skills; additional knowledge about the social service system; and an understanding of managed care” (p. 172)</td>
<td>Descriptive paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blom, B., Nygren, L., Nyman, C., &amp; Scheid, C. (2007)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Swedish Social Work Students in their last semester of training (n=144)</td>
<td>Short written narratives “What kind of knowledge was it? From what source did it come (supervisor, colleagues, earlier theoretical studies, earlier experiences etc). In what way did that knowledge work in the situation described?” (p. 48)</td>
<td>Social work students self-report via completed narratives that were evaluated by researchers</td>
<td>“Social work education is the stated source of knowledge in less than a fourth of the cases (23%) and that the students’ own similar experiences are states as the source of knowledge in a fourth (25%)” (p. 58).</td>
<td>Interpretation theory inspired by Paul Ricoeur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors &amp; date</td>
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<td>Key variables or limitation of study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lam, C. M., Wong, H., &amp; Leung, T. T. F. (2007).</td>
<td><strong>Mixed methods</strong></td>
<td>Social work students (n=114) &amp; Written logs for content analysis (n-9)</td>
<td>Reflective logs; and interviews</td>
<td>Social work students’ self-reports Personal competence; values; professional values; competence</td>
<td>Disturbing events experienced by students in their fieldwork were a catalyst to their reflective process. “nature of critical reflection and reflexivity does not fit the competence-based social work training model: (p. 101)</td>
<td>Reflective-reflexive framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosek, A., &amp; Ben-Oz, M. (2011).</td>
<td><strong>Qualitative</strong></td>
<td>1st thru 3rd year Social work students (n=88) &amp; Field instructors (n=116) &amp; 3-year program longitudinal study</td>
<td>Seven qualities and assets that they bring to the program at the time of the study; Factor analysis completed on this data</td>
<td>Social work students (self-reports) &amp; Field instructors were asked to write down the 7 qualities and assets that they bring to the program</td>
<td>“the devaluation of knowledge by students and field instructors alike, is a cause for concern” (p. 104)</td>
<td>Post-modernist constructivist orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd, S., &amp; Schwartz, K. (2009).</td>
<td><strong>Qualitative</strong></td>
<td>SW Students (n=11) and field supervisors (n=7) convenience sample</td>
<td>Questionnaire; Interview Experiences of alternative and mainstream field placements</td>
<td>Students self-report regarding quality of placement; learning goals were met; congruence between their learning style and their field instructors supervisory style; &amp; agency field supervisors;</td>
<td>Assess quality of field based learning; five themes arose, “quality in terms of congruence of expectations, opportunities to integrate theory with practice, quality of supervision, diversity of placement opportunities and the relationship between the university and the field setting” (p. 392)</td>
<td>Grounded theory approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors &amp; date</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>Key variables or limitation of study</td>
<td>Key Findings</td>
<td>Theory utilized by the study (if declared)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tungate, S., Lazzari, M., &amp; Buchan, V. (2001).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>MSW &amp; BSW students(n=363) 1993-1997</td>
<td>Exit surveys/narratives; student perception of department strengths and field education  Not linked to CBE – findings are more focused on satisfaction</td>
<td>aspects of placement that affected its quality; nature of supervision, certification of field supervisors and their relationship with the school.</td>
<td>“Context where they were able to apply and to integrate theory with practice (Hand-on experience and relevancy) (p. 107)  “The importance of relational connections between students and instructors, along with the connection between classroom concepts and the world of practice, illustrate the logic of connected learning and teaching” (p. 109).</td>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Williamson, Hostetter, Byers, &amp; Huggins, 2010)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Graduated BSW students (n=38)</td>
<td>Interviews using strength-based approach  Draw out student capacities and assets  Themes: Niche in Social Work; strengths and weaknesses; coping</td>
<td>graduated BSW Students self-reports</td>
<td>“All participants reflected that learning and development had occurred in the field placement” (p. 239).  “Their knowledge and skills went beyond identifying values and ethical</td>
<td>Grounded theory</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors &amp; date</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Key variables or limitation of study</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Theory utilized by the study (if declared)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>strategies; confidence; self-awareness</td>
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<td>issues…demonstrated a strong ability to analyze practicum situations and how unethical approaches might adversely affect the client or themselves” (p. 242).</td>
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<td>No CBE measures</td>
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</table>
## Appendix IV: Review of qualitative and mixed method studies of BSW students (n=7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors &amp; date</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Key variables or limitation of study</th>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Theory utilized by the study (if declared)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barretti, M. A. (2009).</td>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>BSW Students (n=20)</td>
<td>Standardized interviews &amp; observation of practice</td>
<td>BSW student self-reports</td>
<td>That faculty needed to, “… support students while supporting the contexts within which they practice. …when faculty support students and the field instructors who train them, they posture themselves as involved, productive members of the professional community that educate as well as act” (p. 62).</td>
<td>Exploratory - undeclared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors &amp; date</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>Key variables or limitation of study</td>
<td>Key Findings</td>
<td>Theory utilized by the study (if declared)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blom, B., Nygren, L., Nyman, C., &amp; Scheid, C. (2007)</td>
<td><strong>Qualitative</strong></td>
<td>Swedish Social Work Students in their last semester of training (n=144)</td>
<td>Short written narratives</td>
<td>Social work students self-report via completed narratives that were evaluated by researchers</td>
<td>“Social work education is the stated source of knowledge in less than a fourth of the cases (23%) and that the students’ own similar experiences are states as the source of knowledge in a fourth (25%)” (p. 58).</td>
<td>Interpretation theory inspired by Paul Ricoeur</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lam, C. M., Wong, H., &amp; Leung, T. T. F. (2007).</td>
<td><strong>Mixed methods</strong></td>
<td>Social work students (n=114)</td>
<td>Reflective logs; and interviews</td>
<td>Social work students’ self-reports Personal competence; values; professional</td>
<td>Disturbing events experienced by students in their fieldwork were a catalyst to their reflective process.</td>
<td>Reflective-reflexive framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors &amp; date</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>Key variables or limitation of study</td>
<td>Key Findings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Mosek, A., & Ben-Oz, M. (2011). | Qualitative | 1st thru 3rd year Social work students (n=88) | Written logs for content analysis (n=9)  
Field instructors (n=116) |  
SARS crisis while students were in field placement  
No measure of competency or skill achievement. | “nature of critical reflection and reflexivity does not fit the competence-based social work training model: (p. 101) |
|                     |        |        | Seven qualities and assets that they bring to the program at the time of the study. | Social work students (self-reports) & Field instructors were asked to write down the 7 qualities and assets that they bring to the program | “the devaluation of knowledge by students and field instructors alike, is a cause for concern” (p. 104) |
|                     |        | 3-year program | Factor analysis completed on this data | | Study’s focus was on the developmental process that supports the professional socialization of social work students. There was no correlation with |

Post-modernist constructivist orientation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authors &amp; date</td>
<td>Todd, S., &amp; Schwartz, K. (2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>longitudinal study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Students (n=11) and field supervisors (n=7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>convenience sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>Questionnaire; Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key variables or limitation of study</td>
<td>Students self-report regarding quality of field placement; learning goals were met; congruence between their learning style and their field instructors' supervisory style; aspects of placement that affected its quality; nature of supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory utilized by the study (if declared)</td>
<td>Grounded theory approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Findings</td>
<td>Assess quality of field based learning; five themes arose: &quot;quality in terms of congruence of expectations, opportunities to integrate theory with practice, quality of supervision, diversity of placement opportunities and the relationship between the university and the field setting,&quot; (p. 392)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tungate, S., Lazzari, M., &amp; Buchan, V. (2001).</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Williamson, Hostetter, Byers, &amp; Huggins, 2010)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
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### Appendix V: Comparison of Field Education and Learning Theory.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
<td>Verbal persuasion in which one receives encouragement and support from values others (supervision and reinforcing of curriculum), (cognitive) from the classroom,</td>
<td>to be self-reflective (affective or emotional domain) of social work values</td>
<td>(1) Integration of theory &amp; practice; classroom &amp; field; (2) critical thinking</td>
<td>Conceptualization of practice; Procedural competencies (assessment, intervention &amp; Professional communication).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective</strong></td>
<td>Physiological and affective states in which one learns to keep ones’ emotions and physiological arousal at a self-supporting versus a harmful level (i.e. professional boundaries and awareness of personal biases)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) self-directed and independent learning</td>
<td>Relational capacity or intentional use of self,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychomotor</strong></td>
<td>Vicarious experiences in which one observes values role models performing the task or skill. As well as engaging in the practice of the skill with clients or agency field supervisor in role plays to prepare.</td>
<td>the use of skills learned in the classroom in their practice with clients (psycho-motor)</td>
<td>(4) collaboration</td>
<td>Behavior in the organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix VI: Learning Contract Assignment

Student Name: ______________________________________
Field Supervisor: ______________________________________
Agency: ______________________________________
Weeks Covered: ______________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work Program Competency &amp; Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Description of task and/or activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly</td>
<td>1.1 advocate for client access to the services of social work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3 attend to professional roles and boundaries;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.4 demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.5 engage in career-long learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.6 use supervision and consultation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work Program Competency &amp; Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Description of task and/or activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice</td>
<td>2.1 recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values guide practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Program Competency &amp; Practice Behaviors</td>
<td>Description of task and/or activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC3 - Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments</td>
<td>3.1 distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research based knowledge and practice wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation</td>
<td>3.3 demonstrates effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organization, communities and colleagues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work Program Competency &amp; Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Description of task and/or activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SWPC 4- Engage diversity and difference in practice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3 recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as key informants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work Program Competency &amp; Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Description of task and/or activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SWPC 5- Advance human rights and social and economic justice</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2 advocate for human rights and social and economic justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 engage in practices that advance social and economic justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Program Competency &amp; Practice Behaviors</td>
<td>Description of task and/or activity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| SWPC 6 Engage in research informed practice and practice informed research | 6.1 use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry  
| | 6.2 use research evidence to inform practice |

Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work Program Competency &amp; Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Description of task and/or activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SWPC 7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment | 7.1 utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation  
| | 7.2 critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment |

Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Work Program Competency and Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Description of task and/or activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Practice Behaviors**

**SWPC 8.1 Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being**

**SWPC 8.2 Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action**

Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.

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<tr>
<th>Social Work Program Competency and Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Description of task and/or activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SWPC 9 Respond to contexts that shape practice</strong></td>
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</table>

**Practice Behaviors**

**SWPC 9.1 Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services**

**SWPC 9.2 Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services**

Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Social Work Program Competency and Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Description of task and/or activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 10(a-d) – Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Behaviors**

**SWPC 10.a - Engagement**

Social Workers:

- **SWPC 10.a.1** Substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- **SWPC 10.a.2** Use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
- **SWPC 10.a.3** Develop a mutually agreed-on intervention focus of work and desired outcomes

**Practice Behaviors**

**SWPC 10.b - Assessment**

Social Workers:

- **SWPC 10.b.1** Collect, organize, analyze and interpret client data
- **SWPV 10 b. 2** Assess client strengths and limitations
- **SWPC 10.b.3** Develop mutually agreed on intervention goals and objectives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SWPC 10.b.4</th>
<th>Select appropriate individualized intervention strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 10.c—Intervention</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Workers:</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWPC 10. c.1</td>
<td>Initiate actions to achieve organizational goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWPC 10.c.2</td>
<td>Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 10.c.3</td>
<td>Help clients resolve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 10.c.4</td>
<td>Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 10.c.5</td>
<td>Facilitate transitions and endings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SWPC 10.d.- Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPC 10.d.1 critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe what happened when you carried out the tasks and activities for this competency. Reflect on how these activities helped you to operationalize the practice behaviors. Assess what you need to do to strengthen your performance on this competency. Identify any questions you have or your need for assistance.