

EDITORIAL

William H. Barton

Welcome to the Fall 2010 (Volume 11, No. 2) issue of *Advances in Social Work*. This issue ranks with one of the most extensive we've ever published. We have had the good fortune to receive many high-quality manuscripts, and reviewers and authors alike have responded quickly and capably to their respective reviewing and revising tasks. As a result, this issue contains 13 articles on a range of topics. There should certainly be something to satisfy the interests or curiosity of all *Advances* readers.

Before previewing the current issue, let me remind you that the next issue of *Advances* (Vol. 12, No. 1: Spring, 2011) will be a special issue on "Social Work and Service Learning in the Age of Competency-Based Education," co-edited by Virginia Majewski and Lisa McGuire. This special issue grew out of the conference "Assessing Professional Competencies through Service Learning" held in Indianapolis this past June. The deadline for manuscript submission for that issue has passed; the co-editors are hard at work shepherding the many manuscripts received through the peer review process.

Advances will also publish an additional special issue this Spring or early Summer focused on "Military Social Work," co-edited by James G. Daley and Anthony Hassan (this one will be Vol. 12, No. 1.5 so that issue #2 can remain consistently in the Fall of each year). The call for papers for that issue remains open until March 15, 2011. Those interested in submitting manuscripts will find more details in the announcement on the journal's home page. One of the many advantages of the online, open-access format of the journal is that we have the capability of producing multiple issues, with the main cost being the dedicated time of the editors. But, as they shout in those late night television commercials, "WAIT! There's more!"

We will be publishing yet another special issue, this one scheduled for Spring, 2012. Its focus will be "Global Problems: Local Solutions," highlighting the latest work on cross-border, cross-disciplinary, and cross-boundary practices that seek solutions at the local level to problems caused by global conditions. Khadija Khaja and Joe Varga will serve as co-editors. Look for more details in an announcement on the *Advances* home page soon.

The current issue opens with an historical and epistemological treatise, "The Role of Science in Postmodern Practice," by Phillip Dybicz. This article offers an original perspective that may intrigue and/or provoke those who have followed debates pitting science against practice wisdom. Next up, Stephanie K. Boys (who holds the relatively rare degree combination of a Ph.D. in social work and a J.D.) proposes that, to be effective in communicating with an audience of judges, social workers should consider using legal discourse to frame findings from social science regarding the issue of gay marriage. Her article, "Let's Talk About Same Sex: How Social Workers Can Make Judges Listen," is especially timely, as the recent case in California (*Perry v. Schwarzenegger*) is unlikely to be the final forum for resolution of this issue.

William H. Barton, Ph.D., is a professor in the Indiana University School of Social Work on the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis campus. Contact information: (317) 274-6711; Email: wbarton@iupui.edu

The next two articles present findings from original research. From a survey of NASW members in New York, Vicki Ashton examines differences in the attitudes of professional social workers regarding corporal punishment and the perception and reporting of child maltreatment, according to the worker's ethnic group membership. In "Does Ethnicity Matter? Social Workers' Personal Attitudes and Professional Behaviors in Responding to Child Maltreatment," Ashton concludes that while approval of corporal punishment and perception of maltreatment differed according to ethnic group membership, ethnicity had no effect on the likelihood of reporting maltreatment.

In "'We Have a Lot of Sleeping Parents': Comparing Inner-City and Suburban High School Teachers' Experiences with Parent Involvement," David Wilkerson and Hea-Won Kim use a mixed methods approach to compare inner-city and suburban high school teachers' reported experiences with parent involvement. Wilkerson and Kim suggest that parent involvement may be relatively devalued among inner-city teachers, who hold beliefs that parent competence is reduced by socioeconomic challenges.

Next are two articles examining the properties of measurement tools. In "Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaire: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis in a Social Work Sample," Karen Rice, Jeongha Hwang, Tina Abrefa-Gyan, and Kathleen Powell examine the psychometric properties of the EBPQ (Upton & Upton, 2006), a tool developed to measure health professionals' attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of evidence-based practice (EBP). Rice et al.'s results suggest that a slightly modified EBPQ may be a useful tool to extend its reach to social workers. This is followed by Sung Hyun Yun and Robert D. Weaver's "Development and Validation of a Short Form of the Attitude Toward Poverty Scale." They conclude that the short form is a feasible alternative to the original ATP scale (Atherton et al., 1993) for researchers and academics seeking to assess the poverty-related attitudes of university students.

In the next article, "Evaluating Qualitative Research for Social Work Practitioners," Cynthia A. Lietz and Luis E. Zayas argue that many social workers receive minimal training regarding qualitative methodology and how to evaluate qualitative research. Building on the seminal work of Lincoln and Guba (1985; 1986), the Lietz and Zayas provide a concise framework practitioners and students may use to evaluate the trustworthiness and merits of qualitative research.

The issue turns next to three articles concerning social work education. Kala Chakradhar and Llena Chavis describe the experiences of a group of faculty adapting to the context of distance education in "Developing a Pedagogy of ITV Teaching Experience." Then, in "Enhancing Self-Awareness: A Practical Strategy to Train Culturally Responsive Social Work Students," Nelini Negi, Kimberly A. Bender, Rich Furman, Dawnovise N. Fowler, and Julia Clark Prickett introduce the "Ethnic Roots Assignment," a teaching exercise to aid students in developing self-awareness. Finally, Sabrina Williamson, Carol Hostetter, Katherine Byers, and Pamela Huggins present a qualitative analysis of practicum students' reflections in "I Found Myself at this Practicum: Student Reflections on Field Education." They suggest that agency experiences help students see social work values and ethics in action, develop an awareness of themselves as social workers, and enhance their self-confidence.

Cynthia A. Lietz returns, this time with Kathleen L. Andereck and Richard C. Knopf, to present a study of a strengths-based initiative in Arizona intended to increase the quality and integration of human services. In “The Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Service Integration: A Mixed Methods Study of a Strengths-Based Initiative,” the authors conclude that while the teams faced many challenges, they were able to be productive in initiating positive changes in their communities as a result of their commitment to the process, perseverance, effective communication, and creativity.

In “Strategies for Engaging Men as Anti-Violence Allies: Implications for Ally Movements,” Erin Casey presents the results of a qualitative analysis of interviews with 27 men who recently initiated involvement in an organization or event dedicated to ending sexual or domestic violence. She discusses themes that emerged regarding gaining access to such groups and delivering their message to potential allies. In the final article in this issue, “Does Police Intervention in Intimate Partner Violence Work? Estimating the Impact of Batterer Arrest in Reducing Revictimization,” Hyunkag Cho and Dina J. Wilke present new evidence regarding this controversial strategy for responding to intimate partner violence. Cho and Wilke use data from the National Crime Survey (NCS) from 1987 to 1992 combined with the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) from 1993 to 2003 to examine the relationship between partner arrest and revictimization. Results suggest that arrest of perpetrators is effective in reducing revictimization, controlling for victims’ characteristics and the nature of the violent incidents.

So, something to do over the long holiday break! Cheers!

References

- Atherton, C. R., Gemmel, R. J., Haagenstad, S., Holt, D. J., Jensen, L. A., O’Hara, D. F., et al. (1993). Measuring attitudes toward poverty: A new scale. *Social Work Research and Abstracts*, 29(4), 28-30.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 20, 15-25.
- Perry v. Schwarzenegger, 591 F.3d 1147 (2010)
- Upton, D., & Upton, P. (2006). Development of an evidence-based practice questionnaire for nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 54, 454-458. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03739.x

The Role of Science in Postmodern Practice

Phillip Dybicz

Abstract: *Postmodern thought offers a critique to the heavily science-based approaches of the modernist discourse. Such critiques however tend to obscure the role that science has to play in postmodern practices. The current scientific-based modernist approaches faced this similar challenge when they arose in the early 1900s. In the 1800s, social agents did not base their interventions upon scientific authority, but rather, moral authority. While scientific knowledge displaced moral knowledge as the main guide for developing treatment plans, the field of social work did not abandon moral knowledge as useless. Instead, moral knowledge was transformed into a robust code of ethics—and serves the new role of circumscribing the boundaries within which one employs scientific knowledge. The postmodern discourse calls for this same displacement to occur—it seeks to have scientific knowledge circumscribe the boundaries within which an hermeneutic inquiry driven by a critical consciousness guides social work interventions.*

Keywords: *Postmodern, science, hermeneutics, narrative, positivism*

INTRODUCTION

In the past twenty or so years in the field of social work, postmodern thought has established a presence in academic debate and more notably, informed a number of innovative approaches to practice such as narrative therapy, the strengths perspective, and solution-focused therapy. By offering an attack upon the dominance of positivism and a scathing critique of the medical model approach to practice, some confusion has arisen over the role science has to play in the application of these innovative approaches. Some opponents (Amundson, 2001; Pilgrim, 2000; Thyer & Myers, 1999; Thyer 2008) criticize these postmodern approaches as either being weak on employing scientific evidence or willing to ignore it completely.¹ Supporters (De Shazer 1994, Weick & Saleebey, 1998; White 2004) reply that while they do not ignore scientific evidence, they do not privilege it as the main knowledge that informs treatment goals—recognizing it as a truth, but with a small ‘t’. To the other side, this appears to confirm their claim that postmodern approaches are weak on science.

The scientific method’s process of hypothesis testing has been translated into social work practice via the medical model (Leighninger 1987; Trattner, 1999), now commonly referred to as the problem solving approach (McMahon, 1990; Perlman, 1963; Simons & Aigner, 1985). The phases of this approach are succinctly encapsulated by the words, “study, diagnose, treatment.” Hence, with the above postmodern approaches also attacking the medical model (De Shazer et al., 2007; Saleebey, 2006b; White & Epston, 1990), their allegiance to the scientific method appears quite weak. On the surface, it seems that there can be no clear or prominent role for science or the scientific method within postmodern practice. This poses a definite problem for the practitioner who wishes to employ one of the above postmodern practice approaches. These approaches do not call upon the practitioner to use scientific knowledge to formulate diagnoses as a road

Phillip Dybicz, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Social Work in the School of Social Sciences at Keimyung University in Daegu, South Korea.

map for the treatment plan. Instead, they seek to tap into the dreams and goals of the client (an approach that to the hard-nosed empiricist scientist appears to be overly naïve, starry-eyed, and quite simply odd). So if scientific knowledge is not used to direct the treatment plan, what role does it play in postmodern practice? The purpose of this paper is to outline this role.

Understanding of this new role for science can be greatly facilitated by an examination of social work history. The movement from modern to postmodern practice requires a fundamental, paradigmatic shift in how we understand social work practice. Yet this is not the first time within the intellectual history of social welfare that a paradigmatic shift in understanding has occurred. Social welfare agents practicing within the 1800s operated within a much different paradigm than the one that guides modern practices today. Rather than relying upon scientific authority, these agents relied upon their moral authority to generate knowledge in which to address the ills of society (Lubove, 1965; Trattner, 1999). The scientific method requires the investigator to seek a value-free stance (as its ideal). In fact, it is seen as a way to liberate oneself from falling prey to religious dogma. On the surface, it would have seemed to some of these social agents that this new paradigm—the modern paradigm, or discourse, emphasizing the scientific method—would have no room for a role for moral knowledge to play (Leiby, 1978). And on one level this is true; within the modern discourse, applying one's moral conscience does not generate knowledge in the determination of the problem, identifying causes, and developing a plan for treatment.

Yet in its transition to the modernist practice and the scientific method, social work did not abandon moral knowledge completely. In fact, moral knowledge plays a very prominent role in guiding treatment—through a very robust code of ethics. In essence, moral knowledge maps the boundaries within which we as social workers may practice the scientific method. Benefitting from a historical record, we now know that social work's embrace of the scientific method did not result in the abandonment, or even sidelining, of moral knowledge. The paradigmatic shift that took place resulted in the transformation of the role played by moral knowledge. This same transformation, but this time in the role played by scientific knowledge, is what is called for by postmodern practice.

Hence, this paper offers a comparative historical analysis between the clash in paradigms that took place at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century with the clash between modern and postmodern paradigms that is taking place today. Understanding how the role played by moral knowledge was transformed from directing treatment to circumscribing the boundaries of treatment via a code of ethics will shed light on how this same transformation is called upon for scientific knowledge within postmodern practice: from directing treatment to circumscribing the boundaries of treatment. Thus the first section will outline some basic elements that comprise a discourse (Foucault 1991), or paradigm as it is being used above. Next, follows a description of the discourse operating during the 1800s which emphasized moral knowledge. This description will lead to greater understanding of the clash between this and the modern discourse and how the role for moral knowledge (as well as scientific knowledge) was transformed. Common dynamics are then outlined between this

clash/transition and the present clash between the modern and postmodern discourses: both discourses are described, as well as their resulting clash around the concept of culture. Finally, this positions the analysis to clearly elaborate the role of science within postmodern practice.

ELEMENTS OF A DISCOURSE

Many social work histories trace the beginning of our profession to the settlement house movement and the charity organization societies of the late 1800s (Bruno, 1957; Leighninger, 1987; Lubove, 1965). And it is true that the term 'social work' arose during this time period (Trattner, 1999). Yet, the charity organization societies and the settlement house movement also mark the end of an era—an era that stretches all the way back to the early 1800s, within which, the broad conception of social welfare and overarching approaches to social welfare practice remain markedly consistent.

It is easy to look back with our present eyes and view the early charity organization society's (COS) slogan, "not alms but a friend," as a naïve engagement with the social problems of the time. As the social work profession itself was young, this naïveté is then just simply dismissed as the mark of a young profession (Thyer, 2008). Yet if one takes a careful look around at the social welfare practices of this era, one notices that a number of oddities arise when looked upon from our present standpoint. For example, why was residency (Trattner, 1999) one of the three "R"s (along with research and reform) forming the major pillars of the settlement house movement? How is it that many of the same individuals who advocated for issues such as tenement house reform and suffrage for the landless white, African-Americans, and then women, were also the ones advocating for prohibition and making prostitution illegal (Boyer, 1978; Burnett, 1968)? Odder still, how is it that the social agents involved in creating the first penitentiaries looked upon these prisons to serve as models of inspiration for the surrounding community on how to organize itself (Rothman, 2002)? Or why were social agents erecting statues in town squares or putting on city pageants—not that this is odd in itself, but odd in that they considered these practices social work (MacKaye, 1912; Patten, 1907; Robinson, 1901)?

To dismiss such practices as simply resulting from scientific naïveté is reflective more of a scientist's attempt to understand history (Thyer, 2008). A historian seeks to offer a more penetrating analysis. One historian who has offered a unique and penetrating approach in which to analyze historical events from a postmodern perspective is Michael Foucault. Within his historical studies, Foucault (1991, 1994a, 1994b) proposed the concept of a discourse: an interlacing web of linguistic structures that serves to order and legitimate knowledge. One particular discourse will gain dominance within an era, and this discourse will serve as the main paradigm for guiding one's understanding of experiences. Foucault identified a number of core elements to a discourse, and some of these will be used within the analyses that follow. The first is that a discourse always arises in response to an urgent need in society (Foucault, 1981, 1994b). Another is how human beings conceive of themselves as existing within the world (Foucault, 1981, 1994b). In addition, examining the intellectual history leading up to the era in question will further help to elucidate the workings of the discourse.

THE PRE-MODERN DISCOURSE OF THE 1800s

Urgent Need

Borrowing a metaphor put forth by the noted historian Wiebe (1967), one can describe the various villages and towns during Colonial times as ‘island communities’. Due to limits in transportation and communication, the various communities throughout Colonial America were not very integrated politically, economically, or socially. From roughly 1820 onward this would dramatically change. The advent of industrialization, urbanization, the increased mobility of labor, and technological advancements such as the railroad and telegraph all contributed toward American communities becoming integrated first at the county, then state, then national level by the end of the century (Wiebe, 1967). This integration occurred simultaneously at the political, economic, and social levels.

What alarmed social agents at the time was that the moral integration of society did not appear to accompany the rapid integration taking place on these other levels. The moral bonds of sympathy that existed within the colonial towns were not replicated within 19th century cities, where social agents saw a rise in crime, vice, and violence. Social agents throughout this era bent their efforts at achieving this moral integration on par with the political, economic, and social integration already occurring (Addams, 1907; Chapin, 1843; Richmond, 1899). The rapid integration of society during the 1800s was an experiment in progress to these social agents—one whose outcome was unknown. In their eyes, achieving moral integration would lead to the Great Community, a lack of moral integration could easily lead to anarchy (Boyer, 1978; Quandt, 1970; Wiebe, 1967). Consequently, they bent their efforts toward achieving moral integration.

Existence in the World

During the 19th century, people viewed themselves as existing simultaneously within two ‘worlds’: a transcendental world, and the natural world. Existence within a transcendental world was based in the belief that all individuals possessed a soul; this served as a major organizing influence within the human sciences (unlike today, where many people may still hold this belief but it does not organize knowledge-gathering for the human sciences). Influenced by revivalist movement in Protestant thought—The Great Awakening of the early 1700s, The Second and Third Great Awakening of the 1800s (Miller, 1965)—the soul was no longer seen as part of an hierarchical system, but rather, capable of direct communion with God. This ability of the soul to commune led to the belief that the one’s soul was able to commune with other human souls. The sympathy that would necessarily arise via this communion was the model for the moral integration that the social agents sought; its existence would be evidenced by the individual’s moral conduct.

At the same time, philosophical materialism had taken root starting with Hobbes and Descartes, extending through Locke, the idéologues, Hume, and Adam Smith, and culminating in the recent developments of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Society viewed human beings as existing in the natural world via the notion that there existed such a thing as human nature. Yet influenced by Enlightenment thought (and

contrary to our present notions of human nature being biologically based), human nature was anchored within a human being's ability to use reason. Human actions were seen as deriving from a moral calculus of pleasure and pain; the proper use of reason is what allowed an individual to recognize that moral pleasures (derived from one's communion with other souls) were far superior to base pleasures. Giving in to base pleasures was indicative of ignorance, or improper use on reasoning. Such actions would need to be corrected for both the benefit of the individual and society.

Intellectual Thought

In addition to the broad outlines discussed above, the impact of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill deserves further elaboration. Within social welfare, they were the dominant voice in elaborating philosophical materialism—and hence human nature—for their time period. Building upon the previous ideas of others concerning a pleasure/pain calculus to human behavior, Bentham gave this idea its fullest scope through his development of Utilitarian thought. Key aspects of his thought as they would relate to social welfare were the following: reason allows one to enjoy moral acts as the highest form of pleasure (i.e. engendering a sense of spiritual communion with others); deviant behavior is conceived as succumbing to sensual pleasures and seeking them at the expense of pursuing moral pleasures; and, most importantly, deviant behavior could be disciplined (i.e. corrected), through the imposition of an orderly routine and the separation from corrupting influences, toward a condition in which reason would once again prevail in guiding one's actions (Mack, 1969; Smith, 1997). Bentham was hailed by many as the “Newton of the moral world” for his law-like depiction of human nature (Mack, 1969). With concerns for the moral integration of society being paramount within the minds of social agents, Bentham's ideas found fertile ground and took deep root.

Mill further fleshed out Bentham's ideas through his concept of ‘sanctions’ (Denise, Peterfreund, & White, 1999). Sanctions, which could be external or internal, reinforced moral behavior through a pleasure/pain calculus. External sanctions, including customs and laws of social approval/disapproval, rewarded moral behavior (e.g. acceptance, respectability) and punished immoral behavior (e.g. scorn, imprisonment). This idea of external sanctions guided practical application to Bentham's ideas on discipline. Internal sanctions, representative of proper reasoning and a communion with others, represented the pain (e.g. shame, guilt) in breaking a moral code, and conversely, the pleasure (e.g. love, benevolence) arising from following a moral code. Social agents believed that those lacking inner sanctions, evidenced by their giving into base pleasures over moral pleasures, could be disciplined into developing inner sanctions. To do so involved a program of imposing strict external sanctions as a way to facilitate the proper use of reasoning. The belief was that once the individual got enough practice using proper reasoning the artificial structure of the external sanctions could be removed; the individual would now be guided by internal sanctions after experiencing the benefits of properly using reason.

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICES IN THE 1800s

Three broad movements arose in social welfare to address societal ills and the concern for moral integration: moral education, institutionalization, and environmentalism (Dybicz, 2006). The scope of this paper prevents a detailed listing of all the various social work practices of the era and how they reflected these movements and thus the pre-modern discourse; however, an enumeration of the practices listed earlier may suffice for our purposes here.

Moral Uplift

It was a common viewpoint among the middle class that poverty resulted from a defect of character (Mohl, 1970; Trattner, 1999). For example, in 1821 the New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism listed six such defects as leading to poverty (intemperance, extravagance, consorting with prostitutes, idleness, gambling, and early and imprudent marriage), and even the two of three environmental factors (pawnshops, and lack of education,) reflected the notions of reason falling prey to base instincts. The final factor (indiscriminant almsgiving) was seen as merely reinforcing the six character defects.

Relief agencies would seek to morally educate the poor to help them develop internal sanctions, and hence, eliminate the moral defects causing their poverty. Robert Hartley, first head of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor (AICP) (formed in the early 1840s), saw as its mission “not merely to alleviate wretchedness, but to reform character” by enlightening the poor to “the true origins of their suffering” via “encouragement and counsel along the path to rehabilitation” (Brandt, 1942, as cited in Boyer, 1978, p. 318). And as the Baltimore AICP framed it, the visitor’s goal was to help the poor reform “from sources within themselves” (Becker, 1961, p. 385). Home visitations became a central element to this approach (Boyer, 1978). The COS societies’ of the 1880s “not alms but a friend” motto was a later incarnation of this approach of attempting to stimulate internal sanctions through moral uplift. They believed that solely providing material aid, while alleviating suffering, would simply feed into the underlying problem (i.e. lack of internal sanctions)—similar to how today we would hesitate to give a drug addict solely material aid without seeking to treat the underlying problem. Moral counseling was aimed at attacking the problem directly.

Moral reform was also directed at the societal level. This led to the various suffrage movements, the abolition movement, and tenement house reform. Yet with their desire to create a more moral society, it is not hard to understand that individuals involved in the above also were involved in the prohibition movement and criminalizing prostitution. Through their eyes, all of the above contributed toward improving the moral character of society.

Institutionalization

While private charities engaged in moral education efforts, the public response to societal ills was institutionalization. Institutions mushroomed up around the country during the Jacksonian era (McKelvey, 1936; Rothman, 2002), and a particular institution

arose to address each form of deviance: the penitentiary for criminal behavior, the asylum for insanity, the almshouse for pauperism, the house of refuge for the juvenile delinquent, and the orphanage for the child pauper. Institutionalization both served to remove deviants from the corrupting influence of the environment from which they came, and placed them within a disciplined and orderly environment in which strong external sanctions existed so that they could be disciplined into learning the proper use of reasoning (i.e. internal sanctions). Their ability to re-create external sanctions reminiscent of the level that existed in the Colonial village led to the first penitentiaries being hailed as models for the community (Rothman, 2002).

The enthusiasm for institutionalization would be short lived (Gillin, 1922; Rothman, 2002). Yet despite being ineffectual, no alternatives to treatment were adopted to any significant degree. As was the case with the moral education movement, failures were ascribed to poor administration, lack of trained workers, and poor funding rather than the model itself (Rothman, 2002). It was not until the early 20th century—when the modern discourse began to rise in prominence—that alternatives were both conceived and adopted on large scale.

Environmentalism

A common thread among all three approaches was that an environment lacking in external sanctions exerted a corrupting influence (via numerous temptations), thus inhibiting one's development of inner sanctions. The moral education movement sought to strengthen the family environment, indoctrinating the individual to resist this influence. Institutionalization simply removed the individual from the environment and placed them back when they were sufficiently trained in the use of reason. Environmentalism represented a movement directed at changing the environment itself. Beginning in the mid 1850s, a broad effort at city beautification emerged that entailed the building of parks, playgrounds, and included such things as erecting statues and hosting city pageants dramatizing the glory of the city. The idea was to create wholesome spaces within the city where the differing classes could intermingle; the beauty of nature or art would then serve to elevate a person's spirit and thus facilitate the communion of souls so desperately sought (Glaab, 1963; Peterson, 1976).

The settlement house movement represented environmentalism at its most sophisticated. The settlement house served as an extension to one's cramped tenement, which often consisted of a single room. The living room, drawing room, kitchen, etc., served as a wholesome space in which community members could congregate and intermingle. As the broad goal of this intermingling was to promote communion among all members of society, it was deemed vital that social workers (who came from the middle and upper class) live within the house and thus represent a microcosm of society within this wholesome space (Addams, 1893; Trattner, 1999). As a result of this intermingling, many practical programs for the poor were set up at the settlement house (ranging from daycare to a penny-savings bank to a meeting hall for union organizing). Settlement house workers efforts were also directed outward, taking up such causes as tenement house reform and child labor laws (Addams, 1895; Trattner, 1999). Finally, through their social survey 'research' and prolific writing, settlement house workers

sought to communicate the plight of the poor to the middle and upper classes (Woods, 1899; Zimbalist, 1977). Believing that these members of society already possessed the social sympathy reflective of proper moral reasoning, settlement writers worked on the assumption that they simply needed to communicate the poor's plight and their audience would be motivated to act on the poor's behalf (as had been the case for themselves in their decision to join the settlement house movement).

THE CLASH BETWEEN PRE-MODERN AND MODERN DISCOURSES

The analysis of the pre-modern discourse, while highly truncated, is sufficient to move on to one of the main concerns of this paper: the clash between pre-modern and modern discourse. Within the pre-modern discourse, the social agent's base of authority rested upon moral expertise. It was because of the fact that they exhibited a high level of moral reasoning and social sympathy (evidenced by their own moral behavior) that they were well positioned to either model, educate, or discipline the development of internal sanctions in others, or direct changes in the environment which would facilitate this change.

However, during mid-century a new, competing discourse based upon science began to take root. An early indication of this is reflected in the re-organization of universities in America that took place around the 1860s and onward from being organized around concerns of philosophy (e.g. natural, moral, etc.) to being organized around specific scientific disciplines (Smith, 1997). In addition, Darwin's theory of evolution created a major stir not only in intellectual circles but within the public consciousness as well (Smith, 1997). By the late 1800s, the role of science as a means of investigation began guiding social work practices.

The COS engaged in 'scientific charity'. Within science they found the missing element for success for their moral education efforts and ascribed the failures of the previous efforts at moral education to their lack of science (Leighninger, 2000; Watson, 1922). Settlement house workers engaged in scientific research, conducting social surveys on the neighborhoods in which they lived. However as Zimbalist (1977) aptly notes, neither the COS's scientific charity nor the settlement houses' social surveys were scientific by today's standards (i.e. employing the scientific method to test hypotheses). There is good reason why this is so. The pre-modern discourse still dominated at this time. While the importance of science began to be recognized, 'science' was interpreted within the pre-modern discourse by social agents.

This necessarily led to a highly constricted view on what science entailed. As social agents rested their authority upon the proper use of moral reasoning, science naturally became an extension of that—a form of reason used to guide one's behavior: in this instance, their behavior of morally directing aid to recipients. Hence, the fundamental element of scientific investigation, hypothesis testing, was lost to these social agents (Zimbalist, 1977). In their hands, science was simply an organized form of data collection: a method to organize individual behavior on a collective level. So the COS used science to methodically collect data on all its clients; the organization of that data helped them to better direct their efforts at moral education and to wisely disperse

material aid (Trattner, 1999; Zimbalist, 1977). Settlement house workers used science, via the social survey, to methodically collect data on the living conditions within poor environments; the organization of that data helped them to more effectively communicate the harshness of these conditions to the middle and upper classes (Young, 1949; Zimbalist, 1977). As noted earlier, the goal of this communication was to touch upon the bonds of sympathy assumed present in these individuals, and hence, get them to support changes to the environment (Young, 1949; Zimbalist, 1977).

The focus of the above scientific investigations was not one of seeking natural causal linkages—that which defines current investigations and treatment plans. Yet even within this constricted framework, science did generate knowledge—knowledge that was used to guide treatment interventions. As history has borne out, science did not simply become the latest fad in the pre-modern discourse on social welfare. Its ability to generate knowledge eventually opened up a space to do so on a much broader level via employment of the scientific method and created a growing recognition that science could provide answers to questions left unasked and unexplained in the pre-modern discourse. Eventually, this led to the modern discourse supplanting the pre-modern discourse. The transition from pre-modern to modern was not one without contention. Science's emphasis upon natural causes over moral/rational causes led many social agents at first to view science as being anti-religion and hence undermining moral knowledge (Lubove, 1965).

Benefitting from the historical record, we now know that the rise of the modern discourse in social welfare did not lead to the voiding of the importance of moral knowledge; however it did result in its displacement. Moral knowledge and expertise was translated into a very robust code of ethics. Moral expertise no longer leads to the generation of knowledge in developing a diagnosis and treatment plan; yet, its application in forms such as honoring self-determination, respecting the dignity and worth of the individual, and honoring the importance of human relationships serves to map the territorial boundaries within which scientific investigation and knowledge are applied. In this manner, moral knowledge guides social work practice. Few would argue against the notion that this is a vital role: a person who is able to expertly apply scientific knowledge but poorly applies social work values does not a good social worker make—and vice versa.

THE MODERN DISCOURSE

Urgent Need

By the early 20th century, the integration of American society on a national level was an accepted fact. At all levels a critical mass had been achieved—political (prominence of federal reach), economic (national distribution network), and social (national, book/magazine distribution, movies, radio then TV, etc.) (Wiebe, 1967). While a Great Community may not have arisen, neither did anarchy prevail; society remained a stable force. Yet numerous social ills remained. Attention was now turned toward maintaining the proper functioning of society; at the individual level, this translated into a concern over the proper functioning of the individual.

Existence in the World

Philosophical materialism dominates the view of human beings within the human sciences. With the emergence of the discipline of psychology, the study of mind as well as body is approached materialistically. Humans are seen as solely existing within the natural world as (bio-psycho) organisms in an (social) environment. Hence questions of human nature are framed within a debate of nature vs. nurture (Smith, 1997).

Intellectual Thought

Positivism, along with the correspondence theory of truth, serve to form the bedrock for the scientific method. Empiricism serves to further define it within this materialist framework. While the scientific method can trace its lineage all the way back to Galileo, its dominance as an organizing force within the fields of the human sciences did not arise until the late 1800s. It would not be until the early 20th century that it would extend its grasp to fully encompass social work practices. The impact of Darwin's theory of evolution cannot be underestimated in its contribution towards a materialist outlook on human existence. Most human behavior theories in the 20th century revolve around concerns of adaptation and adjustment.²

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICES 1900S TO PRESENT

At the dawn of the 20th century, social work practices underwent a dramatic transformation. By 1920, the scientific method was the dominant organizing influence for the profession (Leighninger, 1987). Training to acquire scientific expertise took the form of a rigorous academic program emphasizing scientific knowledge, theory, and modes of inquiry; later, this evolved into core elements of a curriculum resulting in degrees in social work (Leighninger, 1987).

The scientific method, with its emphasis on hypothesis testing, serves as the new organizing influence for social work practices and inquiry, broadly defining the phases of intervention as follows: "study, diagnose, treatment". The adoption of such a broadly defined approach is what served to unify the social work knowledge base in the 1950s (Kadushin, 1959; Maas, 1958). Whether through the employment of psychodynamic theory in years past (Hamilton, 1941) or ecological systems theory in the present (Germain & Gitterman, 1980), intervention approaches follow these three phases. The scientific approach is also reflected in past calls for the development of the scientist-practitioner, the current employment of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, and recent calls for evidence-based practice.

THE CLASH BETWEEN MODERN AND POSTMODERN DISCOURSES

The historical record for the postmodern discourse is relatively brief, so describing the elements of this discourse poses some difficulty. However, what has been clearly established is the new front upon which this discourse has begun to challenge the dominance of the modern discourse. This new front is the concept of culture.³ Through its goal of seeking to generalize results, the scientific method inherently seeks to de-emphasize the particularities of culture as they are expressed within the individual (single

system design may be an exception to this, but it is a minor player in the social work knowledge base and does not direct movements such as evidence-based practice or person-in-environment). It is well established in philosophical circles that positivism seeks to sideline culture and history (Shimony, 1987).

For most of the 20th century, concerns of culture were indeed sidelined, aided by the embrace of the melting pot theory (Green, 1999). Scientific theories and evidence were most important in guiding social work practices. Whether psychodynamic (e.g. Freud), humanist (e.g. Erikson), behaviorist (e.g. Bandura), or transcendental (e.g. Maslow), theory was seen as applicable to all human beings. Sociological theory was no different. Tools such as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* and calls for evidence-based practice still emphasize generalizability over particularity when viewing human beings.

Yet from the 1970s onward, concerns of culture in guiding social work interventions have gained in prominence. Various human behavior theory textbooks now include a caveat when discussing most modernist theories, stating that they contain a Western, male, and heterosexual bias (Greene, 2008; Healy, 2005; Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2006). Others (Green, 1999; Livingston et al., 2008; Wong et al. 2003) have noted the role of the scientific method and the generalizing of results as contributing factors to this bias. The importance of this movement in respecting culture is reflected by the wide acceptance and recognition of the need to foster cultural competency, to the point that it has become an ethical mandate (NASW, 1999) for directing social work practice.

The Modern Discourse and Culture

Culture—and hence cultural competency—seeks expression within both the modern and postmodern discourse. Yet as was the case with science in the late 1800s, the reigning discourse is only able to provide a highly constricted expression to the concept. The move to express culture and cultural competency within the modern discourse is one of incorporating it within the scientific method (just as ‘science’ was incorporated into the proper use of reason within the pre-modern discourse) via the focus on correcting deviance from a norm. Culture is typically conceptualized as “norms of conduct, beliefs, values, and skills” (Lum, 2007, p. 4). As such, culture becomes a form of technical knowledge: either an additional variable to consider when determining causal mechanisms or the recognition that an alternative norm may exist.

Consequently, most models on cultural competency have a strong focus upon knowledge acquisition and skill development particular to various cultural subgroups (Lum, 2007; Pedersen, 1994; Rothman, 2008). Yet significant shortfalls have surfaced with this scientific approach and these same authors have felt a need to shore up their models by adding additional, nonscientific elements. One dynamic illustrative of the this dilemma is that there is now a social work value—respecting diversity—that is doing more than just simply mapping the boundaries within which to apply the scientific method. It is generating knowledge used to develop diagnoses and treatment plans, the role heretofore assigned to science and the scientific method. Hence, as these models begin to drift from their scientific base, elements that require a critical consciousness are embraced such as, self awareness of one’s own biases, reflective learning, and

recognizing the construction of 'multiple' identities of the client (Lum, 2007; Pedersen, 1994; Rothman, 2008).

The Postmodern Discourse and Culture

Another model for cultural competency (Ramsey & Latting, 2005) has been proposed that avoids the above-mentioned issue. Rather than viewing cultural competency as stemming from the acquisition of cultural technical knowledge, it is viewed as stemming from the employment of a critical consciousness. Abilities such as reflecting upon self, relationships, and context comprise the model.⁴

Within such a linguistic paradigm, culture is much more than simply technical knowledge—a description of norms for a population. Culture is a world-making process that serves to delimit one's unique being-in-the-world. This view of culture is more reflective of the German notion of *kulture*, dating back in intellectual thought to Herder (2002/1765-1797) and Goethe (1987/1811-1822). Culture in this manner is something that contributes towards defining one's spirit, as in one's essence of being. Culture's expression is highly contextual and particularistic. To properly understand the influence of culture upon one's essence of being, one must engage in a hermeneutic-driven inquiry.

This approach of a hermeneutic-driven inquiry is exactly what drives knowledge generation within postmodern practice. With its emphasis on values and meaning, a hermeneutic inquiry fits hand in glove with a process yielding knowledge generation via employing social work values—such as respect for diversity.⁵ Yet the idea of *kulture* takes on a much more expansive aspect in terms of encompassing social work values. Postmodern practice is highly value-driven; by engaging in hermeneutic inquiry these values generate knowledge. So for example, honoring self-determination is now a knowledge generating process. Asking clients to define their dreams and goals generates knowledge regarding the direction of their treatment plans. Respecting the dignity and worth of the clients is translated into efforts into understanding and respecting their being-in-the world, or identity (Brubaker & Wright, 2006; White 2007). A client's identity is seen as anchored in narrative; one's dreams and goals serve to generate knowledge regarding this identity (De Jong & Berg, 2008; McIntosh, & McKeganey, 2000; Saleebey, 2006a). Honoring the importance of human relationships also generates knowledge. Via engaging in the process of mimesis (Dybicz, in press), the client is able to build a counterstory which serves to redefine his/her identity. Within the client-social worker relationship, the social worker is able to reflect back to the client "I see you this way too," hence, generating knowledge within the social construction process that serves to reinforce this counterstory and new identity (De Jong & Berg, 2008; Saleebey, 2006a, White & Epston, 1990).

The hermeneutic inquiry that is able to grasp this expansive notion of *kulture* does not rest upon expertise in the scientific method. Rather, it depends upon expertise in employing a critical consciousness, an understanding of how power filtrates and circulates within linguistic structures, supporting some narratives over others in such a way that in some instances they serve to diminish the client's essence, or being-in-the-world. The collaborative relationship that the social worker engages in with the client is

an endeavor aimed at consciousness-raising. This starts with recognizing one's own learned biases and how they may interfere with one's ability to understand the client's being-in-the-world, or essence. This is then followed by the social worker adopting the role of editor via asking the client questions that serve to stimulate reflection upon oppressive narratives at work in the client's life. Thus the watchwords for such a process might be described as "question (the oppressive narrative), generate (a counterstory), and solidify (the counterstory or life-enhancing narrative)." This is a marked departure from the "study, diagnose, treatment" approach of the modern discourse. Yet, this does not mean that there is no role at all for the scientific method in the helping situation.

POSTMODERN PRACTICE AND THE ROLE OF SCIENCE

When the pre-modern and modern discourses clashed upon the battlefield of science, eventually the modern approach based upon the scientific method won out. Yet moral knowledge was not trivialized or sidelined; it was translated into a robust code of ethics. This moral knowledge circumscribed the boundaries within which the scientific method could be legitimately employed. Within the clash between modern and postmodern discourses upon the battlefield of culture, postmodern practice calls for this dynamic to repeat itself. Within postmodern practices, a hermeneutic-driven inquiry displaces a scientific method based inquiry as the dominant form of knowledge generation. This does not call for scientific knowledge to be trivialized or sidelined; rather, its place is to circumscribe the boundaries within which an hermeneutic inquiry can be legitimately employed.

Michael White (White & Epston, 1990) provides an excellent example of this dynamic in his work in family therapy. When discussing his technique of 'externalizing the problem', he breaks it down into two steps. The first step is described as 'mapping the influence of the problem'. In this step, he employs what basically amounts to ecological systems theory to describe the impact that the presenting problem has had among the various family members. Yet this knowledge is not used to form a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan; rather, it circumscribes the boundaries for step two, which involves a hermeneutic inquiry. He describes step two as 'mapping the influence of persons'. This step involves focusing upon the clients' personal agency in mapping "their influence and the influence of their relationships in the 'life' of the problem" (p. 45). From this process, knowledge is created contributing toward a new narrative or counterstory which attacks the narrative diminishing their identity—their essence—by reinforcing their personal agency and empowering their efforts in forming a more positive identity formation.

Empirical observation (and theory that is used to guide it, such as ecological systems theory) is the means by which a scientific approach seeks to accurately capture the properties of an object or organism and how it reacts to other objects or organisms in the environment. Within the modernist discourse, the description of such properties and causal linkages represent reality—a description of the existence of the object. Postmodern approaches are based upon a phenomenological view of the world. As such, reality is made up not simply of objects and organisms but rather phenomena. A phenomenon is considered to comprise not only an existence, but also an essence. Within a phenomenon, the essence serves to organize the existing properties, emphasizing some over others.

When speaking of humans, this essence may be thought of as one's individual identity. Thus, as briefly described earlier, postmodern approaches seek to affect change by targeting the essence of the phenomenon rather than its existence. Yet an accurate description of the existence of the phenomenon still plays a vital role. Science provides this description in a very robust way. The better the description, the better one's 'territory' is mapped out. This paves the way for a successful hermeneutic inquiry that seeks to understand the essence of the phenomenon in relation to this existence.

For example, as noted above, White (White & Epston, 1990) applies systems theory. In the case study of Nick, White uses ecological systems theory to map the influence that Nick's encopresis has had on his life at home and at school (i.e. to accurately capture the existence of the encopresis in Nick's life). But rather than using this information diagnostically (i.e. attacking the problem directly), White uses it as a map in which to search for Nick's strengths and successes as they relate to the problem, hence step two: "mapping the influence of persons." The more detailed the map of the problem, the greater direction and specificity arises for questions geared towards uncovering these strengths and successes (i.e., the many possibilities in which Nick has already triumphed over the problem). The gained awareness of these strengths and successes represents the conscious-raising that is sought.

Of important note is the following: these strengths and successes are always in relation to the presenting problem. The context of the helping relationship will always speak to a presenting problem, challenge, or concern of the client. When the sole focus is upon the existence of this challenge in the client's life and the essence is ignored, the individuality of the client is lost and he/she becomes viewed categorically by the challenge itself (e.g., pregnant teenager). Not only does such an approach carry the danger of social control occurring, but it also undercuts the worth of the individual by painting him/her as "abnormal", "broken", or "dysfunctional:" they are someone that needs to be fixed (otherwise one would not need to visit a social worker). Yet, one cannot focus solely on the client's identity (i.e. essence) and ignore the existence of the challenge. If Nicole is a pregnant teen who has decided to keep her baby, the existence of her pregnancy is not something that can be conveniently ignored. Scientific knowledge tells us that she will need prenatal care, economic support, and perhaps some parenting classes. Do we attack the challenge directly and provide all of the above because she is an "at risk" mother? Or, do we plug into her dream of wanting to be a good mother, recognize the capacities she has already displayed in this endeavor, and then provide the above as the means to help her further realize her dream of being a good mom? If Nicole is supported in developing the image of herself as a good mom, her present and future actions will be tied to this image as she attempts to maintain her dream of being a good mom. Scientific knowledge of her situation not only provides a map within which to explore for her strengths and successes related to various parental challenges, but it also provides information and advice to help her fulfill her dream of being a good mom.

CONCLUSION

The paradigmatic shift required to successfully employ postmodern practices has profound implications for the practitioner. Fundamentally, it requires the practitioner to

move from viewing interventions as an endeavor at problem-solving to viewing them as endeavors at consciousness-raising. Within a problem-solving approach to practice, scientific knowledge takes center stage as the means to arrive at solutions to the life problems faced by clients. Within postmodern practices, a critical consciousness is the main expertise brought by the social worker as the means to assist the client in generating solutions to his/her life problems. This necessarily creates a new role for scientific knowledge—that of circumscribing the boundaries within which the consciousness-raising will take place. Respect for the insights of science regarding the well-being of the client remains, but this knowledge is simply used in a new role, one that is still vital to successful social work practice (just as our present code of ethics is essential to modernist practice).

Scientific knowledge performs the vital role of mapping out the influence the problem has had or will likely have on the life of the client. This is a necessary first step in the creation of the map that is the goal of the intervention: mapping the influence of the client on the life of the problem. These two steps can be seen as representative of a postmodern dialectical process. Science provides the thesis in step one. This allows for an antithesis to emerge in step two. But rather than seeking a simple synthesis, as Gadamer (1999) notes, these two steps open up a dialogical process within which many possibilities can be explored. The properties of existence are never denied, but many possibilities of essence are explored, with the best possibility being the one that best captures the uniqueness of the client's lived experiences by promoting a positive identity of the client. This dialectical inquiry is what comprises the consciousness-raising effort.

Hence, a new role and conception of culture also takes place, one which places culture center stage during the helping process. Within postmodern practice, culture represents much more than simply the norms of a population group. Culture is the bedrock of a world-making process (the social construction of reality), a process that emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual within particular contexts. Understanding culture in this manner requires an hermeneutic inquiry, an inquiry in which application of values serves to generate knowledge toward intervention strategies. A critical consciousness on the part of the social worker is what serves to guide the application of these values to collaboratively generate and then secure more life-enhancing possibilities for the client.

References

- Addams, J. (1893). The subjective value of a social settlement. In H. C. Adams (Ed.), *Philanthropy and social progress* (pp. 1-26). New York: Thomas Y. Crowell
- Addams, J. (1895). The settlement as a factor in the labor movement. In L. Pacey (Ed.), *Readings in the development of settlement work* (pp. 29-40). Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press.
- Addams, J. (1907). Public recreation and social morality. *Charities and Commons*, 18, 492-494.

- Amundson, J. (2001). Why narrative therapy need not fear science and "other" things. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 23, 175-188. doi: 10.1111/1467-6427.00177.
- Becker, D. (1961). The visitor to the New York City poor, 1843-1920. *Social Service Review*, 35, 372-387.
- Boyer, P. S. (1978). *Urban masses and moral order in America, 1820-1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bridge, T., Massie, E., & Mills, C. (2008) Prioritizing cultural competence in the implementation of an evidence-based practice model. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30, 1111-1118. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.02.005.
- Bruno, F. (1957). *Trends in social work 1874-1956*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Burnett, C. (1968). *Five for freedom: Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Station, Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Brubaker, S., & Wright, C. (2006). Identity transformation and family caregiving: Narratives of African-American teen mothers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 1214-1228.
- Chapin, E. (1843). *Moral aspects of city life*. New York: Baker and Taylor.
- De Jong, P., & Berg, I. K. (2008). *Interviewing for solutions* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomas Higher Education.
- Denise, T., Peterfreund, S., & White, N. (1999). *Great traditions in ethics* (9th ed.). New York: Wadsworth.
- De Shazer, S. (1994). *Words were originally magic*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- De Shazer, S., & Berg, I. K. (1992). Doing therapy: A post-structural re-vision. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 18, 71-81. Retrieved from Social Service Abstracts database.
- De Shazer, S., Dolan, Y., Korman, H., Trepper, T., McCollum, E., & Berg, I. K. (2007). *More than miracles: The state of the art of solution-focused therapy*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
- Dybicz, P. (2006). A genealogy of the good: An examination of the discourse on social welfare from poor laws to strengths perspective. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Kansas, United States -- Kansas. (Publication No. AAT 3217191).
- Dybicz, P. (2010). Mimesis: linking postmodern theory to human behavior. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 46, 341-355. doi: 10.5175.
- Foucault, M. (1981). *Power-knowledge: Selected interviews & other writings 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.

- Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline & punish: The birth of the prison*. (Vintage Books, 2nd ed., A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1975).
- Foucault, M. (1994a). *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. (Vintage Books ed., A. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1963).
- Foucault, M. (1994b). *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. (Vintage Books ed.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1966).
- Friere, P. (1997) *Pedagogy of the heart* (D. Macedo Trans.). New York: Continuum.
- Friere, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.) (M. B. Ramos Trans.). New York: Continuum. (Originally published 1970).
- Gadamer, H. G. (1999). *Truth and method* (2nd ed.). (J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall Trans.) New York: The Continuum Publishing Company. (Original work published 1960).
- Germain, C. (1970). Casework and science: A historical encounter. In R. Roberts & R. Nee's (Eds.), *Theories of social casework* (pp. 3-32). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Germain, C., & Gitterman, A. (1980). *The life model of social work practice*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gillin, J. (1922). *Poverty and dependency: Their relief and prevention*. New York: The Century Co.
- Glaab, C. (1963). *The American city: A documentary history*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Goethe, J. (1987). *From my life: Poetry and truth* (parts one to four). (R. Heitner & T. Saine Trans.) (T. Saine & J. Sammons, Eds.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original works published 1811-1822).
- Green, J. (1999). *Cultural awareness in the human services: A multi-ethnic approach* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Greene, R. (Ed.). (2008). *Human behavior theory & social work practice* (3rd ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Guerra, N., & Lyndee, K. (2008). How culture impacts the dissemination and implementation of innovation: A case study of the Families and Schools Together Program (FAST) for preventing violence with immigrant Latino youth. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41, 304-313. doi: 10.1007/s10464-008-9161-4.
- Hall, R. (2003). The hegemony of Eurocentrism in social work practice: From race to culture as ecological perspective vis-a-vis Southeast Asian populations. *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, 64, 418-431.
- Hamilton, G. (1941). The underlying philosophy of social casework. *Family*, 23, 139-48.

- Healy, K. (2005). *Social work theories in context*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson Trans.). New York: Harper and Row. (Original work published 1927).
- Herder, J. (2002). *Herder: Philosophical writings*. (M. Forster Ed. and Trans.). New York: Cambridge University Press (Original works published 1765-1797).
- Kadushin, A. (1959). The knowledge base of social work. In A. Kahn (Ed.), *Issues in American social work* (pp. 39-79). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Leiby, J. (1978). *A history of social welfare and social work in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Leighninger, L. (1987). *Social work: Search for identity*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Leighninger, L. (2000). *Creating a new profession: The beginnings of social work education in the United States*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.
- Livingston, J., Holley, J., Eaton, S., Cliette, G., Savoy, M., & Smith, N. (2008). Cultural competence in mental health practice. *Best Practices in Mental Health*, 4(2), 1-14. Retrieved from Social Service Abstracts database.
- Lubove, R. (1965). *The professional altruist: The emergence of social work as a career, 1880-1930*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lum, D. (2007). *Culturally competent practice: A framework for understanding diverse groups and justice issues* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education
- MacKaye, P. (1912). *The civic theatre in relation to the redemption of leisure*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley.
- McIntosh, J., & McKeganey, N. (2000). Addicts' narratives of recovery from drug use: Constructing a non-addict identity. *Social Science & Medicine*, 50, 1501-1510.
- McKelvey, B. (1936). *American prisons: A study in American social history prior to 1915*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McMahon, M. (1990). *The general method of social work practice: A problem solving approach* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Maas, H. (1958). Social casework. In W. Friedlander (Ed.), *Concepts and methods of social work* (pp. 15-115). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Mack, M. (1969). *A Bentham reader*. New York: Pegasus.
- Miller, P., & American Council of Learned Societies. (1965). *The life of the mind in America from the Revolution to the Civil War: Books one through three*. New York: Harcourt Brace Javonovich.
- Mohl, R. (1970). Humanitarianism in the preindustrial city: The New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, 1817-1823. *Journal of American History*, 57, 576-599.

- NASW. (1999). *Code of ethics of the national association of social workers*. Washington, DC: NASW press.
- NASW. (2001). *NASW standards for cultural competence in social work practice*. Washington, DC: NASW press.
- Patten, S. (1907). *The new basis of civilization*. New York: Macmillan.
- Pederson, P. (1994). *A handbook for developing multicultural awareness* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Perlman, H. (1963). *Social casework: A problem-solving approach*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Peterson, J. (1976). The city beautiful movement: Forgotten origins and lost meanings. *Journal of Urban History*, 2, 415-434.
- Quandt, J. (1970). *From small town to great community: The social thought of progressive intellectuals*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Ramsey, V., & Latting, J. (2005). A typology of intergroup competencies. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 41, 265-84. doi: 10.1177/0021886305277974.
- Rapp, C. A., & Goscha, R. J. (2006). *The strengths model: Case management with people with psychiatric disabilities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ricœur, P. (1984-88). *Time and narrative* (vol. 1-3). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Richmond, M. (1899). *Friendly visiting among the poor: A handbook for charity workers*. New York: Macmillan.
- Robbins, S. P., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. R. (2006). *Contemporary human behavior theory: a critical perspective for social work*. Boston: Pearson.
- Robinson, C. (1901). *The improvement of towns and cities*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Rothman, D. (2002). *The discovery of the asylum* (Revised edition). Piscataway, NJ: Aldine Transaction.
- Rothman, J. (2008). *Cultural competence in process and practice*. New York: Pearson.
- Saleebey, D. (Ed.). (2006a). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Saleebey, D. (2006b). Introduction: Power in the people. In D. Saleebey's (Ed.) *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed., pp. 1-23). Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Shimony, A. (1987). Introduction. In A. Shimony & D. Nails (Eds.), *Naturalistic epistemology: A symposium of two decades* (pp. 1-13). Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, v. 100. Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

- Simons, R., & Aigner, S. (1985). *Practice principles: A problem-solving approach to social work*. New York: Macmillan.
- Smith, R., (1997). *The Norton history of the human sciences*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Thyer, B., & Myers, L. (1999). On science, antiscience, and the client's right to effective treatment. *Social Work*, 44, 501-504.
- Thyer, B. (2008). The quest for evidence-based practice?: We are all positivists! *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18, 339-345. doi: 10.1177/1049731507313998.
- Trattner, W. I. (1999). *From poor law to welfare state: A history of social welfare in America* (6th ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Pilgrim, D. (2000). The real problem for postmodernism. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22, 6-28.
- Wainberg, M., McKinnon, K., Mattos, P., Pinto, D., Mann, C., de Oliveira, C., et al. (2007). A model for adapting evidence-based behavioral interventions to a new culture: HIV prevention for psychiatric patients in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. *AIDS and Behavior*, 11, 872-883. doi: 10.1007/s10461-006-9181-8.
- Watson, F. (1922). *The charity organization movement in the United States*. New York: Macmillan.
- Weick, A., & Saleebey, D. (1998). Postmodern perspectives for social work. *Social Thought: Journal of Religion in the Social Services*, 18, 21-40. Retrieved from ASSIA.
- Westfall, R. (1978). *The construction of modern science: Mechanisms and mechanics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York: Norton.
- White, M. (2004). Folk psychology and narrative practices. In L. Angus & J. McLeod (Eds.), *The handbook of narrative and psychotherapy: Practice, theory, and research* (pp. 15-51). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- White, M. (2007). *Maps of narrative practice*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Widiger, T. A. (1994). *DSM-IV sourcebook*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- Wiebe, R. (1967). *The search for order 1877-1920*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Wong, Y., Cheng, S., Choi, S., Ky, K., LeBa, S., Tsang, K., & Yoo, L. (2003). Deconstructing culture in cultural competence: Dissenting voices from Asian-Canadian practitioners. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 20, 149-167.
- Woods, R. (1899). *The city wilderness: A settlement study*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Young, P. (1949). *Scientific social surveys and research* (2nd ed.). New York: Prentice-Hall.

Zimbalist, S. (1977). *Historic themes and landmarks in social welfare research*. New York: Harper & Row.

Endnotes

¹ There is good reason why this appears so. The above postmodern practices embrace the philosophical position of social constructionism (De Shazer & Berg, 1992; Saleebey, 2006a; White, 2007). Being a theory of epistemology, social constructionism attacks the epistemological position of positivism and seeks to replace it. Regarding concerns of ontology, social constructionism's inherent embrace of phenomenology also attacks the correspondence theory of truth that is innately tied to positivism. Positivism, the correspondence theory of truth, and empiricism are the core elements that make up the scientific method.

² Darwin's theory met the Kantian criteria of an organizing principle that up until then was lacking in the study of biology—consequently, it served to anchor concepts of human nature within biology and reinforced materialist notions of the person and the environment.

³ The broad intellectual front where this clash occurs happens over theories of ontology and epistemology. Modernists believe in the correspondence theory of truth—which asserts that the universe is made up of an objective reality. The epistemological theory of positivism offers a method to capture/describe this reality as best as possible through a systematic means of observation (empiricism).

Postmodernism embraces the ontological theory of phenomenology in which the universe is made up of phenomena—and phenomena are made up of an existence and an essence. Heidegger (1962/1927) elaborated the postmodern version of phenomenology by asserting the essence of a phenomenon is granted to it by humans' attempt to understand it. This creates the stance that a phenomenon can have multiple realities, depending upon the culture of the individuals observing it. The epistemological theory of social constructionism offers a method to capture/describe these multiple realities via an examination of how the various essences are socially constructed.

Within the more parochial concerns of social welfare, the ramifications of the above debate have found expression over the concept of culture and concerns for respecting diversity. These ramifications are more fully articulated in the body of this paper. Briefly, if one takes the modernist stance of the universe being comprised of an objective reality, culture is merely a perception of that reality. If one takes the postmodern stance that phenomena are comprised of an existence and essence, culture creates reality.

⁴ Further supporting this alternate view of cultural competency is the epistemological theory of social constructionism, and a phenomenological view of ontology: reality as phenomena in which things reveal themselves—that in addition to an existence, phenomena have an essence, which is granted to them by culture.

⁵ Hermeneutics—being the study of meaning—is based in axiology (the philosophical branch of values and meaning); thus a hermeneutic inquiry is an axiological endeavor. Values are also based in axiology; this is why the application of social work values generates knowledge. In addition, this is why such an inquiry into human behavior relies upon mimesis—as mimesis is a theory of causality based in axiology. Briefly, mimesis refers to the notion that one has an image of “who I am” and “who I want to be.” The image of “who I want to be” guides present actions and informs the “who I am.” For more elaboration on mimesis see Dybicz (2010) and Ricoeur (1984-88).

This is in contrast to modernist inquiry, which is based in ontology. Newton's causality seeks to explain the movement of objects. The scientific method is an ontological endeavor aimed at uncovering facts that accurately represent reality.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Phillip Dybicz, Keimyung University, Department of Social Welfare, College of Social Science Building, 2800 Dalgubeoldaero, Dalseo-Gu, Daegu 704-701, South Korea. Email: pdybicz@gmail.com

Let's Talk About Same Sex: How Social Workers Can Make Judges Listen

Stephanie K. Boys

Abstract: *Researchers have created a diverse toolbox of literature reporting that same sex cohabitating relationships are strikingly similar to heterosexual marriages in amicus curiae briefs submitted to the courts. However, judges are trained to fit information into legal frameworks and to ignore data that does not fit the rhetoric of a case. The following article aims to fit existing data on same sex relationships into the framework judges will use to decide whether same sex marriage can be prohibited. The primary precedent used to support same sex marriage is based on the analogy of a case prohibiting marriage discrimination based on race. The legal framework created by this case requires social work policy practitioners to frame research in terms of the evolution that has occurred in scientific understanding of same sex attraction and public opinion. A simple shift in the discourse used to frame the data can significantly impact whether judges listen.*

Keywords: *Policy practice, same sex marriage, discrimination, discourse, social policy*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to situate the social science literature on same sex marriage into a legal context useful in a courtroom. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has been an active participant in advocating for same sex marriage in the legal arena through amicus curiae briefs and testimony in previous cases. The evidence that homosexual couples form relationships equivalent to married heterosexual couples has been clearly stated; however, judges are trained to ignore evidence that is not relevant to the legal framework from which they must decide a case.

The case of *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) provides one of the likely legal precedents that will be used to frame and decide whether same sex marriages can be denied for public policy reasons. The case established that states cannot ban interracial marriage, and the similarity to state bans on same sex marriage has created a legal argument advocates call the *Loving* analogy. The analogy is explained in the first section of this article. The next section explores ways to incorporate social science data into the framework of the *Loving* analogy. In explaining these data, advocates should employ a discourse focused on the evolution of both scientific understanding of homosexuality and the evolution of public opinion. The admitted ignorance of the Court regarding issues of sex and intimacy underscores the importance of advocacy by policy practitioners. By placing the current social science literature in the context of the legal precedent, advocates can make this literature relevant for judges who have been trained in law rather than social science.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COURTROOMS TO THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE IN THE UNITED STATES

On June 17, 2008, California courthouses were flooded with same sex couples filing for legal marriage licenses for the first time. It was a day shrouded with controversy.

Stephanie K. Boys, Ph.D., JD, MSW, is an Assistant Professor in the Indiana University School of Social Work on the Indianapolis campus.

Advocates of same sex marriage rights celebrated in the streets, while opponents protested. The celebrations, as well as marriage ceremonies of same sex couples, ceased only a few months later when a public referendum passed and voided legislation that had permitted the marriages. However, turmoil erupted once again on August 4, 2010 when the case of *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* was decided in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. The decision invalidated public referendum proposition 8, but it is unlikely we have heard the last word on this issue as opponents are at work on arguments to appeal.

Currently, the issue of whether to solemnize same sex marriages in the United States is addressed on a state by state basis. The legality of same sex marriage is in flux across the United States. As of the writing of this article, six states grant same sex couples marriage licenses; however, unlike most other couples who marry in the United States, these marriages may not be recognized if the couples travel or relocate to another state.

In order to adapt to the frequent migration of United States' citizens from state to state, the states honor most marriages performed in other states and grant those couples the same rights and privileges of couples married within the state. However, the Supreme Court has validated some exceptions to marriage recognition on public policy grounds, such as if another state were to permit polygamous or incestuous marriages (Strasser, 1998). To ensure states could add same sex unions to the small list of public policy exceptions, Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in 1996. This federal legislation permitted states to outlaw same sex marriage and treat those marriages as void within the state. However, the confusion and turmoil caused by varying laws will require the Supreme Court to address the validity of DOMA and state laws invalidating same sex marriages performed in other states in the near future.

Although advocacy for same sex union legislation is important, courtrooms are the focal concern because most legislation on same sex marriage is challenged on the state level, and it is likely either a case challenging DOMA or a state law will be accepted for review by the Supreme Court. The laws certainly raise a Constitutional issue regarding 14th Amendment equal rights; the Court, however, routinely waits to accept review of controversial issues until public sentiment on the issue is more settled (Perry, 1991). Due to the inclusive nature of Supreme Court decisions and the Court's reluctance to overturn decisions once made, it is imperative that social work practitioners be prepared when the case comes before the Court.

THE LOVING ANALOGY

Another instance in US history when marriages could be voided for public policy reasons by states objecting to the union was the invalidation of interracial marriages. In 1967, sixteen states voided interracial marriages performed in other states. This practice was determined to be unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, as a discriminatory practice based on race (*Loving v. Virginia*, 1967).

History of the Case

The historic lawsuit was brought by Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter, who wed in 1958 in Washington, DC (Pratt, 1998). Mildred and Richard returned to Virginia and moved into her parents' home. About a month later, the two were awakened when the county sheriff entered the unlocked home and found the couple asleep in their bedroom. The two were charged with unlawful cohabitation after being told their District of Columbia marriage license was "no good here" (Pratt, 1998, p. 236). The Virginia 1924 Racial Integrity Act automatically held void all marriages between a white person and a "colored" person. It also prohibited recognition of legal marriages permitted in other states (*Loving v. Virginia*, 1967).

When the law was challenged in front of the US Supreme Court, the Lovings' attorney argued that Virginia's statute invalidating interracial marriages violated the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution. Virginia supported the law by arguing that it was non-discriminatory because it treated white persons and black persons equally since neither was permitted to enter into an interracial union. The Supreme Court did not accept Virginia's argument and held that the facial, or explicit, classification based on race could not stand under the Equal Protection Clause (*Loving v. Virginia*, 1967).

The reasoning needed to overturn the Virginia law was completed at this point, and the opinion could have been finished and signed by the members of the Court. However, the opinion did not stop there. Even though the case could have rested completely upon the Equal Protection Clause, the Court chose to also address the issue of Substantive Due Process raised by the Lovings' attorney. Over time, precedent has established that certain fundamental rights, as defined by the Supreme Court, cannot be infringed by the states under the 14th Amendment by what has become known as Substantive Due Process. In *Loving*, the Court recognized marriage as one of those fundamental rights. The opinion stated marriage is a basic right of man, "fundamental to our very existence and survival" (p. 12).

How the Precedent is Used by Advocates of Same Sex Marriage

The invalidation of anti-interracial marriage laws has been the primary precedent for legal advocates arguing for same sex marriage rights across the United States. The argument follows that, as stated by the majority opinion in the *Loving* case, the "Fourteenth Amendment requires that the freedom of choice to marry not be restricted" (*Loving v. Virginia*, p. 12). This establishment of marriage as a fundamental right set the stage for what has been termed the *Loving* analogy (Morrison, 2007). The analogy reasons that *Loving* is precedent for permitting same sex couples to marry. Advocates argue that freedom to marry means freedom to marry, and that it applies equally to all subordinated groups in society. Although the Court specified that choice of marriage partner could not be restricted by race, the language used by the court was gender neutral. Additionally, although gender classifications have traditionally received a lower level of scrutiny than racial classifications under Equal Protection doctrine, the Court's addition of marriage as one of the fundamental rights allows same sex marriage to be supported

under the Due Process Clause instead of Equal Protection, making the difference between classifications based on race and gender moot.

How the Precedent is Used by Opponents of Same Sex Marriage

Although the Court has granted freedom of whom to marry, it must be acknowledged that this quote is often used out of context. The full quote reads, the "Fourteenth Amendment requires that the freedom of choice to marry not be restricted by invidious racial discriminations" (*Loving v. Virginia*, p. 12). The choice of whom to marry as a fundamental right has been touted by the legal community supporting same sex marriage with little question to the fit of the precedent. It seems logical that if choice of who to marry is a fundamental right, the gender of that person should be a moot point. However, opponents of same sex marriage have developed several strong arguments to puncture the arguably solid fit of the precedent established in *Loving* for the invalidation of laws prohibiting choice of a same sex marriage partner.

The primary retort made by both legal scholars and much of the public in opposition to the legal recognition of same sex marriages is that if the *Loving* precedent is extended beyond race, marriage will be set upon a slippery slope that could end in the recognition of unfathomable unions, such as man and livestock or polygamist unions with one groom and 30 wives (Andreasen, 2003). Though some public figures have dramatized this argument to a laughable extent, the legal argument does remain sound when considering that marriage has never been an unrestricted freedom. Legislatures have been permitted to regulate some elements of who may marry for public policy concerns, such as the age of consent to marry, the prohibition against incest marriages, as well as the elements that permit the dissolution of a marriage (Andreasen, 2003).

Another strong retort to the *Loving* analogy is that the Supreme Court has already decided that *Loving* does not extend to same sex couples. Just five years after *Loving* was decided, two men in Minnesota filed suit when their marriage license application was rejected (*Baker v. Nelson*, 1971). The case to invalidate Minnesota's ban on same sex marriage relied primarily on the *Loving* analogy. The Minnesota Supreme Court rejected the argument stating that it was not directly supported by US Supreme Court precedent. It is likely Minnesota was not ready to extend the *Loving* decision regarding such a controversial subject without explicit approval by the US Supreme Court. The US Supreme Court was not willing to give this approval. The couple appealed the case to the Supreme Court, who dismissed the claim for lack of a substantial federal question (*Baker v. Nelson*, 1972). Legal opponents of same sex marriage, Wardle and Oliphant, use this point to argue that utilizing *Loving* as precedent for invalidating same sex marriage bans is a "first-semester law student kind of error," and illustrates a lack of thorough research, since they assert that *Baker v. Nelson* was the final answer in whether *Lovings'* precedent extends to same sex couples (2007, p. 137). As taboo as it is to appear to be using "bad law," the idea that *Baker v. Nelson* settled the law is far from a thorough examination of the issue. Although at the time *Baker* was dismissed this was interpreted as an indication of a correct interpretation by the lower court, the Supreme Court was also declining cases they were not yet ready to decide. Additionally, although the Court attempts to maintain consistent precedents, it has always been permitted to overrule earlier precedent if it can

be deemed that society has evolved to a point where the earlier precedent is no longer sustainable under public policy considerations.

FRAMING ADVOCACY DISCOURSE FOR THE COURTROOM

A common way social science research is presented to the courts is through submission of an amicus curiae brief. These briefs are used to provide information to the court regarding the impact of a potential court decision upon society rather than just the individuals involved in the current case. Social workers have teamed with psychologists and other social scientists to write amicus curiae briefs submitted in previous court cases in support of same sex marriage (American Psychological Association et al., 2007). A debate has been waged over whether the discourse of the briefs should be focused on mental health or social justice (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2004). This author proposes that in the courtroom, issues of both social justice and mental health can be relevant so long as they are discussed in a discourse that is used by judges.

The purpose of law school is often said to be to teach students to think like lawyers (Wetlaufer, 1990). This means learning the rhetoric by which opinions must match a framework based on legal precedent, or decisions that have been written by previous judges. The principles of previous cases must be determined, and then similar cases must be decided based on those principles. Material that is not relevant to the principles is not relevant to the case. Therefore, in order to garner the attention of judges, discourse regarding social science data must match the rhetoric of the principles. A simple change in the discourse used to discuss the data can greatly impact the weight it is given in a judge's decision (Wetlaufer, 1990).

In connection to same sex marriage jurisprudence, one of the leading precedents is *Loving v. Virginia*. The question the Court will be called upon to answer is whether the precedent that marriage choice cannot be infringed based on race should be interpreted as expanding to include marriage infringement based on gender. Utilizing the precedent of *Baker v. Nelson* (1972), the opposition will argue the Supreme Court of 1967 did not intend the *Loving* case to be interpreted so broadly. Legal advocates for same sex marriage will counter that knowledge and public opinion about gay marriage has evolved to broadly prohibit any infringement upon the choice of whom to marry. If the Court were not permitted to expand previous principles, schools could still be segregated and executions permitted for robbery. The US Constitution, and the government it created, has been able to govern effectively because of the Supreme Court's ability to interpret using evolving standards. Therefore, social work advocates who frame the social science data in discourse focused on evolution of knowledge and public opinion will fit the decision framework of judges and garner more attention to their words.

THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA AND HOW IT CAN STRENGTHEN THE *LOVING* ANALOGY

Wardle and Oliphant have shown in a recent study of state cases and law journals that *Loving* is often used in law review articles supporting same sex marriage, but the analogy has rarely been successful when actually tested in court (2007). The remainder of this

article will explore discourse that can strengthen the precedent of the *Loving* analogy in response to the case the opposition has been building. The better the fit between the discourse in the amicus briefs, testimony and the legal precedent, the more likely the information will sway the justices. The literature must be discussed in a discourse focusing upon the evolution of society. Evolution has occurred in stages. First, the scientific community shifted from understanding homosexuality as a disease to a healthy lifestyle. Next, studies were conducted that changed understanding of homosexual relationships as “different” from to very similar to heterosexual relationship dynamics. Finally, evidence is showing a progressive societal evolution toward acceptance of same sex unions.

Evolution of the Scientific Understanding of Same Sex Attraction

In US history, it is well known that the scientific community used data to support the racial inferiority of African Americans and justify discrimination propagated against the race. However, it is often ignored that scientific evolution of the understanding of a group may be even more profound for homosexual men and lesbian women. Although it has been acknowledged that the Supreme Court dismissed a claimed violation of Due Process and Equal Protection for same sex couples wishing to marry, this case was decided in 1972 (*Baker v. Nelson*). Since that time the scientific community has greatly evolved in its understanding of the nature of sexual orientation. In order to fit courtroom discourse, it is imperative social workers advocating for same sex marriage frame the evidence in terms of a new understanding of homosexuality.

The first shift in scientific understanding was made in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) categorization of homosexuality. The first two editions of the DSM, published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and used as the primary diagnostic authority by the medical, psychological and social work communities in the United States, defined homosexuality as a mental disorder until 1973 (Goishi, 1997). In 1973, same sex orientation was not removed from the *DSM*, but rather was downgraded to sexual orientation disturbance. Prior to the change in terminology, all persons attracted to the same sex were considered to have a disease which could be treated with psychotherapy. The change in the third edition was made because the Board of Trustees of the APA voted, “a significant portion of homosexuals are apparently satisfied with their sexual orientation, show no significant signs of manifest psychopathology...and are able to function socially and occupationally with no impairment” (APA, 1980, p. 380). Therefore, only those “disturbed by, in conflict with, or wish[ing] to change their sexual orientation” (APA, 1980, p. 380) were subsequently diagnosed with sexual orientation disturbance, which was later changed to ego-dystonic homosexuality and then eliminated in the fourth edition (APA, 1987).

Today, in the *DSM-IV-TR*, there is a category of sexual and gender identity disorders, but it has been explained to only pertain to those who experience conflict from their sexual orientation rather than per se to all those experiencing same sex attraction (APA, 2000). Some scholars still assert that the *DSM* should be interpreted as encouraging the treatment of gender identity disorders in childhood, and that successful treatment can prevent homosexuality later in life (Rekers, 1995); however, the majority of the mental

health community diagnoses with the purpose of resolving the emotional conflict without regard to the outcome of the patient's adulthood sexual orientation (Goishi, 1997). This discourse of evolution of the diagnosis of homosexuality must be stressed in amicus curiae briefs and testimony in order to illustrate how vastly the scientific understanding of sexual orientation has changed since the Court case decided in 1972.

Evolution of the Understanding of Same Sex Relationships

Since acknowledgement by mental health professionals that same sex attraction is not a disease, many studies have been conducted to assess the similarities and differences between heterosexual and homosexual relationships. After a thorough review of these studies spanning several decades, an amicus curiae brief submitted by the National Association of Social Workers, the American Psychological Association, and several other professional organizations reported same sex couples form committed relationships in the same ways as heterosexual couples (American Psychological Association et al., 2007). Findings further indicate persons with same sex attraction desire committed relationships. In a 2000 poll, 74% of a randomly sampled pool of lesbian women, gay men and bisexual persons stated that they would like to be married to a partner of the same sex if it were permitted (Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, 2001).

The amicus curiae brief is an excellent, thorough and timely review of what science has learned about the nature of same sex relationships (American Psychological Association et al., 2007). Whether same sex relationships have changed cannot be known since it was not empirically studied at length prior to the 1970s paradigm shift from homosexuality as a dysfunction; however, the understanding of the relationships has greatly changed. It has gone from little knowledge to a host of studies demonstrating that issues from desire for commitment to topics of conflict are similar among heterosexual and homosexual couples (Kurdek, 2004). It is this evolution since the *Baker v. Nelson* decision in 1972 that must be stressed in order to persuade the Court to dismiss arguments that the case is a ruling precedent. Discourse must specifically state that what we know about same sex relationships and their similarity to heterosexual married relationships has evolved greatly since 1972.

The tactic of persuading judges to understand homosexual relationships as analogous to heterosexual relationships very recently gained empirical support through the success of Theodore Olson's arguments in front of Judge Walker on the issue of overturning Proposition 8. Olson is a self-pronounced conservative and was appointed solicitor general by former President George W. Bush. However, he recently represented several same sex couples in a lawsuit that overturned California's Proposition 8 ban on same sex marriage (*Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, 2010). Olson's strategy to change public and judicial opinion regarding same sex marriage is to show that legalization will actually encourage conservative family values as more couples are formally united (Olson, 2010). He further argues that encouraging marriage will strengthen communities both socially and economically through the increase in legal unions of two persons for a lifelong commitment toward family stability (Olson, 2010).

Evolution of Public Opinion

Although social science knowledge has evolved to understand cohabitating same sex couples to be similar to heterosexual married couples, the obvious counter by opponents is, regardless of knowledge, the general public is still opposed to legalizing same sex marriage. While reviewing the published literature on same sex marriage, many discussions of the previous studies and data are written in a way that stresses how much opinions have changed to favor same sex marriage (Andersen & Fetner, 2008). Although there has been an increased acceptance, the percent of Americans who favor legalizing gay marriage is still only about one-third. In a 2004 survey, the number of Americans reported to support gay marriage was 33%, while 49% support legalizing civil unions (Avery et al., 2007).

However, the discourse of evolution is a perfect linguistic fit with evidence on public opinion regarding same sex relationships. Public opinion has been evolving in the direction of support. The level of increase has surprised even those who study changes in generational cohort attitudes and other sex-related issues.

The youngest generational cohort of adult Americans has been termed the "millennials". This generation has shown almost a reversion to traditional family values of monogamy, however, they do not seem to care if the monogamy is between homosexual or heterosexual couples (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Acceptance of same sex relationships is inversely correlated with age, that is, increasing with younger generations; therefore, if the current trend progresses, Americans will become more accepting over the next few decades (Howe & Nadler, 2009).

Recent studies indicate the evolution of acceptance of homosexuality may increase even faster than through evolution of younger cohorts coming into power. Most research shows that social attitudes of generational cohorts tend to remain static from the time the generation reaches adulthood (Howe & Nadler, 2009); however, tolerance of homosexuality has been found to be an exception (Anderson & Fetner, 2008). Although the time period when change occurred is debated, by the year 2000, American attitudes had shifted substantially among older cohorts in the direction of support for gay unions (Smith, 1992; Yang, 1997; Loftus, 2001). Treas (2002) found that public opinion on same sex relationships has changed far more dramatically than on any other sex-related issue, illustrating the unique increase in public support.

Anderson and Fetner (2008) found the phenomenon of increased social support was even stronger in Canada than the United States. The authors theorized the legalization of same sex marriage in Canadian public policy could have spiked public acceptance. If same sex marriage was legalized across the United States, would the same spike occur in US public opinion?

RECOMMENDATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The purpose of this article was to place social science research on same sex relationships into a discourse social work policy practitioners can use in future amicus curiae briefs and testimony before judges. Increasing the toolbox of research knowledge

available for social workers to place in the framework will be important as US public policy on same sex marriage continues to change quickly and is often seen in courtrooms across the country. Now that some states have granted marriage certificates to same sex couples, it will be imperative to assess the impact on public opinion. Will the state government's acceptance of same sex marriage increase acceptance similar to that seen in Canada after the legalization of same sex marriage? If so, this evolution of public opinion as more states legalize same sex marriage could be set in a discourse of evolving societal standards that would certainly pique the ears of the US Supreme Court members who have been trained to incorporate evolving societal standards into their decisions.

Additionally, social work education must be expanded to include discourse on the evolution of the understanding of same sex attraction and public opinion. Unless students are educated regarding the historical struggle for equality same sex couples have already endured, future social workers will not be able to provide the type of advocacy suggested by this author.

Finally, the future discourse on same sex marriage advocacy must be extended to be inclusive of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) population. Strategists have thus far kept discussion focused on relationships between gay men and lesbian women in order to garner the widest range of support; however, for true equality to be achieved, the discourse must work toward evolving to include other subsets of the GLBT community.

CONCLUSION: THE DUTY TO ADVOCATE

Social workers advocating for same sex marriage must educate the Court regarding the evolution of society in order to strengthen their case that the *Loving* analogy of freedom to marry should extend to same sex couples. Judges themselves have illustrated that they are not socially educated regarding sex and intimacy. Judge Posner has written

"Judges know next to nothing about the subject [of sex] beyond their own personal experience, which is limited, perhaps more so than average, because people with irregular sex lives are pretty much (not entirely, of course) screened out of the judiciary - especially the federal judiciary, with its elaborate preappointment investigations by the FBI and other bodies. This screening, along with the gap, for which the screening is in part responsible, in judges systematic knowledge of sex is a residue of the nation's puritan - more broadly of its Christian - heritage. Another residue is the large body of laws regulating sex which judges are called on to interpret and apply, and sometimes asked to invalidate" (Posner, 1992, p. 1).

Justice Powell has also stated he has never known a homosexual (Hermann, 2005).

Some judicial decision makers who will ultimately be deciding the rights of same sex couples admittedly have no knowledge regarding the lives of persons with same sex attraction. Therefore, advocates for same sex marriage must be prepared with as much ammunition as possible to persuade and educate legal decision makers. Research in the area of same sex relationships is plentiful; however, it must be presented to judges in a

discourse that will be relevant. Scientific knowledge and public opinion have evolved, and it is time to tell the Court.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (1980). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1987). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (Revised 3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (Revised 4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychological Association, California Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association & National Association of Social Workers. (2007, September 26). In re Marriage Cases. Case No. S147999. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/offices/ogc/amicus/marriage-cases.pdf>
- Andersen, R., & Fetner, T. (2008). Cohort differences in tolerance of homosexuality: Attitudinal change in Canada and the United States, 1981-2000. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 72(2), 311-330.
- Andreasen, K. (2003). Part two: Marriage and divorce: When, what, and where: Did *Loving v. Virginia* need its slippery slope? *Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues*, 14, 89-96.
- Avery, A., Chase, J., Johansson, L., Litvak, S., Montero, D., & Wydra, M. (2007). America's changing attitudes toward homosexuality, civil unions, and same-gender marriage: 1977-2004. *Social Work*, 52(1), 71-79.
- Baker v. Nelson, 291 Minn. 310 (1971).
- Baker v. Nelson, 409 U.S. 810 (1972).
- Defense of Marriage Act (1996). 28 U.S.C. §1738C.
- Goishi, M. A. (1997). Legal and social responses to the problems of queer youth: Unlocking the closet door: Protecting children from involuntary civil commitment because of their sexual orientation. *Hastings Law Journal*, 48, 1137- 1182.
- Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. (2001). *Inside-out: A report on the experiences of lesbians, gays and bisexuals in America and the public's views on issues and policies related to sexual orientation*. Retrieved from <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/upload/National-Surveys-on-Experiencesof-Lesbians-Gays-and-Bisexuals-and-the-Public-s-Views-Related-to-Sexual-Orientation.pdf>
- Hermann, D. H. J. (2005). Pulling the fig leaf off the right of privacy: Sex and the Constitution. *DePaul Law Review*, 54, 909-969.

- Howe, N., & Nadler, R. (2009, February). Yes we can: The emergence of millennials as a political generation. Retrieved from <http://www.newamerica.net/files/Yes%20We%20Can.pdf>
- Howe, N., & Strauss, W. (2000). *Millennials rising: The next great generation*. New York: Vintage.
- Kitzinger, C., & Wilkinson, S. (2004). Social advocacy for equal marriage: The politics of "rights" and the psychology of "mental health." *Analyses of Social Issues & Public Policy*, 4(1), 173-194.
- Kurdek, L. A. (2004). Are gay and lesbian cohabiting couples really different from heterosexual married couples? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(4), 880-900.
- Loftus, J. (2001). America's liberalization in attitudes toward homosexuality, 1973-1998. *American Sociological Review*, 66(5), 762-782.
- Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S.1 (1967).
- Morrison, A. M. (2007). Same-sex loving: Subverting white supremacy through same-sex marriage. *Michigan Journal of Race & Law*, 13, 177-225.
- Olson, T. B. (2010, January 18). The conservative case for gay marriage: Why same-sex marriage is an American value. *Newsweek*, 155(3), 48-54.
- Perry, H. W. (1991). *Deciding to decide: Agenda setting in the United States Supreme Court*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Perry v. Schwarzenegger, 591 F.3d 1147 (2010).
- Posner, R. A. (1992). *Sex and reason*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pratt, R. (1998). Crossing the color line: A historical assessment and personal narrative of *Loving v. Virginia*. *Howard Law Journal*, 41, 229-244.
- Rekers, G. A. (1995). *Handbook of child and adolescent sexual problems*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Smith, T. W. (1992). Attitudes toward sexual permissiveness: Trends, correlates, and behavioral connections. In A.S. Rossi (Ed.), *Sexuality across the life course* (pp. 63-97). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Strasser, M. (1998). *Baker* and some recipes for disaster: On DOMA, covenant marriages, and full faith and credit jurisprudence. *Brooklyn Law Review*, 64, 307-351.
- Treas, J. (2002). How cohorts, education, and ideology shaped a new sexual revolution on American attitudes toward nonmarital sex, 1972-1998. *Sociological Perspectives*, 45(3), 267-283.
- Wardle, L. D., & Oliphant, L. C. (2007). In praise of *Loving*: Reflections on the "Loving analogy" for same-sex marriage. *Howard Law Journal*, 51, 117-186.

Wetlaufer, G. B. (1990). Rhetoric and its denial in legal discourse. *Virginia Law Review*, 76(8), 1545-1597.

Yang, A. S. (1997). The polls—trends: Attitudes toward homosexuality. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61, 477-507.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Stephanie K. Boys, Indiana University School of Social Work, 902 West New York Street, Education/Social Work Building, Room 4157, Indianapolis, IN 46202. Email: sboys@indiana.edu

Does Ethnicity Matter? Social Workers' Personal Attitudes and Professional Behaviors in Responding to Child Maltreatment

Vicki Ashton

Abstract: *This study examined differences in the attitudes of professional social workers regarding corporal punishment and the perception and reporting of child maltreatment, according to the worker's ethnic group membership (Asian, Black American, Black Caribbean, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic White). Data were obtained by mailed questionnaires from 808 members of the New York City chapter of NASW. Data were analyzed by analysis of variance. Results indicate that approval of corporal punishment and perception of maltreatment differed according to ethnic group membership. However, ethnicity had no effect on the likelihood of reporting maltreatment. Findings suggest that social work values override personal-culture values in the execution of job-related responsibilities. Implications for education and practice are discussed.*

Keywords: *Professional socialization and ethnicity; culture, attitudes and social work practice; personal values and professional practice; corporal punishment and maltreatment*

INTRODUCTION

Child maltreatment remains a serious social problem affecting more than one million children and families each year (Sedlak et al., 2010). Health and social service professionals are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect, yet many incidents of suspected abuse are not reported; moreover, there is often disagreement as to what constitutes maltreatment (Sedlak et al., 2010). Research on mandated reporters suggests that the process of identifying and responding to child maltreatment is a complex phenomenon that involves at least three phases: observing a given situation; assessing and labeling parental behavior; and responding to that behavior. Each phase of the process is filtered through the personal characteristics of the observer. These personal characteristics include attitudes and opinions which direct behavior. For example, a worker's opinion of the severity of parental behavior in an incident of probable maltreatment is related directly to the likelihood that an incident is reported (Ashton, 1999; Ashton, 2001; Morris, Johnson, & Clasen, 1985; Zellman, 1992). It has also been documented that opinions of mandated reporters differ in what they consider to be maltreatment and that these differences in perception can be attributed to worker attitudes about parenting and discipline (Ashton, 2001; Morris et al., 1985).

An individual's attitudes about parenting and discipline are shaped by experiences that are to a considerable extent marked by socio demographic traits, of which ethnicity is salient (Green, 1978; Korbin, 1994; Webb, 2001). Ethnicity remains an "enduring dimension" of American life (Devore & Schlesinger, 1999, p.4) and an important social construct (Dolliver, 2008; Miehl, 2001). Ethnicity represents a "peoplehood" based on common physical appearance, language, and homeland, and on norms, traditions, values,

Vicki Ashton, D.S.W., is a professor of Social Work at York College of The City University of New York, Department of Social Sciences. This research was supported by National Institutes of Health grant #41385. The author is grateful to W. Cody Wilson and Beth S. Rosenthal for reading earlier drafts of this work and for their invaluable insight and suggestions.

and history that make up the content of culture (Devore & Schlesinger, 1999; Korbin, 1994). Ethnic group membership includes a common approach for solving problems of daily living which is based on a historical development for coping that has worked for a given group (Devore & Schlesinger, 1999). These problem solving approaches and the rationale surrounding them become subtle influences that shape attitudes, opinions, and behavior such as parenting (Devore & Schlesinger, 1999; Webb, 2001).

A number of studies have found differences in the use and endorsement of corporal punishment according to ethnic group membership, with Black Americans being the most frequent users of corporal discipline, Whites the least and Hispanics in between (Deater-Deckard, Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2003; Mosby, Rawls, Meehan, Mays, & Pettinari, 1999). Asian (Lau, Takeuchi, Alegria, 2006) and Caribbean (Smith & Mosby, 2003) parents have also been found to be more authoritarian and more favorable toward corporal punishment than White non-Hispanic parents. In addition to ethnicity being related to the endorsement of corporal punishment as an effective means of discipline, ethnicity also appears to influence the perception of child maltreatment (Ashton, 2004; Hong & Hong, 1991; Korbin, 1994).

Among social workers, personal attitudes and opinions that influence professional behavior are tempered and shaped by the norms, values, and ethics acquired through the process of professional socialization (Hantman et al., 2006). Professional socialization can be defined as the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, and values through the process of social work education (Barretti, 2003). The purpose of social work education is to prepare competent and effective professionals who apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice and who understand the value base of the profession and practice accordingly (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2008). Throughout the educational process, students acquire knowledge of social work principles and ideals at the same time they are called on to evaluate their own personal values (Abrams & Mojo, 2009; CSWE, 2008; Devore & Schlesinger, 1999). Throughout social work education and into professional practice, social workers are required to scrutinize their intervention decisions and to be aware of the ways in which their value preferences influence and shape their practice (Mattison, 2000). The educational process of self-assessment recognizes that much of social work practice involves discretionary judgments which require social workers to effectively resolve conflicts between their personal and professional values. A desired outcome of social work education is the internalization of social work norms and values that allows workers to effectively regulate their practice and appropriately use their autonomy (Costello, 2004). Professional socialization involves the integration of professional and personal identities (Hantman et al., 2006) so that "one's identity as social worker is inseparable from the practice of social work" (Jeffery, 2005, p. 419). The process of achieving integration requires some struggle with personal and professional value conflicts, an ability to set personal preferences aside, and the willingness to adopt professional values in accomplishing work with clients (Johnson & Yanca, 2007; Tam & Coleman, 2009).

It is generally presumed that there is an eventual fit between personal and professional values and that practitioners reach a similar level of assimilating social work ideals, attitudes, knowledge and skills (Spano & Koenig, 2007). Yet research on social

work education finds that the process of professional socialization is not uniform; it does not produce a homogenous group of practitioners with the same attitudes and values (Barretti, 2003; Costello, 2004). In fact, there are some studies that suggest that persons of color have a different socialization experience into social work than whites (Barretti, 2003, Daniel, 2007; Jeffery, 2005).

The literature on professionalization raises many questions including the question, what happens when there are conflicts between personal and professional values? Do social workers disregard one system over the other or is a compromise made? Several studies have found that personal attitudes toward corporal punishment impact directly on a worker's judgment of the severity of an incident of probable child maltreatment and relate both directly and indirectly to the likelihood of reporting an incident to child protective services (Ashton, 2001; Morris et al., 1985). Previous studies have examined the relationship between attitudes toward corporal punishment and the reporting of child maltreatment among non professionals (Ashton, 2001; Bluestone, 2005; Ibanez, Borrego, Pemberton, & Terao, 2006) and physicians (Morris, Johnson, & Clasen, 1985); however, no study has examined one of the largest groups of mandated reporters—social workers. Nor has any study examined the effect of ethnicity on professional decision making among mandated reporters. Ethnicity is an important personal characteristic affecting perception and response to child maltreatment. Professional socialization provides a lens that presumably supersedes the personal perspective.

Race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably; however, in this study, the term “ethnicity” is used to reflect the interest on culture rather than biology (Webb, 2001). This study examines differences in the personal values and attitudes of professional social workers regarding corporal punishment according to ethnic group membership. The study also examines how ethnicity is related to the workers' professional behavior in the identification and reporting of probable child maltreatment. Based on the literature, three hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is a difference in approval of corporal punishment according to ethnic group membership. It is expected that White social workers will be less approving of corporal punishment than other ethnic groups.
2. There is a difference in the perception of the seriousness of an incident of probable maltreatment according to ethnic group membership. It is expected that White social workers will perceive incidents of probable maltreatment as more serious than other ethnic groups.
3. There is a difference in the reporting of child maltreatment according to ethnic group membership. It is expected that White social workers will be more likely to report incidents of probable child maltreatment than other ethnic groups.

METHOD

This was a cross sectional, correlational study. Data were collected using a mailed printed questionnaire. The population of interest in this study was professional social

workers working with families and children in an agency setting in the New York City metropolitan area.

The study sample comprised 808 social workers who were systematically randomly selected from a list of the members of the New York City chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Four thousand one hundred ninety four members (4,194) were randomly selected from the full membership and were mailed the study questionnaire. Three follow-up communications were sent at three-week intervals, encouraging the recipients to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire. The third reminder included a short postcard questionnaire requesting selected demographic information if the person was unwilling or unable to fill out the longer questionnaire.

One thousand eight hundred fifty five (1,855) individuals returned the questionnaire and 257 individuals returned the postcard questionnaire for a total response rate of 50%. Those who returned the postcard were similar to those who completed the full questionnaire except that they were slightly older and were less likely to work with families or children and therefore were not members of the population of interest in this study. Of those who returned the questionnaire, 808 indicated that they were employed in agencies serving families and/or children and completed the questions pertinent to this study. Those 808 respondents comprise the sample of professional social workers for this study.

Sample Characteristics

The sample of 808 participants was predominately Caucasian (67%) and female (78%). Approximately 10% were Black American; 4% were Black Caribbean; 3% were Asian; 12% were Hispanic; and 3.7% "other". This last category consisted of persons who identified themselves as "American Indian/Alaskan Native" ($n = 3$) or "other" and described themselves as multi ethnic, multi racial ($n = 27$). The mean age for the sample was 45. Most (90%) had a Master's degree as the highest level of their education. The sample had a mean of 13 years of professional experience; Whites had the most years, Hispanics the least (Table 1). Most of the sample had received some training in the area of child abuse; proportionately, persons categorized "other" and Black Caribbeans received the most training, Whites the least (Table 1).

Measurement

The independent variable "ethnicity" was measured by asking respondents to select the one ethnic group they identified with most from seven categories: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Black/African Caribbean, Latin/Hispanic, White (non-Hispanic) and other. Respondents who identified themselves as American Indian/Native Alaskan or "other" were combined into one category, "other." Responses "were dichotomized into "1" for the selected ethnic group and "0" for all others.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics: Frequencies and Percentages (n = 808 unless specified)

Age:	Mean 45 years	SD 12.3
Gender: (n=806)	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	179	22.2
Female	627	77.8
Educational level:		
BA/BS	28	3.5
Masters	734	90.7
Ph.D/DSW	46	5.7
Race/ethnicity:		
Asian	26	3.2
Black American	82	10.1
Black Caribbean	33	4.1
Hispanic	94	11.6
White	543	67.2
Other	30	3.7
Years of experience by ethnic group (n=799)	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Asian	10.5	9.9
Black American	12.9	10.6
Black Caribbean	11.5	8.9
Hispanic	8.9	7.2
White	14.6	11.3
Other	10.2	9.1
Total Sample	13.5	10.8
10 hours or more training by ethnic group		<u>Percent</u>
Asian		27
Black American		29
Black Caribbean		42
Hispanic		31
White		19
Other		43

There were three dependent variables: approval of corporal punishment, perception of maltreatment, and likelihood of reporting maltreatment. Each dependent variable was measured using multi-item additive scales.

“Approval of corporal punishment” was measured by a five-item scale adapted from Danso, Hunsberger, & Pratt (1997). Each item has 8 response alternatives ranging from 1 “very strongly disagree” to 8, “very strongly agree.” An example item asks the respondent to rate her or his level of agreement with the statement, “A good firm spanking can be one of the best ways to teach children right from wrong.” The scores for all five items were added together. The scale has face content validity and good internal consistency with a reliability coefficient of .88 with the Danso, Hunsberger, Pratt sample (1997) and of .79 with this study sample.

“Perception of maltreatment” was measured by a multi-item additive scale using eight vignettes adapted from Hong and Hong (1991) and from cases known to the local child protective agency. Each vignette describes parental behavior that ranged from what could be considered moderate maltreatment to behavior considered severe maltreatment (Figure 1). Respondents were asked to rate the behavior of the parent on a Likert scale of “seriousness” from 1 to 7, with “1” being “not serious” and “7” being “very serious”. Responses to the eight items were added together for a single score for “perception” (alpha .76).

“Likelihood of reporting” was measured by using the same eight vignettes of probable maltreatment. (These vignettes had been pre tested and rated for seriousness in a previous study by a sample of entry-level social service workers [Ashton, 2004]. On a scale of 1, “not serious” to 7, “very serious”, the vignettes in this study ranged in seriousness from 5.3 to 6.8; thus, all of the vignettes represented reportable situations).

In the current study, respondents were asked to read each vignette and indicate the likelihood that they would report the incident to child protective services. Ratings ranged from 1 (almost certain not to report) to 5 (almost certain to report). The responses for all eight vignettes were summed to give an overall score for the respondent’s “likelihood of reporting” (alpha .77).

Figure 1. Case Vignettes

1. Both parents work long hours; they leave very early in the morning and come home late at night. Their nine-year-old son is left on his own. The boy gets himself ready for school in the morning and lets himself in after school. The parents tell their son to eat food prepared and left in the refrigerator, warming it up if he wants. He usually eats it cold. He goes to bed by himself because his parents are usually not back by his bedtime.
2. A sixteen-year-old yells and curses at his parents during a recent argument. His parent punches him in the mouth.
3. The classroom teacher notices that a nine-year-old boy has red marks on his palms and legs. When asked about the marks, the boy tells the teacher that yesterday he went to a friend's house to play instead of going home to do his homework. When his father found out, he hit him on the palms and legs repeatedly with a stick. The child says that his father does this whenever he does not do his homework.

4. A six-year-old wets the bed. Parents punish the child by immersing his lower body in a tub of very hot water.
5. Recently when asked a question, a 10-year old child mumbled a rude answer under his breath. His parent banged the child against the wall, bruising his shoulders.
6. A 12-year-old is caught stealing candy from the corner store. When his parents found out what the child did, they beat him with a stick and burned a mark on his arm to remind him not to steal again.
7. The parents discipline their eight-year-old child by hitting him with a strap whenever he misbehaves.
8. A family recently arrived in the metropolitan area from a rural location. Last week after school, their 10-year-old son went off with a group of new friends instead of coming straight home. His parents disciplined him in their usual way, which is to make him kneel in the closet for several hours.

Analysis

The frequency distributions of demographic variables, “approval of corporal punishment”, “perception of maltreatment” and “likelihood of reporting” were described. Zero order correlations were obtained for key demographic variables, independent, and dependent variables. The hypotheses were tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA). The large sample size of 808 with six groups used in the ANOVA has the statistical power to detect even a small relationship ($\eta = .10$) at the .01 level of significance 99% of the time (Cohen, 1988).

RESULTS

The sample as a whole varied considerably in their level of approval of corporal punishment, perception of maltreatment, and likelihood of reporting. The theoretical range of scores for approval of corporal punishment was 5 to 40; the actual range of scores was 5 to 38. The mean score was 14.3 with a standard deviation of 7.8. Most of the respondents did not endorse corporal punishment highly but a minority did.

As a whole, the sample tended to perceive the situations of probable maltreatment as relatively serious; however, some respondents did not see the situations as serious. The theoretical range of scores was 8 to 56; the actual scores ranged from 25 to 56. The mean score for the sample was 49 with a standard deviation of 4.8. The distribution was negatively skewed; more than half the sample had scores of 50 or above.

The actual range for likelihood of reporting was the same as the theoretical range, 8 to 40. Some of the respondents would not have reported any of the cases of possible child maltreatment to child protective services, while others would have reported every case including those with moderate levels of seriousness. Nonetheless, the mean score for reporting was 34.1 (standard deviation 4.4) indicating that most of this sample would report most of the cases (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Approval of Corporal Punishment, Perception of Maltreatment and Likelihood of Reporting (N = 808)

Total Sample	Approval of corporal punishment	Perception of maltreatment	Likelihood of reporting
Mean	14.27	49.51	34.12
Median	13.00	50.00	35.00
Mode	5.00	50.00	34.00
Std. Deviation	7.84	4.84	4.42
Skewness	.642	-1.012	-1.069

Correlation analysis shows several demographic variables—age, education, experience and training – related to the independent variable, ethnicity. Age, education and training are also related to one of the dependent variables, approval of corporal punishment (Table 3). There were no correlations between demographic variables and any other dependent variable.

The first hypothesis is confirmed by the statistical analysis. ANOVA showed significant difference between means for approval of corporal punishment according to ethnicity ($F = 24.9$; $p < .0001$). The sample mean for approval of corporal punishment was 14.3. Black Americans had the highest approval rate with a mean of 20.4, followed by Black Caribbeans (mean, 18.1), Hispanics, Asians, and “other”, each with a mean of approximately 17. Whites had the lowest approval score with a group mean of 12.4. Ethnic group membership had a medium effect on approval of corporal punishment ($\eta = .36$) (Rosenthal, 2001).

The second hypothesis is also confirmed. ANOVA showed a difference in perception of maltreatment ($F = 2.4$; $p < .05$) according to ethnicity. An ANOVA post hoc Tukey test for multiple comparisons identified a difference between Black Americans and Whites and Black Americans and Hispanics. There were no other between-group differences. Ethnic group membership had a small effect on perception of maltreatment ($\eta = .12$), (Table 4).

The third hypothesis was not supported by the data. ANOVA showed no difference between ethnic groups in their likelihood of reporting maltreatment. There was virtually no association between ethnicity and reporting ($\eta = .08$).

Table 3. Zero Order Correlations between Demographic, Independent and Dependent Variables (n = 808)

	Gender	Education	Experience	Training	Asian	BlkAm	BlkCar	Latin	White	Other	Approval	Perception	Report
Age	-.12*	.30*	.72*	-.22*	-.05	-.03	-.12*	-.14*	.21*	-.05	-.14*	.03	-.00
Gender		-.09	-.08	.02	-.00	.07	.00	-.01	-.02	-.04	-.06	.05	.03
Education			.33*	-.18*	.03	-.11*	-.07	-.09	.18	-.06	-.11*	-.01	-.04
Experience				-.23*	-.05	-.01	-.03	-.15*	.16*	-.06	-.09	-.01	.02
Training					.00	.09	.11*	.08	-.20*	.10	.13*	-.08	.02
Ethnicity													
Asian											.05	-.02	-.06
Blk American											.26*	-.11*	-.04
Blk Caribbean											.10	.02	.04
Latin											.13*	.04	.02
White											-.35*	.04	.02
Other											.07	-.01	-.01

*p < .05 (Bonferroni correction for multiple computations, C = 14).

Table 4. **Analysis of Variance for Approval of Corporal Punishment, Perception of Maltreatment and Likelihood of Reporting Maltreatment by Ethnic Group (n=808; df=5, 807)**

Approval of corporal punishment		
	Mean	SD
Asian	16.6	7.5
Black American	20.4	8.2
Black Caribbean	18.1	8.1
Hispanic	17.1	8.1
White	12.4	6.8
Other	17.0	9.2
	F=24.9	p<.0001
Perception of maltreatment		
	Mean	SD
Asian	49.1	4.5
Black American	47.9	5.4
Black Caribbean	50.0	5.2
Hispanic	50.1	4.5
White	49.6	4.7
Other	49.4	4.9
	F=2.4	p<.05
Likelihood of reporting		
	Mean	SD
Asian	32.6	4.8
Black American	33.6	4.2
Black Caribbean	35.1	3.5
Hispanic	34.4	4.4
White	34.2	4.4
Other	33.9	6.2
	F=1.2	NS

DISCUSSION

The reader should exercise some caution in interpreting the results of this study. First, the percentage of minority respondents is rather low. However, this sample comprised higher proportions of non Whites than the most recently reported national sample of social workers (Gibelman & Schervish, 1997). Second, the data were obtained from a sample of New York City social workers who were members of their local chapter of NASW; therefore, application of the findings to social workers outside of the sample population should be tentative. Finally, the vignettes used in this study are predominately

incidents of physical abuse; there is only one incident of neglect and none of emotional or sexual abuse.

The study has strength in that it employed a representative sample large enough to detect fairly small relationships among the variables (Cohen, 1988) and the reliabilities of the three multi-item measures (.76, .77 and .79), though not excellent, are reasonably good and well within the range of reliabilities found in social science research. In addition, while vignettes in general have limitations in that they cannot portray all the information necessary to make an actual assessment and while the vignettes in this study are imperfect, vignettes have been used successfully in research to indicate probable decision-making (Ashton, 2004; Zellman, 1992).

The findings of this study suggest that professional socialization has an impact at the most critical point—professional practice. This sample of social workers varied significantly in their personal approval of corporal punishment according to ethnic group membership. Asian, Black American, Black Caribbean, Hispanic, and other non-White social workers, all endorsed corporal punishment as an appropriate form of discipline more so than did Whites. The attitudes of these social workers of color mirrored the attitudes of their related ethnic groups within the general population (Deater-Deckard et al., 2003). Ethnocentric attitudes appeared to be most prevalent among Black American social workers, who differed also in their perception of maltreatment, i.e. Black American social workers had the lowest mean score (47.9) for the perception of the seriousness of the eight incidents of maltreatment (Table 4). Nonetheless, ethnic group differences in perception of maltreatment were considerably smaller than ethnic group differences in approval of corporal punishment, suggesting the effectiveness of professional socialization and training.

Professional socialization appears to have occurred among all ethnic groups in the area where it is arguably most important, in practice. The desired outcome of child safety took precedence; these workers seemed to be able to put aside their personal opinions and protect children in need. When it came to responding to maltreatment, ethnic group membership did not matter and most of the sample regardless of ethnicity indicated that they were likely to report most of the cases of probable maltreatment. Professional socialization overrode personal opinions when it came to required action.

The findings from this study have implications for social work education. Social work education is committed to exploring diversity (CSWE, 2008) and has done so for at least two decades by including cultural competency and ethnic sensitivity in the curriculum (Abrams & Gibson, 2007). The latest issue of CSWE accreditation standards calls for school social work programs to “engage diversity and difference in practice” (CSWE, 2008). However, a frequent criticism of the diversity/cultural competence curricula is that there are few tangible learning or practice outcomes (Abrams & Mojo, 2009). The results of this study indicate that social work education should continue to call for students to explore diversity including their own diversity and the effect that their cultural background has on their personal and professional lives. A concrete objective should be for social work students to be knowledgeable about different perspectives of parenting and discipline and to be familiar with the historical context of those

perceptions. For example, students should know that what is often seen as harsh physical discipline in the Black American family was used historically as a protective mechanism against the harsher reality of White dominated society and against the dangers of street culture (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). It is important for students to recognize that tolerance of physical punishment by persons of color is a reflection that the world is often different for families of color than it is for white families. In addition to being familiar with different cultural perspectives of parenting, students should be required to examine the effectiveness or lack thereof of various types of parenting by reviewing the research outcomes of discipline and child rearing practices based on culturally held norms.

Clearly, professional socialization does not stop with an advanced degree; rather it is ongoing and the findings of this research have implications for the continued professionalization of the child welfare system and for continuing professional education. A number of states, including New York, have made efforts to professionalize the public child welfare workforce (Barbee et al., 2009; Sar et al., 2008). This study suggests that those efforts should be maintained and that social workers are well suited to child welfare work, in that they can make informed decisions based on their professional training rather than personal opinion. The findings of this research also have implications for in-service training. In this study, in-service training was related to a higher approval of corporal punishment. This correlation does not indicate a cause/effect but rather the fact that "hours of training" is related to ethnicity, with minority workers receiving more training than Whites, perhaps in recognition of the discordance between their personal beliefs and practice expectations or in recognition that social workers of color had fewer years of experience than Whites. Training showed no correlation with either perceptions of maltreatment, or likelihood of reporting. These findings suggest that social welfare agencies are challenged to provide the kind of training that is tailored to improve the fit between attitudes and professional behavior. Moreover, social welfare agencies should include training that helps workers identify their personal opinions and attitudes, explore the bases of those attitudes, and explore the possible effects those attitudes have on practice.

The study does raise questions. For example, are the differences among ethnic groups in terms of their personal attitudes toward discipline and perception of maltreatment a result of differential socialization? Further research is needed to explore this issue and to find ways for social work education to enhance professionalization for all groups. In addition, one wonders if the disharmony between thought and action among non-White social workers results in a tension that social workers of color experience in daily practice. If such a tension exists, is there a psychic toll required of the worker to resolve that disharmony? On the other hand, the difference between the private self, i.e. attitudes and beliefs, and the public professional self, may be an indication of two social work skills—self-awareness expressed in the ability to objectively assess oneself, and self-containment expressed in the ability to set aside personal attitudes and beliefs and put into practice the norms and values of the profession. It is left to future research to identify those factors that lead workers to put aside their private opinions and to do what is right in terms of professional conduct.

References

- Abrams, L. S., & Gibson, P. (2007). Teaching notes. Reframing multicultural education: Teaching White privilege in the social work curriculum. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 43(1), 147-160.
- Abrams, L. S., & Mojo, J. A. (2009). Critical race theory and cultural competence dilemma in social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 245-261.
- Ashton, V. (1999). Worker judgements of seriousness about and reporting of suspected child maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 23(6), 539-548.
- Ashton, V. (2001). The relationship between attitudes toward corporal punishment and the perception and reporting of child maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 25(3), 389-399.
- Ashton, V. (2004). The effect of personal characteristics on reporting child maltreatment. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 28(9), 985-997.
- Barbee, A. P., Antle, B., Sullivan, D. J., Huebner, R., Fox, S., & Hall, J. C. (2009). Recruiting and retaining child welfare workers: Is preparing social work students enough for sustained commitment to the field? *Child Welfare*, 88(5), 69-86.
- Barretti, M. A. (2003). *The professional socialization of undergraduate social work students: an exploratory case study*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, City University of New York.
- Bluestone, C. (2005). Personal disciplinary history and views of physical punishment: implications for training mandated reporters. *Child Abuse Review*, 14(4), 240-258.
- Boyd-Franklin, N. (1989). *Black families in therapy*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Costello, C. Y. (2004). Changing clothes: Gender inequality and professional socialization. *NWSA (National Women's Studies Association) Journal*, 16(2), 138-155.
- Council on Social Work Education. (2008). *EPAS Handbook*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=13780>
- Daniel, C. A. (2007). Outsiders-within: Critical race theory, graduate education and barriers to professionalization. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 34(1), 25-42.
- Danso, H., Hunsberger, B., & Pratt, M. (1997). The role of parental religious fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism in child-rearing goals and practices. *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 36(4), 496-511.
- Deater-Deckard, K., Lansford, J. E., Dodge, K. A., Pettit, G. S., & Bates, J. E. (2003). The development of attitudes about physical punishment: An 8-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 17(3), 351-360.

- Devore, W., & Schlesinger, E. G. (1999). *Ethnic-sensitive social work practice* (5th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Dolliver, M. (2008, July 14). Double vision: The race issue revisited. *Adweek*. Special Reports.
- Gibelman, M., & Schervish, P. H. (1997). *Who we are: A second look* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.
- Green, J. W. (1978). The role of cultural anthropology in the education of social service personnel. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 5(2), 214-229.
- Hantman, S., Mosek, A., Ben-Oz, M., Cohen, A., Doron, H., & Farchi, M. (2006). The socialization of social work: A developmental perspective. *Social Work Forum*, 39(1), 79-100.
- Hong, G. K., & Hong, L. K. (1991). Comparative perspectives on child abuse and neglect: Chinese versus Hispanics and Whites. *Child Welfare*, 70(4), 463-475.
- Ibanez, E. S., Borrego, J., Pemberton, J. R., & Terao, S. (2006). Cultural factors in decision-making about child physical abuse: Identifying reporter characteristics influencing reporting tendencies. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30(12), 1365-1379.
- Jeffery, D. (2005). 'What good is anti-racist social work if you can't master it?': exploring a paradox in anti-racist social work education. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 8(4), 409-425.
- Johnson, L. C., & Yanca, S. J. (2007). *Social work practice* (9th ed.). New York: Pearson Education.
- Korbin, J. E. (1994). Sociocultural factors in child maltreatment. In G. B. Melton & F. D. Barry (Eds.), *Protecting children from abuse and neglect* (pp.182 –223). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Lau, A. S., Takeuchi, D. T., & Alegria, M. (2006). Parent-to-child aggression among Asian American parents: Culture, context, and vulnerability. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68(5), 1261–1275
- Mattison, M. (2000). Ethical decision making: The person in the process. *Social Work*, 45(3), 201-212.
- Miehls, D. (2001). The interface of racial identity development with identity complexity in clinical social work student practitioners. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 29(3), 229-244.
- Morris, J. L., Johnson, C. F., & Clasen, M. (1985). To report or not to report: Physicians' attitudes toward discipline and child abuse. *American Journal of Diseases in Children*, 139(2), 194–197.
- Mosby, L., Rawls, A. W., Meehan, A. J. Mays, E., & Pettinari, C. J. (1999). Troubles in interracial talk about discipline: An examination of African American child rearing narratives. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 30(3), 489-521.

- Rosenthal, J. A. (2001). *Statistics and data interpretation for the helping professions*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.
- Sar, B. K., Bledsoe, L. K., Sullivan, D. J., Weeks, P. L., Fox, S., Barrett, L. H., Wadlington, K. L., & Cashwell, S. T. (2008). Professionalizing the child welfare workforce: Kentucky's Credit for Learning (CFL) initiative. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 2(4), 471-494.
- Sedlak, A. J., Mettenburg, J., Basena, M., Petta, I., McPherson, K., Greene, A., & Li, S. (2010). *Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4): Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
- Smith, D. E., & Mosby, G. (2003). Jamaican child-rearing practices: The role of corporal punishment. *Adolescence*, 38(158), 369-381.
- Spano, R., & Koenig, T. (2007). What is sacred when personal and professional values collide? [Electronic version]. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 4(3). Retrieved from: http://www.socialworker.com/jswve/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=69
- Tam, D. M. Y., & Coleman, H. (2009). Construction and validation of a professional suitability scale for social work practice. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(1), 47-63.
- Webb, N. B. (2001). *Culturally diverse parent-child and family relationships: A guide for social workers and other practitioners*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Zellman, G. L. (1992). The impact of case characteristics on child abuse reporting decisions. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 16(1), 57-74.

Author Note:

Address correspondence to: Vicki Ashton, D.S.W., York College/CUNY, Department of Social Sciences, Jamaica, NY 11451. Email: ashton@york.cuny.edu

“We Have a Lot of Sleeping Parents”: Comparing Inner-City and Suburban High School Teachers’ Experiences with Parent Involvement

**David Wilkerson
Hea-Won Kim**

Abstract: *Teachers’ experiences with parent involvement were compared at an inner-city high school and a suburban high school. Parent involvement has been described as underutilized by teachers, due to either ideological barriers or cultural biases against parents of lower socio-economic status. A sample of 62 teachers found no significant group differences between teachers at the two schools for either problematic or collaborative parent involvement. There was a significant difference for beliefs about parent competency. Results may suggest that the ideological barrier of a “protective model” for home/school relations devalues parent involvement for teachers. Parent involvement may be further devalued for inner-city teachers, who hold beliefs that parent competence is reduced by socioeconomic challenges.*

Keywords: *Parent involvement, high school teachers, home/school relations, school social work*

INTRODUCTION

Low achievement and graduation rates for children from impoverished households have represented ongoing failures in American education. Some ethnic groups, including African-American and Hispanic/Latino-American families, have been disproportionately represented in these low rates. For example, in 2000, 12% of African American fourth-graders were proficient readers compared to 40% of Caucasian fourth-graders, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (United States Department of Education, n.d.). In 2001, studies of national graduation rates found only 50.2% of African-American students, and 53.2% of Hispanic/Latino students graduated from high school within four years, as compared to 74.9% of white students (Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004). Overall, these disparities in achievement and graduation rates for students whose families’ socioeconomic status (SES) have included low income, single parent-headed households and various ethnic and minority groups, have resulted in an educational equality ranking for the United States of 21 out of the 24 industrialized nations (Mathis, 2003).

Policy and practice efforts to reduce these achievement and graduation gaps have been primarily school or student-centered (Dynarski & Gleason, 1998; Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2003). School busing was a preeminent example of a large-scale school and student-centered effort. While family-centered efforts appear to receive less interest and action than school, teacher or student-centered interventions, parent involvement has been found to have both direct and indirect effects on student grades and test scores (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005; Parcel & Dufur, 2001; Seyfried &

David Wilkerson, MSW, LCSW is a doctoral candidate and Hea-Won Kim, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor, both in the Indiana University School of Social Work at the Indianapolis campus.

Chung, 2002) and improved behavioral outcomes for regular attendance and cooperation in the classroom (McNeal, 1999).

As children become older and more autonomous, parent involvement is thought to play a lesser role. However, when adolescent students have been studied, although it is mediated by socioeconomic status, supportive parent involvement continues to have direct and indirect effects on academic achievement and adaptive functioning (Bean, Bush, McKenry, & Wilson, 2003; Hill et al., 2004; Voydanoff, 2004). This influence has been capitalized on by interventions like daily home-school report card systems (Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & McDougal, 2002), as well as other reinforcement systems that derive their effectiveness from parent involvement (Embry, 2004).

Numerous organizations, including the American Youth Policy Forum (2003), Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (2004), National Dropout Prevention Centers (n.d.) and the Southwest Educational Developmental Laboratory (2002), have identified parent involvement as a needed resource for schools. However, parent involvement has been underutilized in United States schools (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003). Given the research findings on the importance of parent involvement for student success, and the significant achievement and graduation gaps in the United States, it's important to understand what factors limit its use by schools and teachers. Two explanations have been ideological barriers and cultural biases that devalue the importance of parent involvement for teachers (Swap, 1993; Thompson, Warren & Carter, 2004).

Ideological barriers that support negative teacher attitudes about parent involvement have a historical basis. Swap (1993) suggested that underutilization of parent involvement has been a byproduct of the earliest and most traditional form of home-school relations, the "protective model." In Swap's "protective model," school autonomy was privileged by its cultural mission to create opportunity through education for children to achieve beyond their family backgrounds. In essence, the schools' role was to "protect" its students by fostering upward social mobility. The protective school model represented a school organizational culture that operated to minimize home/school communications and to suppress or eliminate conflict with parents by creating strict boundaries between school and home. Educators were charged with the sole responsibility for educating children, and parents were not to interfere or attempt to usurp teachers' authority.

Examples of Swap's "protective model" continue to be found in studies of elementary, middle school, and high school teachers' communication with parents. These studies found communication between teachers and parents was minimal. Teachers did not receive tangible school support for activities that involved communicating with parents (Baker, 1997; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005). They had not received significant pre-service or professional training that focused on methods for involving parents (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Their preferred method involved limited communication to support educators through home activities like monitoring homework completion (Bruneau, Ruttan, & Dunlap, 1995). Teachers rarely saw parents at times other than at biannual parent-teacher conferences (Baker, 1997). In a junior high school study, barriers to parent involvement were defined

as a “communication mismatch” (Halsey, 2005). Teachers preferred institutional communication like newsletters, open houses, public announcements and invitations to school-wide events, while parents preferred individual communications that were personal and direct.

While these studies suggested that teachers’ ideological preferences were for limited communication with parents, some studies suggested that negative attitudes towards parent involvement reflected cultural biases and were primarily directed toward lower SES families. Elementary and secondary school teachers were found to be more likely to blame lower SES parents when students performed poorly and to have lowered expectations towards students from lower SES families (Lightfoot, 2004; Nakagawa, 2000; Thompson et al., 2004). Studies also found that when lower SES students underperformed, secondary school teachers believed it was because parents did not value education. However, when teachers and parents worked together, studies found their combined influence increased academic achievement for lower SES students (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004). The compensatory involvement of teachers when parents were uninformed was not found to predict increased achievement for lower SES students.

In summary, parent involvement has been an important, though underutilized resource, which exerts a positive influence on high school students’ academic and adaptive behaviors. However, high school teachers have not been found to support parents’ involvement. One explanation for this has been that the oldest and still prevalent ideological barrier for collaborative home-school relations is a protective model, where communication with parents has been devalued and discouraged. However, some studies have suggested teachers’ limited support of parent involvement results from cultural biases toward lower SES families. The goal of this exploratory study was to further evaluate these explanations for the underutilization of parent influence. To accomplish this goal, high school teachers’ experiences and beliefs about parent involvement at a suburban high school were compared with the experiences and beliefs of teachers at an inner-city high school.

METHODS

Settings and Study Participants

The participants were high school teachers from an inner-city and a suburban high school in the Midwest. The two schools were chosen because they represented maximum variation in the numbers of their students that graduated in four years and that received free and reduced price lunch. Small samples that represent extremes in a condition allow the researcher to discover commonalities that can intersect across a condition or situation (Hoepfl, 1997). At the time of this study, 59% of the inner-city school student body was Caucasian, while 29% was African-American. At the suburban high school 96% of the student body was Caucasian and 1% was African-American. Graduation rates were reported as 48% for the inner-city high school and 88% for the suburban high school for the 2005/2006 school year (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.).

Free and reduced price lunches were used as a proxy measure of SES because eligibility for this benefit is based on family income (Sirin, 2005). Children whose families have income of 130% or less of the Federal poverty guideline as well as those who receive food stamps or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are eligible for free lunch. Those whose families have incomes from 131% to 185% of the poverty guideline are eligible for reduced-price lunch. During the study period, 921(67%) of the inner-city school's students received free lunch and 208 (14%) received reduced price lunch. At the suburban high school, 93 (4%) of the students received free lunch, while 57 (3%) received reduced-price lunch (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.).

Ninth through twelfth grade teachers at both schools were surveyed during the 2005-2006 school term, through their school's email service. All teachers at each school had an assigned email address. An invitational email was first sent to teachers announcing the forthcoming survey and requesting their participation. It briefly presented the purpose and benefits of the survey and assured confidentiality to respondents. A follow-up email was mailed a week later. The data collection period was one month. At the conclusion of the survey period, 70 surveys had been returned out of total of 221 teachers at both high schools. Eight surveys were excluded from analysis, as two contained large amounts of missing data, and six were completed by administrators and others. The final samples consisted of 62 teachers, 46 from the suburban high school and 16 teachers from the inner-city high school. The overall the teacher demographics at the suburban high school were reported to be 100% white, while at the inner-city high school, 67.3% were identified as white, 30.77% were identified as black and 1.92 % were identified as Hispanic/Latino. In addition, the teacher samples' years of experience teaching were equivalent to the teachers in general at the two schools (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.).

Measures

A self-administered survey was developed for this study from three previously researched surveys. Items were selected from Meyer's (2004) organizational conflict survey, Schaefer and Edgerton's (1979) Teacher Report of Parent Involvement, Short Form; and Ponterotto, Baluch, Greig, and Rivera's (1998) Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey. Of the items selected from each of these three scales, both wording and response choices were modified to suit this study's survey. The study survey consisted of 26 items describing teacher experiences with parents. These items included experiences with conflict and experiences with collaboration. They also included teacher beliefs about parent competence and non-traditional parent involvement. Teachers were asked to rate their experiences and beliefs about parent involvement on a 5- point scale from (0) "none of the time" to (4) "all of the time."

A factor analysis was conducted to summarize the survey items for the modified teacher experiences with parents scale using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. A total of three factors were extracted from 19 items explaining 56.9% of the variance (see Table 2). Seven items were excluded because of low factor loadings (i.e., less than .40). The first factor, *experiences parents as problems*, consisted of nine items, which accounted for 37.2% of the variance (Cronbach's alpha=.90). This factor included

items that described abusive, forcing, and avoiding parent behaviors. The second factor, *experiences parents as collaborators*, included six items and accounted for 12.5 % of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha=.83$). The items in this factor included collaborative behaviors to help teachers understand their student and solve problems. The final factor, *beliefs about parent competency* (for supporting educational goals), consisted of four items, which accounted for 7.2 % of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha=.72$). These items primarily concerned supporting and valuing education at home. The second section included background information such as gender, ethnicity, years of teaching, grades taught and courses taught. Face validity was evaluated during questionnaire construction by having two teachers and two administrators at the suburban high school and one teacher and one school social worker at the inner-city high school review the items.

In addition to the self-administered survey, qualitative interviews with two teachers at the inner-city high school were conducted: two teachers from the suburban school declined to participate. Qualitative interviews were used as a supplemental strategy to aid in the interpretation of quantitative survey data results. Teachers who taught special and alternative education students were selected because they have been suggested to have greater involvement with parents (Lake & Billingsley, 2000). An hour-long, semi-structured interview was conducted using an interview guide of open-ended questions to gather information on school policy concerning parent involvement, teacher involvement practices, and teacher recommendations regarding parent involvement. The questions from the interview guide were developed to explore explanations for the underutilization of parent influence from the literature review of parent involvement in secondary schools.

Data Analysis

Independent samples *t*-tests were performed to compare the teachers' experiences and beliefs about parent involvement at the two high schools. The face-to-face interviews were transcribed and coded to derive themes and patterns from the individual teacher's narratives. Coding was done concurrently with the quantitative analysis of survey data using a case study approach (Creswell, 1998). This approach was used to compare and contrast the explanations for parent underutilization from the literature review to the teacher practices from the inner-city school and to search for exceptions and disagreements within these explanations.

FINDINGS

School Comparisons

Of the final sample ($N=62$), the majority of respondents at both schools were female and Caucasian, and had been teaching longer than 10 years. Teaching 9th grade was the most frequently reported teaching assignment of survey respondents from both schools. The group differences on gender, years of teaching, and grade taught were not statistically significant (see Table 1). Group differences for ethnicity were statistically significant. Although about 75% of both schools' teachers identified themselves as being "white," 11 respondents from the suburban high school identified themselves as "other," which included Hispanic-American ethnicity, as compared to one respondent at the inner-

city high school. Additionally, three teachers at the inner-city high school identified African-American ethnicity compared to none of the teachers at the suburban school. Table 1 displays demographic information. It is also noted that while 75% of the suburban school teachers identified themselves as “European-American”, state records for the study period showed that 100% of the teachers were “white”. The discrepancy is believed to have resulted from the use of the term “European-American” in the study survey. The 11 teachers who identified themselves as “other” may have elected not to identify themselves as “European-American” as opposed to “white”.

Table 1. Comparison of High School Teachers Based on Background

	Inner-city school (N=16)	Suburban school (N=46)	Test statistics
Gender (female %)	11 (68.8%)	30 (65.2%)	$\chi^2 = 0.07$
Ethnicity			$\chi^2 = 10.54^{**}$
European American	12 (75.0%)	35 (76.1%) ^a	
African American	3 (18.8%)	0 (0.0%)	
Other	1 (06.3%)	11 (23.9%)	
<i>Years of teaching</i>			$\chi^2 = 3.97$
1 to 3 years	1 (06.3%)	4 (09.3%)	
4 to 6	0 (0.0%)	6 (13.1%)	
7 to 9	3 (18.8%)	7 (16.3%)	
10 or more	12 (75.0%)	26 (60.5%)	
<i>Grade taught</i>			$\chi^2 = 5.59$
9 th grade	7 (43.8%)	14 (30.4%)	
10 th	2 (12.5%)	7 (15.2%)	
11 th	4 (25.0%)	5 (10.9%)	
12 th	0 (0.0%)	9 (19.6%)	
Other	3 (18.8%)	11 (23.9%)	

^{**}p<.01

^a State records showed 100% of teachers at this school were “white” during the study period. The discrepancy in this response category where 11 of the teachers picked “other” may have occurred because these teachers did not identify themselves as “European-American” but as “white”.

Table 2. Factor Item Comparisons

	Factor Loading	Inner-City High School (N=16) Mean (SD)	Suburban High School (N=46) Mean (SD)	t-test (2-tailed)
Factor 1: Experience parents as problems				
1. Expect to get their way	.75	2.63(0.81)	2.54(0.81)	.729
2. Try to overrule my authority	.80	0.88(0.89)	1.07(0.93)	.478
3. Get angry over misunderstandings and work against me	.69	1.06(1.34)	0.86(0.93)	.520
4. Demand special exceptions	.68	1.88(0.86)	2.00(1.10)	.682
5. Seek revenge when dissatisfied	.73	1.69(1.25)	1.30(1.01)	.224
6. Insult, yell or swear	.70	0.69(0.95)	0.42(0.62)	.309
7. Disrespect my role	.73	1.00(1.16)	0.76(0.77)	.352
8. Avoid problem discussions	.60	1.81(0.91)	1.78(0.66)	.889
9. Hold back useful information	.79	1.38(0.96)	1.67(0.82)	.249
Factor 1 Summary Score		13.0(7.07)	12.33(5.75)	0.38
Factor 2: Experience parents as collaborators				
1. Give positive feedback	.59	1.38(1.20)	1.65(0.82)	.310
2. Help me understand my student	.78	1.69(1.14)	1.72(0.83)	.911
3. Appreciate suggestions about activities	.75	1.75(1.13)	2.11(0.82)	.179
4. Provide information to problem-solve	.68	2.00(0.97)	1.98(0.76)	.924
5. Ready to work together	.54	1.69(1.14)	2.09(0.73)	.203
6. Interested in academic progress	.58	1.69(0.95)	2.04(0.76)	.188
Factor 2 Summary Score		10.19(5.58)	11.54(2.98)	-1.23
Factor 3: Beliefs about parent competency				
1. Support education at home***	.68	1.06(0.57)	1.93(0.75)	.000***
2. Help their children to learn**	.69	1.44(0.81)	2.11(0.71)	.007**
3. Parent concerned about education*	-.54	2.31(1.07)	3.06(0.87)	.020*
4. Availability to help	-.68	1.93(1.03)	2.53(1.01)	.062
Factor 3 Summary Score***		6.63(2.96)	9.50(2.21)	-4.09***
Note: Items were rated on a 5-point scale (0=not at all, 1=just a little, 2=some of the time, 3=much of the time, 4=all of the time).				
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001				

Table 2 presents mean scores of items on each factor, as well as factor loadings and t-tests for statistically significant differences. For each factor, a summary score was calculated and compared between the two school locations. No statistically significant

group differences were found for the summary scores from two of the three factors: *experiences parents as problems* and *experiences parents as collaborators*. In addition, no statistically significant differences were found for any of the individual items that made up these two factors.

For the summary score for the factor *beliefs about parent competency*, teachers from the suburban school reported significantly stronger beliefs of parent competency than did teachers at the inner-city high school ($t = -4.09$, $p < .001$). There were also statistically significant differences between teachers from the two schools in all of the individual items making up this factor, except for the item “availability to help” (see Table 2). The effect sizes for the factor *beliefs about parent competency* and its three statistically significant individual items were between .81 and 1.23, all large effects according to Cohen (1988).

Bivariate correlations between study variables were also examined. Teachers who *experience parents as problems* were less likely to *experience parents as collaborators* ($r = -.42$, $p = .001$) or to hold the *beliefs about parents competency* ($r = -.56$, $p = .000$). Also, teachers who *experience parents as collaborators* were more likely to hold the *beliefs about parent competency* ($r = .51$, $p = .000$). Gender of teachers or years of teaching were not significantly correlated with any of the three summary scores.

Themes from Qualitative Interviews

Themes from the qualitative interviews with two teachers at the inner-city high school are consistent with the findings from the survey. Two primary themes were identified: 1) SES limits parent competence; and 2) parent involvement is complementary rather than collaborative to teachers’ efforts. The most frequently reported theme related to teachers’ negative *beliefs about parent competency*. This aspect of the teachers’ narratives mirrored the research of Thompson et al. (2004), as they attributed a lack of competence to parents who deal with various challenges such as poverty, single-parent headed households, and little formalized education. The interviewed teachers described these parents as lacking motivation and energy for supporting basic educational goals like supervising school attendance and homework completion. They also reported these parents as either difficult to contact or unavailable due to lack of interest or resources. Verbatim examples included:

Very few of the teachers will assign homework and without giving time in the class to finish it. Most feel if they take their homework home it will not be done. Not a lot of parents are encouraging their kids to do their homework. You have to realize the population of our kids, many of our parents are single parents. Many are working, one, two jobs, or they have a live-in boyfriend, or girlfriend, that kind of thing.

We have a lot of sleeping parents. Or they say, “we’re coming,” and then you call, and they are in the shower. Or they’ve gone to their Granny’s or something that’s so important that they couldn’t come to the conference.

Teachers also stated parents were helpful when they complemented teachers' efforts through their actions at home to support work completion, regular attendance and adaptive classroom behavior. Verbatim examples included:

At the high school level, I don't know that teachers need any more parental involvement other than more parental involvement at home. I guess the high school level teachers would just appreciate the support at home for what they do; making sure the work gets done, making sure they have a phone number that they can reach a parent if there is a problem at school.

Well, the only involvement I have with parents is getting their support to make sure that their kids' lessons were done and that they get here...their attendance.

A minor theme concerned school competence. Teachers stated that parents have greater difficulty contacting them at the inner-city school, as compared to a suburban school. Related to school competence, teachers also shared a belief that parents at the inner-city school consider the quality of education their children receive to be inferior to that of a suburban high school. Verbatim examples included:

In the suburban high school classrooms, I know teachers do have voice mails [unlike the inner-city classroom], so if I wanted to contact a teacher, I could call and leave a message. Teachers at suburban high schools are far more accessible, if parents do want to have some type of contact with them.

It's what it is, [an inner-city high school]. They tell their kids that "if we were in the suburbs, you would get a better education. You'd have a better ability to learn. It's a utopia over there (suburban school system)."

DISCUSSION

This exploratory study compared teachers' experiences and beliefs about parent involvement at an inner-city high school and at a suburban high school location. High schools were chosen because parent involvement has been thought to be of less importance during this time in a student's academic career, however, numerous studies have found that it continues to be significantly related to academic achievement and positive adaptive functioning. In the case of lower SES high school students, Gregory and Weinstein (2004) found that teacher and parent collaboration predicted increased achievement.

The two schools chosen for this study represented maximum variation in their percentages of student graduation rates and student eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch. Significant differences in teacher experiences and beliefs would have suggested school location affects the use of parent involvement. However, there were no significant differences between the two school locations for either problematic or collaborative teacher experiences with parent involvement. In other words, although some school cultures may operate to "blame" parents rather than to foster collaborative partnerships, as described by Thompson et al. (2004), in this study, teachers at a suburban and an inner-city school did not display significant differences in their experiences with parent involvement that were either helpful or obstructive. The lack of significant differences in

teacher experiences between the two school locations could suggest that overall, the high school teachers in this study may not see parents as having a role to play at this stage of a student's academic career, regardless of factors like a parent's socioeconomic status. While we did not directly measure the variable of a "protective model" this finding does suggest that home-school communication is limited and as such, adheres to the structure of "protective model" of home-school relations.

However, there were significant differences between the two schools' teachers in their beliefs about parent competency. Qualitative interviews with inner-city teachers offered additional information. Teachers believed a lack of parent competency was a consequence of socioeconomic factors including poverty, single-parent headed households, low parent support for education, parents' lack of education and lack of resources. Additionally, teacher interviews suggested some inner-city parents did not experience the inner-city high school to be as competent as are suburban high schools for providing a good education. Even so, these concerns about school competency were not described to be a contributing factor to the level of parent involvement. If a protective ideological model is in operation for teachers whose work settings are inner-city schools, negative experiences and beliefs about parent competency, as depicted in a teacher's observation, "*We have a lot of sleeping parents,*" can be seen as a further cultural barrier for teacher encouragement of parent involvement.

These findings can have implications for modifying levels of parent involvement to address problems of achievement and graduation gaps. Interviews with inner-city high school teachers suggested several school-based efforts to encourage greater parent involvement, such as offering child-care to improve parents' attendance and participation, providing more invitational family programs, offering parent management training programs, and providing teacher voicemail. However, because in the current study parent involvement is not presumed to play an important role for high school teachers regardless of location, it is unclear who would provide leadership for such efforts within the school. In practice, when students are academically underperforming or adapting poorly at school, the support staff (deans, guidance counselors, psychologists and social workers) intervenes and may operate to increase linkages that enable collaborative parent involvement. When considering leadership necessary to increase collaboration between home and school, these staff members have been identified as a resource whose capacity is currently underutilized. One model that increases the capacity of school student support services has been proposed and supported by The Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (2002).

Their model highlights the three key components for successful systemic change: (1) teachers, (2) school managers/administrators, and (3) student support services staff. The model advocates for each component to have an equal voice in policy and practice-decision making. Without an equal voice, the capacity of student support service staff to provide comprehensive and collaborative home-school linkages is limited by their marginalized budgetary and policy decision-making roles within school systems.

This study had several limitations. Although maximum variation was used to increase the generalizability of this study's findings, there were several other limitations for

generalizability. This study did not randomly select schools or their teachers for inclusion. Additionally, survey response rates were low: 40% response rate for suburban high school and 15% response rate for inner-city school. These low response rates may not have captured the total spectrum of teachers. The especially lower response rate from the inner-city school teachers might have been affected by an external factor. During the survey period, teachers at the inner-city school were facing staff cut-backs as a consequence of declining enrollment. This may have reduced teacher interest and motivation for completing surveys. Although qualitative interviews provided additional information, the external circumstances in school may be an important factor affecting their response rates or even their attitudes toward this issue.

Finally, the survey instrument was developed based on previous studies and may not capture other important information to measure teacher experiences and beliefs about parent involvement. We did not ask for other important factors that may influence their attitudes and beliefs such as frequency of parent contact, nature of contact, or method of contact.

A further limitation was this study's use of free and reduced-price lunch as a proxy measure of SES. Sirin (2005) notes “ecological fallacy” may result when between-school aggregated measures that proxy SES are used to interpret within-school differences. Therefore, follow-up study that also collects individual SES information from parents would be recommended. Additionally, a follow-up study could benefit by including parent perceptions about involvement. This survey only represented teachers' perception. In order to have a more accurate picture of parent-teacher relations, it would be important to examine parents' perceptions and experience with teachers regarding parent involvement.

References

- American Youth Policy Forum. (2003). *No more islands: Family involvement in 27 school and youth programs*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Baker, A. (1997). Improving parent involvement programs and practice: A qualitative study of teacher perceptions. *School Community Journal*, 7(1), 9-35.
- Bean, R. A., Bush, K. R., McKenry, P. C., & Wilson, S. M. (2003). The impact of parental support, behavioral control and psychological control on the academic achievement and self-esteem of African-American and European-American adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 18(5), 523-541.
- Bruneau, B., Ruttan, D., & Dunlap, S. K. (1995). Communication between teachers and parents: Developing partnerships. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties*, 11, 257-266.
- Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2002). *New directions for student support*. Retrieved from <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/dbsimple.aspx?Primary=2104&Number=9990>

- Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. (2004). *An introductory packet on parent and home involvement in schools*. Los Angeles, CA: Author.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Creswell, J. (1998) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Chafouleas, J. L., Riley-Tillman, S. M., & McDougal, T. C. (2002). The good, bad, or in-between: How does the daily behavior report card rate? *Psychology in the Schools*, 39(2), 157-169.
- DeCastro-Ambrosetti, D., & Cho, G. (Winter 2005). Do parents value education? Teachers' perceptions of minority parents. *Multicultural Education*, 13(2), p. 44. Retrieved from Academic OneFile via Gale:
<http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.ulib.iupui.edu/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>
- Dynarski, M. & Gleason, P. (1998). *Impact of dropout prevention programs: A research report for the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program Evaluation*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
- Embry, D. D. (2004). Community-based prevention using simple, low-cost, evidence-based kernels and behavior vaccines. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 32(5), 575-591.
- Gonzalez-Dehass, A. R., & Willems, P. (2003). Examining the underutilization of parent involvement in the schools. *School Community Journal*, 13, 85-99.
- Greenwood, G. E., & Hickman, C. W. (1991). Research and practice in parent involvement: Implications for teacher education. *The Elementary School Journal*, 91(3), 2798-288.
- Gregory, A., & Weinstein, R. S. (2004). Connection and regulation at home and in school: Predicting growth in achievement for adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 19(4), 405-427.
- Halsey, P. A. (2005). Parent involvement in junior high schools: A failure to communicate. *American Secondary Education*, 34(1), 57-69.
- Henderson, A., & Mapp, K. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
- Hill, N. E., Castellino, D. R., Lansford, J. E., Nowlin, P., Dodge, K. A., Ganes, J. E., & Pettit, G. E. (2004). Parent academic involvement as related to school behavior, achievement, and aspirations: Demographic variations across adolescence. *Child Development*, 75(5), 1491-1509.
- Hoepfl, M. C. (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers. *Journal of Technology Education*, 9(1), 1-13.

- Indiana Department of Education. (n.d.). *School data*. Retrieved from <http://mustang.doe.state.in.us/SEARCH/criteria.cfm?schools=3437>
- Ivarie, J. J. (1995). Strategies for managing conflict in the collaboration process. *Annual Meeting of the Council for Exceptional Children, Indianapolis*, 73, 2-8. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 385 064).
- Jeynes, W. H. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, 40(3), 237-269.
- Lake, J. F., & Billingsley, B. S. (2000). An analysis of factors that contribute to parent-school conflict in special education. *Remedial and Special Education*, 21(4), 240-251.
- Lehr, C. A., Hansen, A., Sinclair, M. F., & Christenson, S. L. (2003). Moving beyond dropout towards school completion: An integrative review of data-based interventions. *School Psychology Review*, 32(3), 342-364.
- Lightfoot, D. (2004). "Some parents just don't care:" Decoding the meanings of parental involvement in urban schools. *Urban Education*, 39(1), 91-107.
- Mathis, W. J. (2003). No child left behind: Costs and benefits. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(9), 679-686.
- McNeal, R. B. (1999). Parental involvement as social capital: Differential effectiveness on science achievement, truancy and dropping out. *Social Forces*, 78(1), 117-144.
- Meyer, S. (2004). Organizational response to conflict: Future conflict and work outcomes. *Social Work Research*, 28(3), 183-190.
- Nakagawa, K. (2000). Unthreading the ties that bind: Questioning the discourse of parent involvement. *Educational Policy*, 14(4), 443-472.
- National Dropout Prevention Centers. (n.d.). *Family engagement*. Retrieved from <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/familyengagement/overview.htm>
- Orfield, G., Losen, D., Wald, J., & Swanson, C. (2004). *Losing our future: How minority youths are being left behind by the graduation rate crisis*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. Contributors: Advocates for Children of New York, The Civil Society Institute.
- Parcel, T. L., & Dufur, M. J. (2001). Capital at home and at school: Effects on student achievement. *Social Forces*, 79(3), 881-912.
- Ponterotto, J. G., Baluch, S., Greig, T., & Rivera, L. (1998). Development and initial score validation of the teacher multicultural attitude survey. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 58(6), 1002-1016.
- Schaefer, E. S., & Edgerton, M. (1979). *Teacher Report of Parent Involvement, Short Form*. Princeton, NJ: ETS Test Collection.
- Seyfried, S. F., & Chung, I-J. (2002). Parent involvement as parental monitoring of student motivation and parent expectations predicting later achievement among

- African Americans and European American middle school age students. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 11(1-2), 109-131.
- Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 417-453.
- Southwest Educational Developmental Laboratory. (2002). *SEDL's new center makes family-community connections to improve learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedletter/v14n01/2.html>
- Swap, S. M. (1993). *Developing home-school partnerships: From concepts to practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Thompson, G. L., Warren, S., & Carter, L. (2004). It's not my fault: Predicting high school teachers who blame parents and students for students' low achievement, *High School Journal*, 87(3), 5-14.
- United States Department of Education. (n.d.). *Information and research on dropouts and dropout prevention strategies*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov./print/programs/dropout/dropoutprogram.html>
- Voydanoff, P. (2004). Work, community and parenting resources as predictors of adolescent problems and grades. *Journal of Adolescent Relations*, 12(2), 155-173.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: David Wilkerson, Indiana University School of Social Work, 902 West New York St., Indianapolis, IN 46202. Email: dawilker@iupui.edu

Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaire: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis in a Social Work Sample

Karen Rice
Jeongha Hwang
Tina Abrefa-Gyan
Kathleen Powell

Abstract: *This study examined the psychometric properties of the Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaire (EBPQ). The 24-item EBPQ was developed to measure health professionals' attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of evidence-based practice (EBP). A confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the EBPQ given to a random sample of National Association of Social Work members (N = 167). The coefficient alpha of the EBPQ was .93. The study supported a 23-item 3-factor model with acceptable model fit indices ($\chi^2 = 469.04$; RMSEA = .081; SRMR = .068; CFI = .900). This study suggests a slightly modified EBPQ may be a useful tool to assess social workers' attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP.*

Keywords: *Evidence-based practice, confirmatory factor analysis, EBPQ, social workers*

INTRODUCTION

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is defined as a “process that blends current best evidence, community values and preferences, and agency, societal, and political considerations in order to establish programs and policies that are effective and contextualized” (Regehr, Stern, & Shlonsky, 2007, p. 410). In most developed countries, use of EBP is the goal of public services (Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2009), and in the past two decades, there has been a more conscientious attempt to use EBP in various social work settings including child welfare, employment, health, juvenile justice, mental health, and substance abuse (Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, & Wallace, 2009).

The degree to which EBP is used varies among practitioners and across practice settings (McNeece & Thyer, 2004). Bellamy, Bledsoe, and Traube (2006) note that many federal agencies including the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) have emphasized the use of evidence-based interventions and are now linking their grants to translational research.

Karen Rice, MSW, is an Instructor in the Department of Social Work at Millersville University in Millersville, PA, and a Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Jeongha Hwang and Tina Abrefa-Gyan are Ph.D. students at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Kathleen Powell, MSW, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work at Frostburg State University in Frostburg, MD as well as a Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. This research was supported by funds from the University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work as part of a doctoral practicum project. The authors wish to thank Drs. Llewellyn J. Cornelius and Donna Harrington for their technical assistance and professional mentoring. In addition, the authors wish to thank the following student colleagues for their assistance with the project: Margaret Beall, Darnell Morris-Compton, Saltanat Dushalieva, Andrea Jones, Marlene Materese, Deborah Vangeison Svoboda, Kimberly Searce VanVulpen, Michelle Tuten, and Crystal Williams. Finally, special thanks are given to Dominic and Penelope Upton for allowing the use of their measure.

Social workers, however, do not generally incorporate research evidence into daily practice despite being encouraged, or sometimes required to do so (Bledsoe et al., 2007; Mullen, Bledsoe, & Bellamy, 2008; National Association of Social Workers, 1999; Rosen, 2003). In fact, some practitioners have actively resisted the use of EBP (Gibbs, 2003; Nelson, Steele, & Mize, 2006). In an attempt to understand the resistance to the use of EBP, research has been done on barriers to implementing EBP (Bellamy et al., 2006). The findings reveal that negative attitudes toward EBP (Aarons, 2004; Addis & Krasnow, 2000; Rosen, 2003) and lack of knowledge and skills for using EBP (Addis & Krasnow, 2000; Rosen, 2003) are the two most frequently cited barriers impeding practitioners' use of EBP.

To ensure that attitudes toward and knowledge of EBP are measured consistently across the diverse population of social workers, it is essential to have reliable and valid measures (Harrington, 2009). A review of the literature identified scales measuring attitudes toward, knowledge of, and/or use of EBP developed for use in the health or mental health professions, but not explicitly for social work. To determine whether the original structure of a measure works well in a new population such as social work, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) can be performed (Harrington, 2009), which is the purpose of this research study. As Upton and Upton (2006) noted, the psychometric properties of the Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaire (EBPQ), the instrument used in this study, need to be evaluated for further refinement. Thus, the purpose of this study is to assess the reliability and validity of the EBPQ with a sample of National Association of Social Work members.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature was conducted to identify potential standardized scales that measure social service providers' knowledge of, attitudes towards, and use of EBP. A search using keywords: "evidence-based practice" or "evidence-based interventions" and "measures" or "instruments" was conducted using Academic Search Premier, Social Science Index, PsycINFO, PubMed, and HAPI databases. The search produced three potential EBP scales that have been used in the health professions, particularly in nursing. These scales included the 15-item Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS) developed by Aarons (2004); the 24-item Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaire (EBPQ) developed by Upton and Upton (2006); and the joint 16-item EBP Beliefs Scale and 18-item EBP Implementation Scale developed by Melnyk, Fineout-Overholt, and Mays (2008).

Evidence-Based Practice Beliefs and Implementation Scales

The 16-item EBP Beliefs and 18-item EBP Implementation scales (Melnik et al., 2008) were designed to be used jointly to measure nurses' attitudes toward and use of evidence-based practice. Both scales are unidimensional constructs. The EBP Beliefs scale has response categories ranging from 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree with higher scores indicating higher value of EBP and belief in implementing it in practice. The EBP Implementation scale's response categories range from 0 = 0 times to 4 = > 8 times with higher scores indicating increased frequency in implementing EBP.

within the past eight weeks. High internal consistency reliability was attained for each scale ($\alpha = .90$ for EBP Beliefs and $\alpha = .96$ for EBP Implementation), and criterion validity was also supported. These scales were recently developed and the developers continue to test their reliability and validity.

Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale

The 15-item EBPAS was designed to measure mental health service providers' attitudes about adopting new or different therapies or interventions with a sample of 322 public sector clinical service workers from 51 programs (Aarons, 2004). Approximately one-third of the sample was comprised of social workers. Response categories on the EBPAS range from 0 = not at all to 4 = to a very great extent. Using two separate factor analytic procedures, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, a four-factor solution was found in the study as follows: (a) intuitive *Appeal* of EBP ($\alpha = .80$), (b) likelihood of adopting EBP given *Requirements* to do so ($\alpha = .90$), (c) *Openness* to new practices ($\alpha = .78$), and (d) perceived *Divergence* of usual practice with research-based/academically developed intervention ($\alpha = .59$). Subsequent studies have tested the validity of the EBPAS (Aarons, 2006; Aarons, McDonald, Sheehan, & Walrath-Greene, 2007). Aarons' (2006) study of 303 public-sector mental health clinicians and case managers, including 99 social workers, from 49 programs yielded an overall alpha of .77 for the EBPAS with subscale alphas ranging from .59 to .90. The Aarons et al. (2007) study of 221 mental health service providers, including 99 social workers, resulted in an overall alpha of .79 for the EBPAS with subscale alphas ranging from .66 to .93.

Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaire

Finally, Upton and Lewis (1998) laid the groundwork for the EBPQ in an effort to record healthcare professionals' attitudes toward and knowledge of the concepts of evidence-based practice. Upton (1999) subsequently refined the measure with a sample of 370 nurses, midwives, and health visitors. Upton and Upton (2006) then examined the factor structure of the 24-item EBPQ and found a three-factor structure in a pilot study of 500 randomly selected nurses in the United Kingdom. Following a principal components analysis, three distinct subscales, attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP emerged. Cronbach's alpha for each subscale exceeded .70. The EBPQ is not based on theory, but rather on prior quantitative and qualitative research related to barriers to EBP. The scale was found to have good construct and discriminant validity in a random sample of 751 nurses. Construct validity was supported by positive correlations ranging from 0.3 to 0.4 ($p < .001$) between the measure and an independent measure of awareness of EBP. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing those who were knowledgeable about a local EBP initiative with those who were not; those who were knowledgeable of the initiative had a better attitude [$t(332) = 2.5, p < .001$], more frequent use of EBP [$t(360) = 3.2, p < .02$], and better knowledge of EBP [$t(360) = 5.2, p < .001$] than individuals without knowledge of the local EBP initiative. Additionally, the subscales were reported to have adequate internal consistency including an alpha of .79 for attitudes toward EBP, an alpha of .91 for knowledge of EBP, an alpha of .85 for use of EBP, and an overall alpha of .87.

Ultimately, the EBPQ scale was selected as it incorporated all three of the constructs that the study sought to examine: attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP, unlike the EBPAS, which measures attitudes only, and the EBP Beliefs and EBP Implementation Scales, which measure attitudes and use of EBP, but not knowledge of EBP. The incorporation of all three major constructs in one scale contributed to the goal of reducing the level of burden placed on potential respondents.

Purpose of the Study

EBP has made its way into the social work profession with an increasing expectation that social work practitioners will utilize evidence to guide their practice. However, no scale measuring social workers' attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP exists. The EBPQ was developed to measure these constructs within the nursing profession, but had not been used with a sample of social workers. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the EBPQ can be used as a reliable and valid tool with a sample of social workers, which helps validate this tool across professional disciplines.

METHOD

Participants

A random sample of 1000 current members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) was obtained. This sample was subsequently randomly divided into two groups of 500 each; individuals in one group received a mail survey and the other group received a URL link to an internet survey. Two modes of delivery were used to assess the viability of each mode in reaching social work practitioners. Fourteen invitations were returned undeliverable (11 from mail group and 3 from internet group), and seven participants (1 from the mail group and 6 from the internet group) refused to participate. Further, of the mail surveys returned, two cases were deleted due to failure to complete the survey. Forty individuals completed the internet survey (8% response rate). This response rate is close to the average 10-11% typically yielded from an internet-based survey (Dillman, Smyth, & Melani-Christian, 2009). Combined with the 140 mail survey respondents (28% response rate), the total sample yielded 180 participants. Table 1 presents the demographics of this study's participants. On average, participants were female ($n = 135$), White ($n = 148$), and held a Masters degree in social work ($n = 145$), with a mean age of 49 years old ($SD = 14.21$) and 18.2 ($SD = 13.7$) years of practice experience. The current sample characteristics are consistent with the *2008 NASW Membership Workforce Study* compiled by Whitaker and Arrington (2008), which indicated that the majority of NASW members are female, White, MSW educated, older (median age of 50), and experienced (with most having more than 16 years of practice experience).

Table 1: Select Sample Demographics (N = 167)

Sample Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Female	135	80.8
Male	30	18.0
Missing data	2	1.2
Race		
White/Caucasian	148	88.6
Black/African American	9	5.4
Hispanic/Latino	5	3.0
Asian	4	2.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.6
Highest Degree		
Bachelors degree	5	3.0
Masters degree	145	86.8
Doctoral degree	15	9.0
Missing data	2	1.2
Employment Status		
Unemployed	9	5.4
Employed full-time	114	68.3
Employed part-time	28	16.8
Retired	17	10.2
Geographical Area		
Rural	26	15.6
Urban	86	51.5
Suburban	55	32.9
Area of Practice		
Addictions	10	6.0
Adolescents	7	4.2
Aging	14	8.4
Child Welfare/Family	19	11.4
Community Development	2	1.2
Criminal Justice	1	0.6
Developmental/Rehabilitative Disabilities	6	3.6
Health	14	8.4
Mental Health	81	48.5
School Social Work	9	5.4
Other	10	6.0
Direct Clinical Social Work		
Direct	132	79.0
No direct	33	19.8
Missing data	2	1.2
<i>(Cont.)</i>		

(Table 1. Cont.)

	M	SD
Years of experience	18.2	13.7
Age	49.2	14.2

Procedure

Upon obtaining permission from the measure's authors and exempt status from the university's Institutional Review Board, the EBPQ (Upton & Upton, 2006) was administered to a group of members of NASW as part of a larger cross-sectional study. A modified approach of Dillman and colleagues' (2009) mailing recommendations was employed in order to prevent over-burdening respondents, as well as to reduce the extra costs and time associated with Dillman and colleagues' process. The mail group respondents were sent a cover letter and survey; whereas, the internet group was sent a letter with the URL address to access the online survey through Survey Monkey (2009). Both groups were sent a reminder postcard 3-weeks after the first mailing. The survey asked respondents to rate their attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of evidence-based practice by completing the EBPQ (Upton & Upton, 2006). Participants were not compensated for responding to the survey.

Measure

The survey included the 24-item EBPQ (Upton & Upton, 2006), which consists of three subscales: attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP. Each item is scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 (Poor/Never) to 7 (Best/Frequently) and higher scores indicating a more positive attitudes toward, knowledge of, or use of EBP. The attitudes toward EBP subscale is comprised of 4 items, the knowledge of EBP subscale consists of 14 items, and the use of EBP subscale is made up of 6 items. However, there is some variation in the structure of the subscale responses. For example, the attitude toward EBP subscale requires participants to indicate their attitude somewhere between opposite pairs of statements (e.g., "Evidence based practice is a waste of time" to "Evidence based practice is fundamental to professional practice"); whereas, the other two subscales do not utilize this paired statement approach.

Data Analysis

SPSS 17.0 for Windows (2009) was used to analyze demographics and compute Cronbach's alpha. Internal consistency reliability of the full EBPQ and three subscales was examined using Cronbach's alpha. To identify items that may not fit well within each subscale, alphas if item deleted were also examined. All statistical analyses were interpreted with an alpha level of .05.

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the EBPQ using *Mplus* (Muthén & Muthén, 2005). Multiple fit indices are available for evaluating the goodness-of-fit of the model; therefore, the following fit indices were used: chi-square, the comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) with 90% confidence

interval, and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Values $> .90$ were indicative of good model fit using the CFI; RMSEA close to $.06$ or less, and SRMR close to $.08$ or less also indicate good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Consistent with Upton and Upton (2006), factor loadings $> .4$ were used as the criterion for including items on a subscale.

In the current study, the initial model (with 24-item, 3-factor) did not fit well. To analyze the missing pattern, a new variable was created by computing the percent of *missingness* using NMISS function in SPSS. As a result, 13 cases were removed due to having 25% or more *missingness*. Modifications based on modification indices (MI) or examination of residuals were considered. To examine the MI, SPSS missing values analysis (MVA) using the expectation maximizing (EM) algorithm was used to impute missing data for this sample as recommended by Schafer and Graham (2002). As a result, the full 167 sample size was retained for further CFAs.

Additionally, the normality assumption using skewness and kurtosis indices was checked for each item using the following criteria: skewness index absolute value > 3 , kurtosis index absolute value > 10 (Kline, 2005). The assumption was met for this sample (see Table 2).

RESULTS

Internal Consistency Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was $.93$ for the knowledge of EBP subscale and was $.90$ for the use of EBP subscale, both well above the recommended $.70$ cutoff for good internal consistency reliability (de Vaus, 2002). The overall scale yielded an alpha of $.93$; however, the attitudes toward EBP subscale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of $.64$. Because the attitudes toward EBP subscale fell below the recommended alpha of $.70$, alphas if item-deleted were examined. Removal of Item 1 ("My workload is too great for me to keep up-to-date with all the new evidence.") would result in an alpha of $.69$, suggesting this item does not fit well with the other three items on this subscale.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Using the subscales identified by Upton and Upton (2006), a 3-factor CFA model was examined. Because of the change in alpha for the attitudes toward EBP subscale that resulted from dropping Item 1, the 3-factor model was run with and without Item 1. The chi-square difference test (Kline, 2005) was used to assess whether changes to the model (deletion of Item 1) resulted in an improved model fit. The original 24-item model resulted in $\chi^2(252, N = 167) = 844.361$; whereas, the 23-item model yielded a $\chi^2(230, N = 167) = 789.402$. The change in $\chi^2 = 55.959(22, N = 167)$ between the models indicates the model improved significantly ($p < .001$) without Item 1. Therefore, all subsequent CFAs were run without this item.

Table 2: EBPQ Item Statistics Including Assumption Checking (N = 167)

Item	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Attitudes Toward EBP				
My workload is too great for me to keep up to date with all the new evidence	4.44	1.63	-0.16	-0.89
I resent having my clinical practice questioned	5.53	1.53	-1.11	0.71
Evidence-based practice is a waste of time	5.69	1.47	-1.34	1.71
I stick to tried and trusted methods rather than changing to anything new	5.54	1.26	-0.75	0.52
Knowledge of EBP				
Research skills	4.33	1.50	-0.25	-0.54
Information technology skills	4.71	1.46	-0.32	-0.72
Monitoring and reviewing of practice skills	4.73	1.06	-0.18	-0.50
Converting your information needs into a research question	3.89	1.53	-0.04	-0.55
Awareness of major information types and sources	4.73	1.24	-0.07	-0.58
Ability to identify gaps in your professional practice	5.10	1.09	-0.25	-0.28
Knowledge of how to retrieve evidence	4.68	1.32	-0.22	-0.45
Ability to analyze critically evidence against set standards	4.51	1.31	-0.28	-0.42
Ability to determine how valid (close to the truth) the material is	4.59	1.24	-0.39	-0.19
Ability to determine how useful (clinically applicable) the material is	4.98	1.11	-0.50	0.21
Ability to apply information to individual cases	5.37	1.06	-0.79	1.36
Sharing of ideas and information with colleagues	5.46	1.20	-0.70	0.57
Dissemination of new ideas about care to colleagues	5.14	1.27	-0.66	0.33
Ability to review your own practice	5.28	1.04	-0.76	2.30
Use of EBP				
How often have you formulated a clearly answerable question as the beginning of the process towards filling this gap?	4.19	1.68	-0.20	-0.75
How often have you tracked down the relevant evidence once you have formulated the question?	4.41	1.64	-0.28	-0.59
How often have you critically appraised, against set criteria, any literature you have discovered?	4.07	1.75	-0.22	-0.81
How often have you integrated the evidence you have found with your expertise?	4.57	1.67	-0.54	-0.51
How often have you evaluated the outcomes of your practice?	4.41	1.63	-0.19	-0.72
How often have you shared this information with colleagues?	4.29	1.76	-0.19	-0.89

Given that the 23-item, 3-factor model did not fit adequately, an examination of the modification indices suggested that the model fit could be improved by allowing several of the item errors to correlate. These modifications were made one at a time until the fit indices marginally met the cutoff criteria for acceptable levels. Error correlations occurred between Items 17 and 16, 8 and 5, 13 and 12, 20 and 19, 14 and 13, 18 and 16, and 18 and 17. All 23 items had significant loadings $>.4$, using the criterion set by Upton and Upton (2006) in their original study. The final model yielded a model χ^2 (223, $N = 167$) = 469.041, $p < .0005$; RMSEA = 0.081 (90% CI 0.071-0.092); SRMR = 0.068; CFI = 0.900. The chi-square difference between the second and the final model is 320.361 ($df = 7$) indicating a significant improvement ($p < .001$) in model fit. A graphic illustration of this final model is displayed in Figure 1, and Table 3 provides a summary of CFA goodness-of-fit indices by analysis.

DISCUSSION

The Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaire (Upton & Upton, 2006) is a 24-item, self-report survey measuring attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of evidence-based practice. This study supported a 23-item, three subscale structure of the EBPQ with seven error covariances. Different from the original EBPQ work done by Upton and Upton (2006), this study did not support retaining Item 1 on the attitudes toward EBP subscale, resulting in the final 23-item EBPQ. Item 1 asks respondents to examine the impact their workload has on their ability to use evidence within their practice; whereas, the remaining three items on the attitudes toward EBP assess perceptions of the usefulness of evidence on one's practice. This item may not have fit well due to the sample differences between this study and Upton and Upton's (2006) study that surveyed nurses. The original survey was developed using a group of nurses; whereas, this study's sample consists of a range of social work practitioners (e.g., clinical practitioners, case managers, and administrators). Many social workers, regardless of area of practice, are able to relate to workload demands and the impact these demands have on their daily activities. For example, many workload studies within child welfare have confirmed the impact high workloads have on a caseworker's ability to effectively engage and spend quality time with children, families, and caregivers (Child Welfare League of America, 2007). Not all social workers, however, are engaged in direct practice, and in examining the three remaining items on the attitudes toward EBP subscale, the emphasis is on clinical practice, which could explain the discrepancy in how this subscale fit within this sample of social workers.

The format of the attitudes toward EBP subscale may also have impacted the findings. Unlike the knowledge and use of EBP subscales, the attitudes toward EBP subscale uses paired statements to anchor the 7-point Likert scale. For example, Item 1 was anchored with the following statements: 1 = "My workload is too great for me to keep up to date with all the new evidence" and 7 = "New evidence is so important that I make the time in my work schedule." In fact, these items may be distinct and able to stand on their own, rather than representing opposite pairs. Additionally, Dillman et al. (2009) caution against using such a format due to the possibility of confusing respondents, which may increase response error.

Figure 1: 3-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis of 23-item EBPQ with 7 Error Covariances and Standardized Estimates

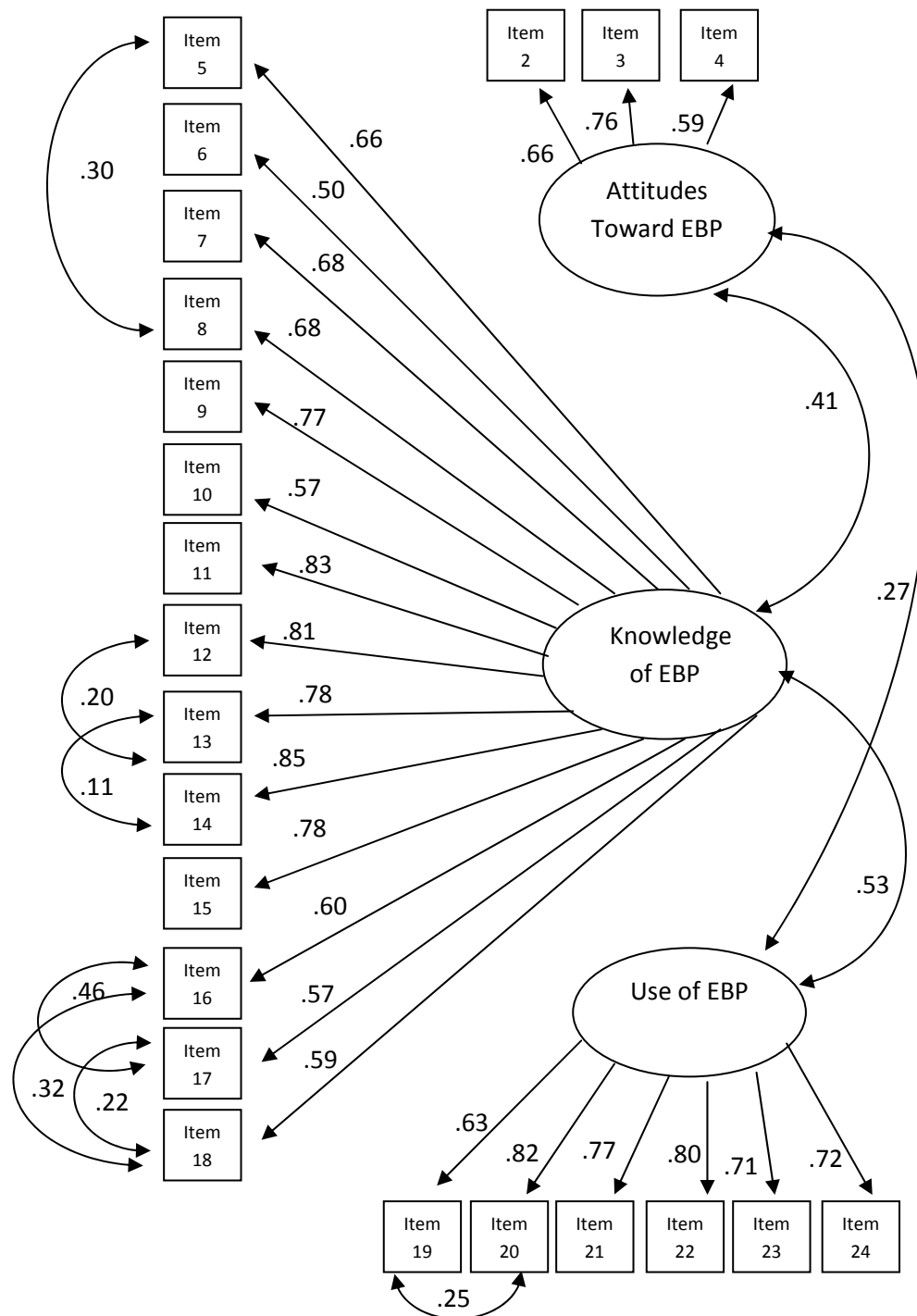


Table 3: Goodness-of-Fit Indices (N = 167)

Model	$\chi^2(df)$	RMSEA (90% CI)	SRMR	CFI	Number of Items
3-Factor Model (with Item 1)	844.361 (252)	0.119 (0.110-0.128)	0.091	0.765	24
3-Factor Model (without Item 1)	789.402* (230)	0.121 (0.112-0.130)	0.088	0.773	23
3-Factor Model with 7 Error Covariances (without Item 1)	469.041* (223)	0.081 (0.071-0.092)	0.068	0.900	23

* Change in chi-square indicated significant improvement of model fit at $p < .001$.

The final 23-item 3-factor EBPQ required seven error covariances, as suggested from the modification indices, before obtaining an adequate goodness-of-fit model. Bloom, Fischer, and Orme (2009) define EBP as a process that involves developing a question, finding the evidence, analyzing the evidence, combining the evidence with your understanding of the client situation, applying the evidence to practice, and monitoring and evaluating your results. In examining the error covariances, Item 8 explores respondents' knowledge in converting information into a research question, and Item 5 explores respondents' knowledge in finding the evidence. It is not surprising, therefore, that as one item varies, the other will too. Further, Items 13 and 12 examine respondents' ability to analyze the evidence. Finally, Items 14 and 13 covary as Item 13 explores the ability to determine how valid the evidence is and Item 14 explores respondents' ability to determine the clinical applicability of the evidence.

As for the error covariances between Items 17 and 16, 18 and 16, and 18 and 17, they can best be explained as addressing social workers' ethical responsibility to evaluate their practice and disseminate that knowledge. The NASW Code of Ethics (1999) indicates that social workers have an obligation to monitor and evaluate their practice, as well as contribute to the development of knowledge. Adding the covariances between these items' errors, therefore, seems reasonable.

The last error covariance was between Items 20 and 19, both on the use of EBP subscale. Item 19 asks respondents their frequency in developing answerable questions and Item 20 explores their frequency in tracking down relevant evidence to answer the questions. These items support Bloom and colleagues' (2009) definition of evidence-based practice being a process that requires social workers to develop the research question and find the evidence to answer it. For that reason, adding the covariance between these items' errors makes sense.

Strengths and Limitations

The study's sample was demographically similar to the NASW membership and sufficient to detect a medium effect size (Kline, 2005). It is possible, however, that those who did not respond to the survey may have differed in significant ways from those who did respond. Furthermore, some of the model fit indices may have been influenced by the small sample size. For example, the noncentral chi-square distribution used in the RMSEA fit index is not well approximated in samples under 200 because it may lead to skewed values of model fit (Curran, Bollen, Poxton, Kirby, & Chen, 2002). In addition, the study's small sample is below Kline's (2005) recommendation of a minimum sample of 200. Marsh and Hau (1999) suggest using indicators with good psychometric properties where factor loadings are greater than .60 to compensate for a limited sample size. In this study, factors loaded at .50 or greater, thus approaching Marsh and Haus' suggested minimum, and exceeding Kline's .40 recommendation. The current study made several model modifications (e.g., error covariances and dropping Item 1) to the original measure while ensuring that the specified model retained at least three indicators for each latent variable per Kline's (2005) recommendation. Still, the small sample does mean that caution should be exercised in interpreting the study's findings, although this study's response rate was not wholly inconsistent with expected response rates for other "cold-contact" surveys that have used these mediums (Aday & Cornelius, 2006).

Although the final EBPQ model was slightly modified (deletion of Item 1 and seven error covariances) in order to fit this sample of social workers, this may be reflective of the inherent differences between the two professions, nursing and social work. The professional model of EBP has its origins in medicine and is described as the use of best evidence in guiding the decision-making process regarding the care of individual patients (Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes, & Richardson, 1996). Adopting EBP has not been an easy task for professionals in any discipline (Glasgow, Lichtenstein, & Marcus, 2003; Mullen, Shlonsky, Bledsoe, & Bellamy, 2005). In particular, social work as a profession has lagged behind in embracing the use of evidence to guide practice with clients (Mullen et al., 2005) and continues to hold onto what may be considered humanistic motivations (Thyer, 2008). The error covariances that emerged within this sample of social workers seem understandable as they are potentially more reflective of the social work profession's process in utilizing evidence to inform practice. In summary, the greatest contribution of this study is that it helps validate the only known tool that measures attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP.

Implications for Research and Practice

The final 23-item three-factor (see Figure 1) model produced acceptable fit indices; therefore, this analysis contributes to the ongoing refinement of the EBPQ as a measure to evaluate social workers' attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP. Due to the paucity of scales examining EBP use, many primarily exploring attitudes toward EBP (e.g., Aaron, 2004; Melnyk et al., 2008), the EBPQ offers a good alternative. Given the challenges and potential influences on the social work profession of EBP use, it is essential that the profession's practice evidence base be identified or clearly articulated. In line with this, the EBPQ may be a reliable measure that should continue to be used for

improving credibility among social workers and closing the gap between research and practice in the field. Further research using the 23-item three-factor model is warranted, however. In particular, the 23-item three-factor model is recommended because use of this revised tool will further the development and confirmation of the three-factor EBPQ structure. Specifically, larger sample sizes and samples that are diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, and practice settings are necessary to examine whether there are differences in attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP among various social work populations.

There is a need for evaluative research on the equivalence of measurement models across distinct groups (e.g., culturally different groups and different practice disciplines such as social work and nursing). Multiple-group CFA will be a useful analysis to evaluate the generalizability of a construct across population subgroups (Brown, 2006). Ultimately, there is the need for a qualitative study that examines how well this measure assesses all relevant facets of the construct of EBP in social work. The recently adopted Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (2008) encourages social work scholars and educators to devote more attention to the teaching of EBP in the classroom and to helping social work students and practitioners learn how to utilize the process of evidence-based practice as well as the use of evidence-based interventions. Specifically, the revised EBPQ could be used as a tool to evaluate social work students' performance in the field with regards to their attitudes toward and knowledge and use of EBP.

CONCLUSION

Evidence-based practice is an attempt to bridge the gap between research and practice (Hagell & Spencer, 2004); therefore, finding a survey that measures social workers' attitudes toward, knowledge of, and use of EBP is essential in order to increase the use of evidence in social work practice. In this study, the EBPQ demonstrated adequate psychometric properties in a sample of social work practitioners. Although this instrument was not primarily developed for testing among social work professionals, findings from this study contribute to the sparse psychometric evidence on the instrument and its promise for use with social workers.

References

- Aarons, G. A. (2004). Mental health provider attitudes toward adoption of evidence based practice: The evidence-based practice attitude scale (EBPAS). *Mental Health Services Research*, 6, 61-74. doi: 10.1023/B:MHSR.0000024351.12294.65
- Aarons, G. A. (2006). Transformational and transactional leadership: Association with attitudes toward evidence-based practice in mental health services. *Psychiatric Services*, 57, 1162-1169. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.57.8.1162
- Aarons, G. A., McDonald, E. J., Sheehan, A. K., & Walrath-Greene, C. M. (2007). Confirmatory factor analysis of the evidence-based practice attitude scale (EBPAS) in a geographically diverse sample of community mental health providers.

- Administrative Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 34, 465-469. doi: 10.1007/s10488-007-0127-x
- Aday, L. A., & Cornelius, L. J. (2006). *Designing and conducting health surveys* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Addis, M. E., & Krasnow, A. D. (2000). A national survey of practicing psychologists' attitudes toward psychotherapy treatment manuals. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68, 331-339. doi: 10.1037//0022-006x.68.2
- Bellamy, J. L., Bledsoe, S. E., & Traube, D. E. (2006). The current state of evidence-based practice in social work: A review of the literature and qualitative analysis of expert interviews. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 3, 23-48. doi: 10.1300/J367v03n01_02
- Bledsoe, S. E., Weissman, M. M., Mullen, E. J., Ponniah, K., Gameroff, M., Verdeli, H., ... Wickramaratne, P. (2007). Empirically supported psychotherapy in social work training programs: Does the definition of evidence matter? *Research on Social Work Practice*, 17, 449-455. doi: 10.1177/1049731506299014
- Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (2009). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Brown, T. A. (2006). *Confirmatory factor analysis for applied research*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Child Welfare League of America (2007). *Child welfare standards of excellence*. Arlington, Virginia: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.cwla.org>
- Council on Social Work Education (2008). *Education policy and accreditation standards*. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.cswe.org>
- Curran, P. J., Bollen, K. A., Poxton, P., Kirby, J. B., & Chen, F. (2002). The noncentral chi-square distribution in misspecified structural equation model: Finite sample results from a Monte Carlo simulation. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 37, 1-36. doi: 10.1207/S15327906MBR3701_01
- de Vaus, D. (2002). *Analyzing social science data: 50 key problems in data analysis*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Melani-Christian, L. (2009). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Fixsen, D. L., Blase, K. A., Naoom, S. F., & Wallace, F. (2009). Core implementation components. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19, 531-540. doi: 10.1177/1049731509335549
- Gibbs, L. E. (2003). *Evidence-based practice for the helping professions: A practical guide to integrated multimedia*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Glasgow, R. E., Lichtenstein, E., & Marcus, A. C. (2003). Why don't we see more translation of health promotion research to practice? Rethinking the efficacy-to-

- effectiveness transition. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(8), 1261-1267.
Retrieved from <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/contents-by-date.0.shtml>
- Hagell, A., & Spencer, L. (2004). An evaluation of an innovative audiotape method for keeping social care staff up to date with the latest research findings. *Child and Family Social Work*, 9, 187-196. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2206.2004.00313.x
- Harrington, D. (2009). *Confirmatory factor analysis*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternative. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6, 1-55. doi: 10.1080/10705519909540118
- Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Marsh, H. W., & Hau, K. T. (1999). Confirmatory factor analysis: Strategies for small sample sizes. In R. H. Hoyle (Ed.), *Statistical strategies for small sample research* (pp. 251-284). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McNeece, C. A., & Thyer, B. A. (2004). Evidence-based practice and social work. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 1, 7-25. doi: 10.1300/J394v01n01_02
- Melnyk, B. M., Fineout-Overholt, E., & Mays, M. Z. (2008). The evidence-based practice beliefs and implementation scales: Psychometric properties of two new instruments. *Worldviews on Evidence-Based Nursing*, 4, 208-216. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-6787.2008.00126.x
- Mullen, E. J., Bledsoe, S. E., & Bellamy, J. L. (2008). Implementing evidence-based social work practice. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18, 325-338. doi: 10.1177/1049731506297827
- Mullen, E. J., Shlonsky, A., Bledsoe, S. E., & Bellamy, J. L. (2005). From concept to implementation: Challenges facing evidence-based social work. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, 1, 61-84. doi: 10.1332/1744264052703159
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (2005). *Mplus Version 3.13*. Los Angeles, CA: Author.
- National Association of Social Workers. (1999). *Code of ethics*. Washington DC: Author.
- Nelson, T. D., Steele, R. G., & Mize, J. A. (2006). Practitioner attitudes toward evidence-based practice: Themes and challenges. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, 33, 398-409. doi: 10.1007/s1048800600444
- Nutley, S., Walter, I., & Davies, H. T. O. (2009). Promoting evidence-based practice: Models and mechanisms from cross-sector review. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19, 552-559. doi: 10.1177/1049731509335496
- Patterson, M., West, M., Shackleton, V., Lawthom, R., Maitlis, S., Robinson, D., ...Wallace, A. (2004). Development and validation of an organization climate

- measure. Aston Academy for Research in Management, Aston University, Birmingham, UK, B4 7ET.
- Regehr, C., Stern, S., & Shlonsky, A. (2007). Operationalizing evidence-based practice: The development of an institute for evidence-based social work. *Research on Social Work Practice, 17*, 409-416. doi: 10.1177/1049731506293561
- Rosen, A. (2003). Evidence-based social work practice: Challenges and promise. *Social Work Research, 27*, 197-208. Retrieved from <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/nasw/swr/2003/00000027/00000004/art00002>
- Sackett, D. L., Rosenberg, W. M. C., Gray, J. A. M., Haynes, R. B., & Richardson, W. S. (1996). Evidence-based medicine: What it is and what it isn't. *British Medical Journal, 312*, 71-72. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8555924>
- Schafer, J. L., & Graham, J. W. (2002). Missing data: Our view of the state of the art. *Psychological Methods, 7*, 147-177. doi: 10.1037/1082-989X.7.2.147
- SPSS, Inc. (2009). *SPSS 17.0 for Windows*. Chicago, IL: Author.
- Survey Monkey. (2009). Software for professional surveys [Computer software]. Retrieved from <http://www.surveymonkey.com>
- Thyer, B. A. (2008). The quest for evidence-based practice?: We are all positivists! *Research on Social Work Practice, 18*, 339-345. doi: 10.1177/1049731507313998
- Upton, D. (1999). Attitudes towards, and knowledge of, clinical effectiveness in nurses, midwives, practice nurses and health visitors. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 29*(4), 885-893. Retrieved from <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118486802/home?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>
- Upton, D., & Lewis, B. K. (1998). Clinical effectiveness and EBP: Design of a questionnaire. *British Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation, 5*(12), 647-650. Retrieved from <http://www.ijtr.co.uk>
- Upton, D., & Upton, P. (2006). Development of an evidence-based practice questionnaire for nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 54*, 454-458. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03739.x
- Whitaker, T., & Arrington, P. (2008). *Social workers at work: NASW membership workforce study*. Washington, D. C.: National Association of Social Workers. Retrieved from <http://workforce.socialworkers.org/clearinghouse/default.asp>

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Karen Rice, Department of Social Work, Millersville University, P.O. Box 1002, 1 South George St., Millersville, PA 17551. Email: karen.rice@millersville.edu

Development and Validation of a Short Form of the Attitude Toward Poverty Scale

Sung Hyun Yun
Robert D. Weaver

Abstract: *This study outlines the development and validation of a short form of the 37-item Attitude toward Poverty (ATP) scale. Employing a cross-sectional survey design, the authors sampled 319 undergraduate students at a mid-sized university located in central Canada. The short form evinced high levels of internal consistency ranging from .87 to .89. Evidence for the validity was established through correlational analyses and independent samples t-tests. The findings suggest the short form is a feasible alternative to the original ATP scale for researchers and academics seeking to assess the poverty-related attitudes of university students.*

Keywords: *Measurement, short form development, validation, factor analysis*

INTRODUCTION

A large number of studies have been conducted to investigate attitudes toward poverty and/or impoverished persons. Generally, these studies indicate the multidimensional nature of poverty-related attitudes (e.g., Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Feagin, 1972; 1975; Gil, 1981; Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991; Karger & Stoesz, 1990; Price, Desmond, Snyder, & Kimmel, 1988; Rosenthal, 1993; Ryan, 1976; Shek, 2002; Smith & Stone, 1989). Two constructs frequently identified are the individualistic and structural explanations of poverty. The individualistic explanation emphasizes individual/personal deficits as the primary cause of poverty, while the structural explanation highlights deficiencies within a market economy (DiNitto, 2000; Mullaly, 2007). Researchers have also identified the fatalistic explanation of poverty, which generally attributes poverty to uncontrollable factors such as personal misfortune and disability (e.g., Cryns, 1977; Feagin, 1972; 1975; Golding & Middleton, 1982).

MacDonald (1971; 1972) and Feagin (1972; 1975) empirically investigated multidimensional attitudes toward poverty. The MacDonald's Poverty Scale (MacDonald, 1972, p. 118), a 12-item Likert-type scale (including five filler items), contained seven items that measure a broad combination of perceptions/stereotypes about poor people, causes of their poverty, and public policies targeting the low-income population (e.g., "Although we don't like to face it, most people on welfare are lazy"; "I can't understand why some people make such a fuss over the disadvantaged state of the poor. Most of them could improve their condition if they only tried"; "By pouring money into poverty programs we are destroying the very thing that made this a great and prosperous country: competition").

Feagin (1972; 1975) developed an 11-item Likert-type scale that includes three dimensions: *individualistic explanations*, *structural explanations*, and *fatalistic*

Sung Hyun Yun, Ph.D., MSW, and Robert D. Weaver, Ph.D., are both Assistant Professors in the School of Social Work at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario, CANADA.

explanations of poverty. These three constructs identified by Feagin (1972; 1975) have been widely used and modified in several studies which measure people's attitudes toward poverty and/or poor persons (e.g., Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Cryns, 1977; Kluegel & Smith, 1982; Smith & Stone, 1989). For example, Cryns (1977) modified the Feagin Poverty Scale and developed the 9-item Economic Success Scale to evaluate beliefs about reasons for economic success. The Economic Success Scale (Cryns, 1977) consists of three subscales: *individualistic interpretation*, *structural interpretation*, and *fatalistic interpretation*, all of which correspond to the three dimensions or constructs of the Feagin Poverty Scale outlined above.

Moreover, Cozzarelli et al. (2001) tested the three constructs (*internal*, *external/societal*, and *fatalistic*) originally proposed by Feagin (1972; 1975). The principal component analysis with oblique rotation confirmed the two constructs (*internal* and *external*), although the *fatalistic* construct was replaced by the *cultural attribution* or the *belief about the subculture of poverty* construct.

Golding and Middleton (1982) developed a 12-item scale that measures attitudes toward the causes of poverty and identified four dimensions: *prodigality*, *injustice*, *ascribed deprivation*, and *fatalism*. *Prodigality* represents a negative perspective toward impoverished persons, such as a belief in "the wasteful spending patterns, financial ineptitude, imprudent breeding habits and sheer fecklessness or lack of motivation of the poor" (p. 197). *Injustice* indicates "a positive explanation of poverty as the converse of wealth and a direct consequence of the exploitative or unfair distribution of financial reward" (p. 197). The *ascribed deprivation* and *fatalism* dimensions are alternatives to the single dimension that Feagin (1972; 1975) identified as *fatalistic*. While scale items of the *ascribed deprivation* dimension are based on the cycle of deprivation, such as impoverished persons "never stood a chance because their parents were poor" and "come from places where there's little opportunity for most people" (Golding & Middleton, 1982, p. 197), the *fatalism* items measure a belief that people are poor because of random misfortune. The *fatalism* construct includes such items as poor people "are just unlucky individuals" (p. 197) and "have had a bad break at some point in their lives" (p. 197). Golding and Middleton's (1982) multidimensional causes of poverty align with the three dimensions by Feagin (1972, 1975) outlined above, that is, the *individualistic*, *structural*, and *fatalistic* explanations.

Rosenthal (1993) gathered more evidence for individualistic explanations of poverty by examining graduate social work students' beliefs about poverty and attitudes toward the poor. Through the development of two scales (The Belief in the Individual Cause of Poverty scale and The Antipathy to the Poor scale), Rosenthal measured the attitudes of graduate social work students toward impoverished people. The Belief in the Individual Cause of Poverty scale is a Likert-type measure that consists of four items which reflect a belief that poverty is the result of a person's flawed characteristics rather than society's restricted opportunities. On the other hand, the Antipathy to the Poor scale, a 10-item Likert-type scale, measures an individual's propensity for disliking poor persons or avoiding situations which involve contact with them. Overall, the existing measures outlined above suggest that attitude toward poverty and poor people is multidimensional.

Unidimensionality of the Attitude toward Poverty (ATP) Scale

In contrast to the trend of the multidimensionality of the attitude toward poverty and poor people, a unidimensional measure also exists. Atherton et al. (1993) published a brief research report on a scale for measuring university students' attitudes toward poverty. The Attitude toward Poverty (ATP) scale is a 37-item Likert-type scale that assesses attitude toward poverty and impoverished persons, with high scores indicating a belief that structural determinants are the primary causes of poverty while low scores indicate an individualistic explanation of poverty (Atherton et al., 1993). The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the original scale was .93 and the split-half (odd versus even) reliability was .87 (Atherton et al., 1993). The authors noted the ATP scale also demonstrated construct validity when they compared the response scores of social work and sociology students with business students.

Atherton et al. (1993) concluded this instrument was a single-factor scale even though they found ten factors when using the eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion. Considering that all of the 37 items loaded high (.33 or more) on factor 1 and the eigenvalues of the ten factors were higher than one, it seems likely that a complicated factor structure (cross factor loadings) was apparent. Nonetheless, the authors did not elaborate sufficiently to justify this conclusion. Similarly, Whalen (2005) identified 13 factors using the same principal components analysis employed by Atherton et al. (1993), yet concluded, without an in-depth discussion regarding the possibility of a multidimensional factor model of the ATP, that the ATP is unidimensional. In particular, Whalen (2005) specified that in both the original and current study at least two factor eigenvalues larger than 1.0 were identified; 11.40 for factor 1 and 2.80 for factor 2 (Atherton et al., 1993) and 8.66 for factor 1 and 2.71 for factor 2. In contrast to the results of Whalen's study, the potential multidimensionality of the ATP was verified by Rehner, Ishee, Salloum, and Velasques (1997). In their study, Rehner and colleagues determined that the ATP scale contained the following ten factors: *irresponsibility*; *determinism*; *no-fault circumstances*; *deficiency*; *complacency*; *unworthiness*; *identification*; *paternalism*; *denigration*; and *lost rights*.

Purpose of the Study

The contradictory findings regarding the dimensionality of the ATP scale prompted the authors' interest in clarifying how many dimensions this measure actually contains. The authors supposed that the ATP would contain more than one factor. This hypothesis was made after reviewing the literature and the number of items and factors found in comparable measures, such as Feagin's scale (1972, 11 items, three factors), Cryns' scale (1977, nine items, three factors), and Golding and Middleton's scale (1982, 12 items, four factors). Considering 37 items too numerous to be exclusively loaded on only one factor without cross-loadings (e.g., Rehner et al., 1997; Whalen, 2005), the authors aimed to retain only necessary items without cross-loading by using a series of factor retention procedures. These procedures included the eigenvalue-greater-than-one rule (Kaiser, 1960), Cattell's scree test (Cattell, 1966), and Velicer's minimum average partial method (MAP; Velicer, 1976). These procedures were selected in order to answer the authors' questions regarding factor dimensionality and to produce a short form that could be

administered more quickly than the original 37-item scale. Therefore, the objectives of this study were to: (1) identify the multidimensionality of the original 37-item ATP scale; (2) generate an alternative short form that has compatible levels of reliability with the original 37-item ATP scale; and (3) establish evidence for the validity of this short form to determine its suitability for measuring the poverty-related attitudes of university students.

METHODS

Design and Participants

A cross-sectional survey research design was used in this study. The survey was administered at the beginning of a fall semester at a mid-sized university located in central Canada. Prior to the inception of the data collection phase, the authors received approval from the host university's *Research Ethics Board* (REB). The participants were informed that the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at anytime without consequence. Three hundred and nineteen students participated in the study. The participants were selected from a total of 389 undergraduate students enrolled in one of three selected social work courses (two introductory and one third-year). Of this group of students, 329 met the authors' inclusion criterion that required students to major in a social science or human service profession, such as social work, psychology, sociology, political science, criminology, or nursing. The authors excluded sixty students because they either did not specify a major ($n = 49$) or they reported a major that differed from those outlined above ($n = 11$). Furthermore, ten students were removed from the data since their response scores were determined to be outliers through *Normtest* (DeCarlo, 1997). In cases where respondents did not respond to some of the scale items, the authors replaced the missing values with the mean of the response values for that specific scale item. The authors did not exclude any cases due to an inordinate number of missing items, since none of the cases exceeded their pre-determined threshold of expulsion, that is, 15% or more items missing on the original 37-item scale (Johnson, 2003).

The mean age of the sample was 21.5 years ($SD = 5.3$). Two hundred and seventy-one (85.0%) of the participants were female while 48 (15.0%) were male. As for ethnicity, the participants were primarily Caucasian ($n = 221$; 69.3%), followed by African-Canadian/Black ($n = 31$; 9.7%) and then Asian ($n = 14$; 4.4%). The median income for an individual student and her/his family was \$9,000 and \$80,000, respectively. The majority of the participants ($n = 253$; 79.4%) reported they were financially secure when the survey was administered. Refer to Table 1 for a complete demographic profile of the participants.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics (N = 319)

Demographic Variable		Characteristic
Age	<i>M</i>	21.5
	<i>SD</i>	5.3
Income	Individual Gross Income (<i>Median</i>)	\$9,000
	Family Gross Income (<i>Median</i>)	\$80,000
Gender	Female	271 (85.0%)
	Male	48 (15.0%)
Ethnicity	Caucasian	221 (69.3%)
	African-Canadian/Black	31 (9.7%)
	Asian	14 (4.4%)
	Multiethnic	13 (4.1%)
	Middle Eastern	6 (1.9%)
	Indo-Canadian	6 (1.9%)
	Aboriginal	6 (1.8%)
	Other	22 (6.7%)
Religion	Catholicism	139 (43.6%)
	Protestantism	74 (23.2%)
	Islam	12 (3.8%)
	Orthodox	10 (3.1%)
	Buddhism	3 (.9%)
	Hinduism	3 (.9%)
	None	46 (14.4%)
	Other	31 (9.7%)
	Missing	1 (.3%)
Political Affiliation	Conservative	49 (15.4%)
	Liberal	133 (41.7%)
	Social Democrat	26 (8.2%)
	Socialist	8 (2.5%)
	None	91 (28.5%)
	Other	8 (2.5%)
	Missing	4 (1.3%)
Financial Security	Very secure	42 (13.2%)
	Secure	116 (36.4%)
	Somewhat secure	95 (29.8%)
	Somewhat insecure	42 (13.2%)
	Insecure	13 (4.1%)
	Very insecure	8 (2.5%)
	Missing	3 (.9%)

Measurement Modification

The ATP scale, developed by Atherton et al. (1993), was used in this study. In the authors' judgment, there were two items on the original scale developed by Atherton et al. (1993) that required modification in order to better reflect the Canadian context. These items were "An able-bodied person using food stamps is ripping off the system" (p. 29) and "Poor people use food stamps wisely" (p. 29). Given that the Food Stamp Program is an American scheme not delivered by the Canadian welfare state (Lightman, 2003), the authors, after consulting with four Canadian social work academics (three at the full professor rank and all of whom had earned a graduate level social work degree in the United States), replaced the term 'food stamps' with 'welfare benefits' in the items outlined above.

Construction and Validation of the Alternative Short Form

In order to retain/discard items and identify the number of factors, the authors used the eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion (Kaiser, 1960), the conventional factor-loading-greater-than .40 criterion, the Keil-Wrigley criterion (Keil & Wrigley, 1960), reliability analysis, and the scree test (Catell, 1966). Specifically, principal axis factoring was conducted in order to maximize the covariance extracted by each successive factor. The authors chose the promax ($\kappa = 6$) solution because the scale items were expected to moderately correlate with each other. Items with factor loading less than .40 were discarded, while retained items were further tested for exclusion in order to reach the highest level of reliability (the corrected item-total correlation). The authors proposed the three-factor solution because the fourth factor (and above) did not have at least three salient loadings, as determined by the Keil-Wrigley criterion (Keil & Wrigley, 1960). The number of factors was evaluated by the scree plot and the interpretability of factors.

The authors established evidence for internal consistency for the short form and convergent validity between the original 37-item ATP scale and the short form. In addition, evidence for the known-groups validity was established through investigating the response differences between students who identified themselves as politically left-wing (i.e., liberals/social democrats/socialists) from those who identified themselves as politically right-wing (i.e., conservatives).

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

The authors tested the data for univariate and multivariate normality. A common guide for normal distribution is if univariate skewness and kurtosis are less than $|2.0|$ and $|7.0|$, respectively. According to these conventional cut-offs, all of the items were within the accepted normal distribution parameters.

In order to test for multivariate normality, the authors conducted *Normtest* (DeCarlo, 1997) and examined the suitability of the data for factor analysis by using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1970), as well as Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1950). The results showed that the KMO value for the data

was .92, which is greater than Kaiser's (1970) recommended value of .6, suggesting the variability in the data was sufficient for conducting factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity (1950) was statistically significant, which indicated that the variables were not independent. Hence, the data were deemed appropriate for conducting factor analysis.

ATP Short Form Development

The eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion initially extracted five factors for the ATP Short Form (eigenvalues: 5.88, 1.78, 1.39, 1.07, and 1.04); however, the last two factors were dropped because they lacked at least three salient loadings, as determined by the Keil-Wrigly criterion (Keil & Wrigley, 1960). The three factor solution was also confirmed after discarding 12 items that were less than the factor loading cut-off criteria (.40). Initially, there were 11 items for factor 1, eight items for factor 2, and six items for factor 3. From factor 1, three more items were eliminated to increase the alpha coefficient from .76 to .82, while one item was removed from factor 2, which resulted in an increase in the alpha coefficient from .62 to .75. All items were retained for factor 3 because item expulsion did not improve the alpha coefficient (.67). The factor structure of the 21-item short form of the original ATP scale is demonstrated in Table 2. All of the factor loadings of the three factors were equal or higher than .40: factor 1 (.44 – .76), factor 2 (.40 – .81), and factor 3 (.50 – .60). The authors also administered the scree test (Catell, 1966) and found a linear decline commencing with the fourth factor, which supports the three factor solutions: factor 1 (*personal deficiency*), factor 2 (*stigma*), and factor 3 (*structural perspective*).

The alpha coefficient for the total 21 items, which included factors 1, 2, and 3, was .87 (see Table 3). To compute the alpha coefficient for the total 21 items, the authors reversed the item scores for factor 3 because the items in factor 3 reflected structural explanations for poverty while factors 1 and 2 were individualistic and discriminatory explanations of poverty, respectively.

Validity

Convergent validity. Evidence for convergent validity was established by examining the correlation coefficients between the original 37-item scale and the ATP Short Form. Table 4 shows that the original 37-item ATP scale had statistically significant correlations across the ATP Short Form and its three subscales. All the subscales of the ATP Short Form had high positive correlations with the original 37-item ATP scale, ranging from .76 to .85, except for factor 3 that was negatively correlated (-.30).

Table 2: ATP Short Form (21 Items) Factor Structure and Loadings

Scale Item	Factor		
	Factor 1 ^a	Factor 2 ^b	Factor 3 ^c
Poor people are different from the rest of society.	.76	-.26	-.01
Poor people are dishonest.	.65	-.20	-.19
Most poor people are dirty.	.64	.04	.01
Poor people act differently.	.60	.13	.28
Children raised on welfare will never amount to anything.	.54	.01	.00
I believe poor people have a different set of values than do other people.	.48	.14	.08
Poor people generally have lower intelligence than nonpoor people.	.44	-.06	-.05
There is a lot of fraud among welfare recipients.	-.15	.81	.13
Some "poor" people live better than I do, considering all their benefits.	-.12	.77	.19
Poor people think they deserve to be supported.	.13	.63	.27
Welfare mothers have babies to get more money.	.17	.53	.01
An able-bodied person collecting welfare is ripping off the system.	-.15	.51	-.26
Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder.	-.01	.46	-.22
Welfare makes people lazy.	.17	.45	-.18
Benefits for poor people consume a major part of the federal budget.	.07	.40	-.23
People are poor due to circumstances beyond their control.	.08	.09	.60
I would support a program that resulted in higher taxes to support social programs for poor people.	-.02	-.04	.60
If I were poor, I would accept welfare benefits.	.07	.18	.58
People who are poor should not be blamed for their misfortune.	.00	.02	.51
Society has the responsibility to help poor people.	-.07	.00	.51
Poor people are discriminated against.	-.02	.20	.50

Note. Factor loadings $\geq .40$ are in boldface. Principal Axis Factoring and Promax (Kappa = 6).

^aFactor 1 = Personal Deficiency

^bFactor 2 = Stigma

^cFactor 3 = Structural Perspective

Table 3: Internal Consistency Reliability (Alpha Coefficient) of the ATP Short Form

Scale	Alpha Coefficients
ATP Short Form (21 Items – Total)	.87 ^a
Factor 1: Personal Deficiency (7 Items)	.82
Factor 2: Stigma (8 Items)	.75
Factor 3: Structural Perspective (6 Items)	.67

Note. $N = 319$.

^aThe alpha coefficient of the ATP Short Form (Total) was computed after reversing the response scores of the Factor 3 items because they reflect attitudes that are opposite to the items of both Factors 1 and 2.

Table 4: Correlations between the Original 37-item ATP Scale and the ATP Short Form

Scale	Correlations
ATP Short Form (21 Items - Total) ^b	.826*
Factor 1: Personal Deficiency (7 Items)	.846*
Factor 2: Stigma (8 Items)	.762*
Factor 3: Structural Perspective (6 Items)	-.302*

Note. The correlation between the ATP Short Form (total) and the original ATP scale was computed after reversing the response scores of the Factor 3 items because they reflect attitudes that are opposite to the items of both Factors 1 and 2. $N = 319$.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Known groups validity. The literature indicates that measures of attitudes toward poverty and impoverished persons usually include conceptually distinct explanations such as individualism and structuralism (Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Gil, 1981; Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991; Price et al., 1988; Ryan, 1976; Shek, 2002). Furthermore, there is empirical evidence which supports the relationship between political affiliation and attitudes toward poverty and impoverished persons (e.g., AuClaire, 1984; Davis, 1988; Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991; Ryan, 1976).

In our study, evidence for known-groups validity was established by investigating the attitudinal differences between students who identified themselves as politically left-wing (liberals/socialists), and those who identified themselves as politically right-wing (conservatives). An independent-samples *t*-test (one-tailed) was conducted to evaluate whether students who identified themselves as politically left-wing reported more structural attitudes toward poverty and impoverished persons than students who identified themselves as politically right-wing. Table 5 shows that the ATP Short Form could successfully differentiate between political orientation and attitude toward poverty and poor persons.

Table 5: Summary of Study Outcome Measures and Critical Comparison

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (one-tailed)
ATP Short Form (Total)					
Politically Right Wing (<i>n</i> = 49) (Conservatives)	70.0	9.7	-3.5	214	.000
Politically Left Wing (<i>n</i> = 167) (Liberals/Social Democrats/Socialists)	75.6	10.2			

DISCUSSION

In this study, the authors described the development of the short form of the original 37-item ATP scale (Atherton et al., 1993) that measures people's attitudes toward poverty and poor people. The authors identified the presented ATP Short Form as a robust alternative to the original ATP scale. The factor structure shows that all the items within the ATP Short Form had salient factor loadings on their respective factors equal to or greater than a cut-off of .40. In addition to establishing its reliability, the validity of the ATP Short Form was established through correlational analyses and independent samples *t*-tests.

The multidimensionality of the ATP Short Form was theoretically examined and empirically tested. The ATP Short Form includes three factors (*personal deficiency* – 7 items, *stigma* – 8 items, and *structural perspective* – 6 items), which measure a range of diverse attitudes toward poverty and poor people. In contrast to the unidimensionality reported by Atherton et al. (1993), the present study developed a theoretically and statistically sound alternative, the multidimensional ATP Short Form.

The authors' preliminary psychometric analyses indicated a high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for the alternative ATP Short Form ($\alpha = .87$). All of the subscales of the ATP Short Form exceeded the minimum acceptable level for internal consistency between 0.50 and 0.70 (Bowling, 2002).

Evidence for convergent validity was established by investigating the correlational relationships between the original 37-item scale with the ATP Short Form ($r = .83$).

Factor 3 (*structural perspective*) of the ATP Short Form had a significant negative correlation ($r = -.30$) with the original 37-item scale, while the other subscales were positively correlated with the original scale (between .76 and .85). This is most likely due to the fact that factor 3 of the ATP Short Form includes a unique dimension that measures a structural explanation of poverty, which is conceptually distinct from the personal deficiency and stigma perceptions of poverty. Evidence for known-groups validity was also supported because the independent samples *t*-test (one-tailed) suggested that students with a left-leaning political orientation demonstrated a more structural attitude toward poverty and poor people than did right-leaning students.

Despite the promising and clear findings regarding psychometric properties, there were limitations to this study. For instance, a convenience sample of university students who were primarily female, white, and middle class was used. Hence, replication studies with various populations who differ in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and political affiliation are necessary to boost the generalizability of this study's results. In addition, confirmatory factor analysis should be conducted within these replication studies in order to further establish evidence for the three constructs detected within the ATP Short Form.

The ATP Short Form, due to its reduced number of items, is potentially easier to administer and thus more efficient in collecting data than the original 37-item ATP scale. Furthermore, the multidimensionality of the ATP Short Form allows researchers to measure students' attitude toward poverty and impoverished persons in a much more comprehensive and accurate manner than the original ATP scale.

It is vital that university students aiming to work in the human service professions are sensitized to issues surrounding social justice, and the liberation and empowerment of under-served and under-represented population groups within society, including people experiencing poverty. This is because their attitudes will dictate the policy, programmatic, and practice decisions they make as human service professionals which, in turn, can either empower or harm low-income persons (Krumer-Nevo, Weiss-Gal, & Monnickendam, 2009; Mullaly, 2007).

The accreditation standards of social work programs within North America emphasize the importance of promoting social and economic justice and nondiscrimination. For example, the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) maintain that social work programs should provide curricula that foster the implementation of strategies that combat discrimination, oppression, economic deprivation and that promote social and economic justice (2001). Specifically, the EPAS states that social work education should help "prepare social workers to alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice" (p. 10). Furthermore, the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) Standards for Accreditation (2008) emphasize that "the curricula should reflect social work values that promote a professional commitment to analyze and eradicate oppressive social conditions" (p. 8). In light of these guidelines, the authors propose that the ATP Short Form developed in this study can assist university educators in detecting if their pedagogical efforts are sensitizing students to the structural

determinants of poverty, and thus boosting the likelihood of their becoming professionals that are committed to poverty reduction efforts.

References

- Atherton, C. R., Gemmel, R. J., Haagenstad, S., Holt, D. J., Jensen, L. A., O'Hara, D. F., et al. (1993). Measuring attitudes toward poverty: A new scale. *Social Work Research and Abstracts*, 29(4), 28-30. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxyuwindsor.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=9609194559&site=ehost-live>
- AuClaire, P. A. (1984). Public attitudes toward social welfare expenditures. *Social Work*, 29(2), 139-144. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.uwindsor.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=5273831&site=ehost-live>
- Bartlett, M. S. (1950). Tests of significance in factor analysis. *British Journal of Psychology, Statistical Section*, 3, 77-85.
- Bowling, A. (2002). *Research methods in health: Investigating health and health services* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Canadian Association for Social Work Education. (2008, May). *CASWE Standards for Accreditation*. Ottawa, ON: CASWE-ACFTS. Retrieved from www.caswe-acfts.ca
- Cattell, R. B. (1966). The scree test for number of factors. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 1(2), 245-276.
- Council on Social Work Education. (2001). *Education Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education*. Retrieved from http://www.wheelock.edu/socialwork.sw_policy.pdf
- Cozzarelli, C., Wilkinson, A. V., & Tagler, M. J. (2001). Attitudes toward the poor and attributions for poverty. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 207-227.
- Cryns, A. G. (1977). Social work education and student ideology: A multivariate study of professional socialization. *Journal of Education for Social Work*, 13, 44-51.
- Davis, L. F. (1988). Rural attitudes toward public welfare allocation. *Human Services in the Rural Environment*, 12(2), 11-19.
- DeCarlo, L. T. (1997). On the meaning and use of kurtosis. *Psychological Methods*, 2, 292-307.
- DiNitto, D. M. (2000). *Social welfare: Politics and public policy* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Feagin, J. R. (1972, November). Poverty: We still believe that God helps those who help themselves. *Psychology Today*, 101-129.
- Feagin, J. R. (1975). *Subordinating the poor: Welfare and American beliefs*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Gil, D. G. (1981). *Unraveling social policy: Theory, analysis, and political action toward social equality*. Rochester, VT: Schenkman.
- Golding, P., & Middleton, S. (1982). *Images of welfare: Press and public attitudes to poverty*. Oxford: Martin Robertson.
- Handler, J. F., & Hasenfeld, Y. (1991). *The moral construction of poverty: Welfare reform in America*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Johnson, M. L. (2003). *Lose something? Ways to find your missing data*. Retrieved from www.hsrh.houston.med.va.gov/Documents/MJ%20Missing%20Data%20PDS%20091703.ppt
- Kaiser, H. (1960). The application of electronic computers to factor analysis. *Educational and Psychological measurement*, 20, 141-151.
- Karger, H. J., & Stoesz, D. (1990). *American social welfare policy: A structural approach*. New York: Longman.
- Keil, D., & Wrigley, C. (1960). Effects upon the factorial solution of rotating varying number of factors. *American Psychologist*, 15, 383-394.
- Kluegel, J. R., & Smith, E. R. (1982). Whites' beliefs about Blacks' opportunity. *American Sociological Review*, 47, 518-532.
- Krumer-Nevo, M., Weiss-Gal, I., & Monnickendam, M. (2009). Poverty-aware social practice: A conceptual framework for social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 46(2), 225-243.
- Lightman, E. (2003). *Social policy in Canada*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- MacDonald, A. P. Jr. (1971). Relation of birth order to morality types and attitudes toward the poor. *Psychological Reports*, 29, 732.
- MacDonald, A. P. Jr. (1972). More on the protestant ethic. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 39(1), 116 – 122.
- Mullaly, B. (2007). *The new structural social work* (3rd ed.). Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Price, J. H., Desmond, S. M., Snyder, F. F., & Kimmel, S. R. (1988). Perceptions of family practice residents regarding health and poor patients. *Journal of Family Practice*, 27(6), 615-21.
- Rehner, T., Ishee, J., Salloum, M., & Velasques, D. (1997). Mississippi social workers' attitudes toward poverty and the poor. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 33(1), 131-142.
- Rosenthal, B. S. (1993). Graduate social work students' beliefs about poverty and attitudes toward the poor. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 7(1), 107-121.
- Ryan, W. (1976). *Blaming the victim*. New York: Vintage.

- Shek, D. T. (2002). Chinese adolescents' explanations of poverty: The perceived causes of poverty scale. *Adolescence*, 37(148), 789-803.
- Smith, K. B., & Stone, L. H. (1989). Rags, riches, and bootstraps: Beliefs about the causes of wealth and poverty. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 30(1), 93-107.
- Velicer, W. F. (1976). Determining the number of components from the matrix of partial correlations. *Psychometrika*, 41, 321-327.
- Whalen, M. H. (2005). *Measuring MSW student attitudes toward poverty and the poor: A tool for evaluating social work education outcomes*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Sung Hyun Yun, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Windsor, 401 Sunset Avenue, Windsor, ON N9B 3P4, Canada. Email: yshhsy@uwindsor.ca. The authors would appreciate being contacted by anyone planning on using the ATP short form.

Evaluating Qualitative Research for Social Work Practitioners

Cynthia A. Lietz

Luis E. Zayas

Abstract: *In the field of social work, practitioners must remain well informed regarding research advances in their respective areas. Proponents of evidence-based practice expect social workers to engage in practice informed by the best available evidence. Research studies conducted through the lens of qualitative inquiry provide important contributions to the social work knowledge base. In many cases, these studies can represent the best available research regarding emerging problems or application of evidence to diverse populations. Yet, despite the relevance of qualitative research, many social workers receive minimal training regarding qualitative methodology hindering their ability to conduct and evaluate research that uses qualitative methods. The purpose of this article is to provide students and practitioners some orientation regarding qualitative research methods and to highlight potential strategies researchers and consumers of research may use to evaluate the trustworthiness and quality of qualitative research. Specifically, the concept of trustworthiness is defined in the context of qualitative inquiry and questions social work practitioners can ask when evaluating the quality and applicability of a qualitative research study are provided.*

Keywords: *Qualitative, research methods, trustworthiness*

INTRODUCTION

As social workers intervene with individuals, families, and communities, it is critical to remain informed regarding the literature base and research advances specific to one's field of practice. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW)'s Code of Ethics (1999) asserts the importance of engaging in practice informed by prevailing research when it states "social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work." Similarly, the Council on Social Education (CSWE) recently identified ten core competencies of social work practice, one of which involves engaging in "research-informed practice and practice-informed research" (Holloway, Black, Hoffman, & Pierce, 2009, p. 2). Moreover, the evidence-based practice (EBP) movement has increased the expectation that social workers actively seek research findings related to their particular domain of practice (Howard, McMillen, & Pollio, 2003; Jenson, 2005). Specifically, EBP asserts social workers make decisions guided by research evidence working in conjunction with clinical expertise and client preferences (Gambrill, 2007; Gilgun, 2005; McNeece & Thyer, 2004).

Although most would agree with the importance of identifying and reading research articles related to one's area of practice, there are many challenges social workers face as they seek to achieve this goal (Adams, Matto, & LeCroy, 2009). First, social workers are under increased pressure to do more in less time. Caseloads are increasing and budget

Cynthia A. Lietz, Ph.D., and Luis E. Zayas, Ph.D., are Assistant Professors in the School of Social Work at Arizona State University in Phoenix.

cuts in many agencies require social workers to serve multiple roles. Additionally, many practitioners do not have access to library databases and other resources that may have been available to them while pursuing their education. Coupled with the challenges of finding the needed time and resources, even once social workers identify current research articles related to their field of practice, many struggle to ascertain the quality and applicability of a particular study to their work.

The purpose of this article is to address the question of quality and applicability as it relates to qualitative research in social work. A growing literature base stemming from qualitative research studies produce findings of relevance to social work practice. However, a recent study reviewing master's level social work syllabi found content regarding qualitative methods was "generally very limited" (Drisko, 2008, p. 89) suggesting many social workers receive limited education about evaluating qualitative methods. To help overcome this limitation, this article seeks to provide social work practitioners some guidance when assessing the methodological quality of studies that employ qualitative methods.

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research represents a "family of methods" stemming from a variety of traditions (Padgett, 2008 p. 1). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) explain, "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 4). Qualitative inquiry developed through a rich history of research seeking contextualized, in-depth descriptions that offer increased understanding.

Although qualitative inquiry is consistent in its naturalistic approach, researchers adopt a variety of perspectives that inform their work. Many qualitative research articles will identify or implicitly embrace a philosophical stance or paradigm to frame their work, such as post-positivist, social constructivist, or critical theory (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Morrow, 2007). Understanding the perspective used to guide the study will help the reader understand the epistemological position of the researchers and the methods used to answer the research question (Drisko, 1997). For example, post-positivist research seeks methods that are systematic, constructivist research asserts all knowledge is co-constructed thus prioritizing depth over methodological structure, and the critical paradigm calls for collaboration and corroboration with research participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). These paradigmatic stances impact the way researchers conceptualize their qualitative studies (Morrow, 2007). Therefore, as Caelli, Ray, and Mill (2003) suggest, "each qualitative approach needs to be evaluated in a manner that is congruent with its epistemological and methodological origins" (p. 7).

Creswell (1998) identifies five qualitative inquiry traditions: ethnography, phenomenology, biography/narrative, grounded theory, and case studies. Others also discuss critical, feminist, and action research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; DePoy, Hartman, & Haslett, 1999; Olesen, 2000), and new approaches continue to emerge. Many suggest embracing one of these approaches when conceptualizing a qualitative study is one way of enhancing the quality of the project as these frameworks rest on established

philosophical foundations. Also, certain strategies for rigor are deemed more suitable than others based on the study's approach (Padgett 2008). However, there has been a recent increase in qualitative studies using generalized qualitative methods rather than a specific tradition. Some suggest these generalized studies can produce useful findings when conducted systematically, even if they do not embrace one of the recognized qualitative approaches (Caelli et al., 2003; Patton, 2002).

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH: COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Research seeks the development of knowledge derived from empirical evidence. Data are collected and analyzed through procedures that are reported for review and evaluation, an important part of the scientific tradition. Despite these commonalities, there remain some specific differences between quantitative and qualitative research (Frankel, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rubin & Babbie, 2010). First, their purposes are often different. Quantitative research often seeks through measurement to test hypotheses, to determine outcomes and to draw generalizable conclusions to a defined population. Qualitative research tends to be interpretivist and seeks to understand a phenomenon in its context in greater depth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Morrow, 2007). It seeks to elucidate the nature of social practices, relationships, and beliefs along with the meaning of human experiences from the participants' point of view. Generally, qualitative studies differ from quantitative studies in that they are inductive rather than deductive, and they consider experiences within context rather than controlling for variables as in an experiment (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Quantitative studies may administer a standardized instrument to measure a variable with closed-ended items developed and tested for their ability to produce valid and reliable data. On the other hand, qualitative inquiry employs data collection strategies such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and archival reviews (Polkinghorne, 2005). Understanding these differences is the first step in evaluating research articles as it is essential that there is congruency between the purpose of the research and the methods chosen to achieve those aims (Frankel, 1999).

Once practitioners gain some clarity regarding the fundamental commonalities and differences between quantitative and qualitative research, social workers need to develop an understanding regarding how to evaluate the quality of studies conducted within each methodological tradition. Critique is a part of the research tradition. It is expected that researchers conduct their projects through procedures that are presented to the research community allowing readers to draw conclusions from findings that are appropriate considering each study's limitations. In quantitative research, studies are evaluated according to the level of reliability and validity related to the measurement procedures, the internal validity established through the design of the study, and the external validity or the degree to which the sampling procedures allowed for generalizability (Creswell, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Rubin & Babbie, 2010). In qualitative research, the process for ascertaining the quality of research is quite different according to its varied purposes and methods. The following section describes criteria used to evaluate qualitative

research along with the strategies used by researchers to increase the quality of their qualitative studies.

EVALUATING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The issue of evaluating qualitative research can prompt a lengthy debate about varied perspectives regarding epistemology and whether the activity of truth finding is even possible (Emden & Sandelowski, 1998; 1999; Kincheloe, 2001; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). Although we acknowledge the importance and relevance of this ongoing debate, our purpose here is not to engage in a philosophical discussion regarding ways of knowing, but to instead provide practitioners some practical ways for looking at the quality of qualitative research. We acknowledge there are differences of opinion on these issues. Therefore, we chose to utilize the ideas of Lincoln and Guba (1985) when discussing the topic of evaluating quality. Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001) conclude Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria to be the "gold standard" with "staying power" (p. 527). Their conceptualization represents the most cited standards for evaluating qualitative work and provides some practical direction for practitioners.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) seminal work identified criteria evaluating qualitative research. They suggest that qualitative studies should achieve "trustworthiness;" a study that represents as closely as possible the perspectives of the research participants. Consider that a research team wants to understand the experience of youth who age out of foster care and choose to conduct a series of in-depth interviews with a sample of young adults who identify with this experience. The researchers may have some preconceived ideas regarding what these participants might share. Despite these ideas, the study is trustworthy if steps are taken in the research procedures to ensure the perspectives of these participants are authentically gathered and accurately represented in the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) address this by considering four concepts that work together to achieve trustworthiness – credibility, transferability, auditability, and confirmability. These concepts are defined further to provide guidelines practitioners can use when evaluating qualitative studies. A series of strategies researchers can use to enhance the quality of qualitative research are also discussed.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the degree to which a study's findings represent the meanings of the research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Drisko (1997) suggests qualitative "interpretations must be authentic and accurate to the descriptions of the primary participants" (p. 191). Padgett (2008) explains that, to achieve credibility, qualitative research must manage the risk of research reactivity and bias. Research reactivity refers to the potential for the researcher or the study procedures to exert an impact on the participants thereby changing the findings of the study. For example, a researcher interested in family violence may design a study that videotapes family interactions for the purpose of understanding the nature of relationships shaped by aggression. However, the presence of the camera when researching a socially undesirable behavior will likely affect the way families interact. When researchers analyze these tapes, they will observe a family's interaction while being recorded, not a true representation of how that family

may have behaved if the camera were not present. Research reactivity can also occur based on how researchers develop and ask interview questions, display affirming or non-affirming non-verbal communication, or even through their degree of participation when engaging in observations. In order to manage this threat, qualitative researchers need to remain aware of how the research procedures may exert an influence on the credibility of the data.

In addition to reactivity, researchers also remain mindful regarding the potential impact of their own bias. Researcher bias involves how researchers' socio-political locations and preconceived ideas may shape the way they design the study and engage in analysis, thereby potentially leading to a misrepresentation of the data (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). For example, if a researcher wants to explore client satisfaction with a parent training program, the researcher may conduct a focus group in which participants discuss their experiences. If the researcher has a stake in the outcome, she may be tempted to engage in interviewing that encourages discussion of successful outcomes while failing to attend or draw out comments related to negative impressions of the program. Researcher bias can affect other aspects of a research project beyond data collection. The research question, decisions about research procedures, and the process of data analysis are all influenced to some degree by the experience, knowledge base and standpoint from which one comes to a research project (Horsburgh, 2003).

As qualitative researchers seek to achieve credibility, there are strategies that can be used to manage the threats of research reactivity and bias. To manage research reactivity, researchers may try to make their data gathering efforts less conspicuous and intrusive without deception. For example, video-recorders may be concealed or employed more discretely with knowledge of the participants. Researchers conducting participant-observation may choose at times to act less as a 'participant' and more as an 'observer' to minimize reactivity. Junker (1960) describes a continuum of degrees of engagement that ranges from *complete participant* to *observer as participant* to *participant as observer* and to *complete observer*. Remaining mindful regarding the potential impacts research procedures can have on the findings is an important part of conceptualizing a qualitative research study.

In addition to reactivity, qualitative researchers manage the threat of researcher bias as they seek to achieve credibility. To manage such bias, researchers engage in reflexivity and seek to build self-awareness regarding their own influence on the research project (Drisko, 1997). Reflexivity is defined by Horsburgh (2003) as "active acknowledgement by the researcher that her/his own actions and decisions will inevitably impact upon the meaning and context of the experience under investigation" (p. 308). Reflexivity involves a thoughtful consideration of one's standpoint through reflection that may occur through keeping a written journal and engaging in dialog with peers (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). Lietz and colleagues (2006) conducted a study that analyzed autobiographical accounts regarding Jewish identity. The researchers describe extensive efforts to remain reflexive. Specifically, a journal was kept during the analysis process that recorded the analysts reactions to what was being read. In addition, the research team met and engaged in lengthy debates about how the differences in spiritual identity within the research team brought diverse perspectives of the transcripts. Ultimately, the journal and meetings

brought a spirit of openness and accountability to the research process that the authors found highly important to their ability to offer a credible portrayal of the qualitative data.

Reflexivity is not an activity that occurs at one point in time, but instead represents a process that unfolds throughout the entire research process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Evidence of reflexivity may be discussed in the methods section of an article. Some authors may also include a statement of self disclosure where the researchers acknowledge their own bias and report their potential influence on the findings. Reflexivity is a critical part of managing research reactivity and bias and should be evident in the research article. Creswell and Miller (2000) suggest this is particularly relevant for studies stemming from a critical paradigm, although we contend reflexivity is an appropriate strategy to enhance trustworthiness in any qualitative research regardless of approach.

Other strategies to increase credibility include triangulation, member checking, and thick descriptions. Padgett (2008) defines triangulation as a concept adapted from navigational science involving the use of “two or more sources to achieve a comprehensive picture of a fixed point of reference” (p. 186). By gathering data from multiple sources (data triangulation) or utilizing multiple analysts to review the data (observer triangulation), qualitative researchers are able to achieve what Drisko (1997) refers to as “completeness” or an exhaustive response to the research question. Data triangulation might involve gathering data at multiple points in time or using varied data collection strategies such as interviews, focus groups, or observations (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation by observer involves having more than one researcher analyze the data to be sure important ideas are not missed and that there is some consistency to how data analysis is linked to the findings. Some projects may involve multiple observers and interviewers working independently to collect the same type of data. For projects stemming from a post-positivist perspective, training should be provided to standardize their approach and minimize bias and variability in the way data is collected. Having a list of guiding questions, for example, helps to focus the observations of multiple observers in recording the phenomenon of interest. Padgett (2008) suggests that triangulation is particularly relevant with case studies and grounded-theory approaches, including mixed method studies (methodological triangulation).

When performing certain qualitative data analyses, such as content analysis, it may also be important to compute the intra- or inter-rater reliability of coders or analysts (Shek, Tang & Han, 2005). Particularly studies coming from the post-positivist perspective prioritize the use of systematic procedures (Creswell & Miller, 2000). However, for qualitative traditions which assert reality is constructed intersubjectively, computing inter-rater reliability is not consistent with the philosophical underpinnings of this position. When evaluating qualitative research, it is important to remember that credibility stems from the “intended inquiry purposes;” thus credible research decisions are consistent with one’s purpose (Patton, 2002, p. 266), requiring practitioners to think critically and contextually when judging methodological decision making.

Member checking involves corroborating the research findings by seeking feedback from the research participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Padgett, 2008). Member

checking can involve including selected research participants in the data analysis or returning to a sample of participants with a draft of the findings to ascertain their sense of agreement with the findings (Shenton, 2004). For example, a researcher interested in resilience may interview adults who grew up in high risk circumstances to understand how some individuals come to cope effectively with adversity over time. The research team may identify a subset of their sample to provide feedback about the analysis. These individuals are provided a description of the preliminary analysis and are encouraged to offer feedback regarding whether the findings appear to reflect their own experiences. In some cases, specific questions may be used to guide this discussion when the researchers are seeking to clarify the meaning of certain quotes or accounts.

While some identify member checking to be one of the most valuable strategies for increasing trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lietz et al., 2006), others acknowledge that member checking can raise practical concerns such as not being able to locate research participants or assuming that a sample of members' experiences are similar enough that they will all agree to the findings (Padgett, 2008). Despite these concerns, member checking is particularly important for studies stemming from the critical paradigm as these studies seek collaboration and corroboration with research participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The notion of thick description derives from the tradition of interpretive ethnography in anthropology, and involves "deep, dense, detailed accounts" of a phenomenon of inquiry with particular consideration of the context(s) in which it occurs (Denzin, 1989, p. 83). According to Geertz (1975), cultures are "webs of significance" and their analysis involves "an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 5). In this tradition, to adequately study a phenomenon, it is important to obtain ample and contextual documentation from which to derive knowledgeable and insightful interpretations. Specifically, Creswell and Miller (2000) explain:

The purpose of thick description is that it creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feelings that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study. Thus credibility is established through the lens of readers who read a narrative account, and are transported into a setting or situation (p. 128-129).

Thick description is deemed particularly significant in constructivist research and in ethnographic studies. However, adequate description of the context and research procedures is relevant for qualitative research regardless of paradigmatic positions.

One strategy used to support the process of obtaining thick descriptions includes prolonged engagement. This involves conducting multiple interviews or spending extended time observing participants to achieve a complete look at the experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). While seeking to establish credibility, researchers may document the training of interviewers or observers, the frequency, duration, and intensity of data collection efforts, probing techniques, whether interviews were audio-recorded or notes were taken, and whether data saturation was achieved. Ample use and discussion of examples of thematic findings is also helpful. Although many journals cannot

accommodate lengthy descriptions, it remains the author's responsibility to adequately describe efforts taken to thoroughly account for the participants' experiences.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings are applicable or useful to theory, practice and future research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Sandelowski (1986) refers to this concept as "fittingness" suggesting transferability has to do with the degree to which findings fit situations outside of the study and are found meaningful. Qualitative research studies are not generalizable according to quantitative standards, because probability sampling is not employed. Instead, qualitative studies typically use purposive sampling to seek a specific group of participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied. The number of research participants is typically smaller than quantitative studies, because as researchers seek to study experiences in-depth, the quality and exhaustive nature of each case becomes more important than the number of participants (Polkinghorne, 1995). In addition, constructivists challenge the relevance of generalizability in qualitative research, "arguing that an emphasis on generalizing strips away the context that imbues a qualitative study with credibility" (Padgett, 2008, p. 182).

Although qualitative researchers do not seek generalizability, transferability is achieved when the findings have applicability to another setting, to theory, to practice, or to future research. Devers (1999) suggests for findings to achieve transferability, "...the contexts must be similar. Therefore, it is the role of the researcher to identify key aspects of the context from which the findings emerge and the extent to which they may be applicable to other contexts" (p. 1165). Therefore, as researchers seek to achieve transferability, thick descriptions are again relevant allowing readers to understand ways findings may be applicable to other settings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Shenton, 2004). The study's context should be described in detail and should relate to the context of other groups or settings (Devers, 1999). For example, in a current study, Zayas and colleagues are documenting the challenges that quality assurance professionals experienced in performing their functions in community-based behavioral health agencies. These study findings along with the suggestions that followed may be applicable in and transferable to other community agencies that provide similar services with comparable staff, resources, and clientele.

Finally, when assessing transferability, credibility is again important. Just as a study that produces reliable, but invalid data is not useful in quantitative research, qualitative studies that produce transferable findings that are not credible do not contribute to the knowledgebase.

Auditability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify the third criteria for evaluating qualitative research projects as auditability. Auditability refers to the degree to which research procedures are documented allowing someone outside the project to follow and critique the research process (Padgett, 2008). While quantitative research requires strict adherence to study procedures, qualitative methodology does allow for some flexibility. In fact, some

suggest high quality projects should demonstrate an iterative process that changes as the study unfolds (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Drisko, 1997; Frankel, 1999; Morrow, 2007). For example, interview instruments may be revised during early stages of data collection if questions are not yielding quality information. Proposed sample sizes may be increased or decreased based on data saturation. Also, codebook development involves painstaking deliberations among analysts based on their assessment of a certain number and type of data sources. When, why and how are such consequential decisions made? One way of addressing the need to make decisions and changes along the way is to provide detailed documentation throughout the research project. Projects stemming from a post-positivist perspective will commonly prioritize systematic procedures such as these (Creswell & Miller, 2000). However, we contend keeping an account of the research procedures and decisions seems relevant for all approaches.

The strategies used to increase auditability include keeping an audit trail and engaging in peer debriefing. An audit trail is a written account of the research process that includes a reporting of what occurred throughout the research project along with a demonstration of reflexivity. Mullins, Cheung, and Lietz (under review) recently conducted a project that involved describing families' descriptions of family preservation services. In this project, the authors chose to maintain the audit trail through Google Docs. This document included detailed accounts of each research meeting, the research decisions that were made throughout the process, and each member's reactions after engaging in any coding of the transcripts. By using an online document, any member of the team was able to go into and add to the document at any time, providing an efficient way to maintain a detailed account of the project from beginning to end. Although a copy or excerpts from the audit trail are rarely included in the research article, many authors will report the maintenance of an audit trail to demonstrate auditability. It can help to clarify concerns and increase the confidence of other researchers and reviewers about the conduct of the study.

Additionally, peer debriefing involves consulting with colleagues experienced in qualitative methodology (Padgett, 2008). By discussing research decisions and procedures, important feedback can be provided enhancing the quality of the project (Shenton, 2004). Peer debriefing can help to promote reflexivity allowing researchers to become more sensitized to the effects of their socio-political position. It can also enhance the research process by generating new ideas and identifying potential pitfalls related to the methodology. For example, in the study referenced earlier of Jewish identity (Lietz et al., 2006), the researcher engaged in the analysis of these autobiographical accounts did not personally identify with this spiritual tradition. In order to increase reflexivity and accountability, a decision was made to consult with another qualitative researcher who was Jewish to provide an insider's perspective to the data analysis process.

An audit trail is of particular relevance for post-positivist qualitative research while peer debriefing is seen by some as necessary for projects stemming from a critical standpoint (Creswell & Miller, 2000). However, some suggest that peer debriefing and auditing may represent "...potentially contaminating influences that interfere with the search for deep structures of meaning" in phenomenological approaches (Padgett, 2008,

p. 194). In other words, these approaches are divorced from the lived experience, possibly leading the researchers away from their intimate interaction with data.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the ability of others to confirm or corroborate the findings (Drisko, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Shenton (2004) asserts “steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work’s findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher” (p. 72). To achieve confirmability, a study demonstrates that the findings and data are clearly linked. There are several strategies that a researcher can use to increase a study’s confirmability. Already discussed were the benefits of member checking, peer debriefing, and audit trails. These strategies allow collaborators external to the research team an opportunity to evaluate or confirm the research procedures.

In addition, negative case analysis is a strategy used when a researcher deliberately seeks contrasting evidence, a strategy commonly employed in a grounded theory approach (Padgett, 2008). Frankel (1999) suggests looking at “deviant cases” is “perhaps most important” when determining whether the qualitative researcher achieved an adequate look at the research question (p. 344). An example might include a researcher who is exploring diverse perspectives regarding immigration policy. If the sample included a group of citizens who favored a particular policy position, negative case analysis would require a researcher to continue recruitment into the study until alternative or contrasting perspectives were represented in the findings. Negative case analysis is relevant not just during sampling but also throughout data analysis. It requires that analysts seek disconfirming evidence when analyzing their qualitative data. Creswell and Miller (2000) note that this strategy is especially useful for constructivist research. Drisko (1997) suggests seeking contradictory evidence and diverse experiences is essential to achieving a complete or exhaustive exploration of a phenomenon.

Table 1 provides a summary of research strategies available to increase the trustworthiness of a qualitative research project. Notwithstanding, no project is expected to employ all of these strategies. There may be some projects where triangulation seems particularly relevant, such as mixed-methods studies, whereas member checking may be critical in another, such as participatory inquiry. As one evaluates the quality of a qualitative project, while it is not necessary or even appropriate for a researcher to engage in all of the strategies provided in Table 1, there should be evidence that the researcher addressed research reactivity/bias and enhanced credibility, transferability, auditability, and confirmability in accordance with the paradigmatic lens of the project (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Table 1. Research Strategies for Increasing Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

Reflexivity	A thoughtful consideration of how a researcher's standpoint can influence the research.
Observer Triangulation	Using more than one researcher to analyze the data.
Data Triangulation	Collecting data from multiple sources such as interviews, focus groups and interviews.
Prolonged Engagement	Conducting multiple interviews or spending extended time with participants to achieve an exhaustive look at the experience.
Member Checking	Including participants in analysis or returning to a sample of participants to corroborate the findings.
Thick Descriptions	A thorough representation of the phenomenon of inquiry and its context as perceived and experienced by study participants.
Audit Trail	Keeping a detailed written account of the research procedures.
Peer Debriefing	Meeting with mentors or other researchers engaged in qualitative research to dialogue regarding research decisions.
Negative Case Analysis	Seeking contrasting evidence through sampling and analysis.

Sources: Lincoln and Guba (1985); Padgett (2008); Shenton (2004)

EVALUATING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FOR PRACTITIONERS

When evaluating qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest researchers plan and conduct their studies seeking to achieve trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is evaluated according to the degree to which the study is credible, transferable, auditable and confirmable. Table 1 summarizes ten strategies researchers can use to increase the quality of their qualitative studies and Table 2 provides a list of questions practitioners may ask to determine a study's trustworthiness. Important to remember is that not all strategies need to be utilized for a study to be trustworthy. It is for the reader to determine whether the strategies chosen align with the purpose, epistemological positioning, and design of the project, and whether they adequately manage threats to research reactivity and bias. In addition, evaluators of qualitative research articles should remain mindful of the impacts of these threats on both data collection and the analysis of the data. Regardless of how rigorous data analysis strategies are, data collection procedures must first collect data that are authentic and as exhaustive as possible, taking a comprehensive look at an experience in spatio-temporal context. Once a researcher has established that

data are “thick” and complete, strategies are once again taken to ensure that analytic processes lead to an accurate representation of the participants’ perspectives.

Table 2. Questions Practitioners Can Ask to Evaluate Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research Articles

✓	Did the research study identify a paradigmatic lens or research tradition in the article?
✓	If there was no tradition, were the purpose and epistemological positions made clear?
✓	Were the methods consistent with the tradition and/or purpose?
✓	How was research reactivity and bias managed in the study?
✓	What strategies were used to establish the credibility?
✓	How extensive or ‘thick’ were the descriptions supporting findings? Was the context adequately described?
✓	Were the findings applicable or useful for your population, setting or area of practice?
✓	Was there evidence of an audit trail and/or peer consultation on the project?
✓	How did the researchers corroborate their conclusions?
✓	To what degree do you find the research procedures increased the trustworthiness of the findings?

Considering heightened expectations that social work practitioners are able to identify, evaluate, and use research in their practice, knowledge of research procedures has become an essential part of being a social work practitioner. Rigorous qualitative research can offer important implications for social work practice. The purpose of this article is to provide social workers some concepts to help frame their evaluation of the trustworthiness of qualitative research. As practitioners become more confident regarding their understanding of qualitative methods, they can better ascertain the applicability or usefulness of qualitative studies in their practice settings.

References

- Adams, K. B., Matto, H. C., & LeCroy, C. W. (2009). Limitations of evidence-based practice for social work education: Unpacking the complexity. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 1-22.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Caelli, K., Ray, L., & Mill, J. (2003). Clear as mud: Toward greater clarity in generic qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(2), Article 1. Retrieved from <http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/pdf/caellietal.pdf>

- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130.
- Davies, D., & Dodd, J. (2002). Qualitative research and the question of rigor. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(2), 279-289.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- DePoy, E., Hartman, A., & Haslett, D. (1999). Critical action research: A model for social work knowing. *Social Work*, 44(6), 560-569.
- Devers, K. J. (1999). How will we know "good" qualitative research when we see it? Beginning the dialogue in health services research. *Health Services Research* 34(5), 1153-1188.
- Drisko, J. W. (1997). Strengthening qualitative studies and reports: Standards to promote academic integrity. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 33(1), 185-197.
- Drisko, J. W. (2008). How is qualitative research taught at the master's level? *Journal of Social Work Education*, 44(1), 85-101.
- Emden, C., & Sandelowski, M. (1998). The good, the bad and the relative, part one: Conceptions of goodness in qualitative research. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 4, 206-212.
- Emden, C., & Sandelowski, M. (1999). The good, the bad and the relative, part two: Goodness and the criterion problem in qualitative research. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 4, 2-7.
- Frankel, R. (1999). Standards of qualitative research. In B. Crabtree & W. Miller (Eds.), *Doing qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 333-346). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Gambrill, E. (2007). Social workers' code of ethics and accreditation standards as guides for choice. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 43(3), 447-462.
- Geertz, C. (1975). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. London: Hutchinson.
- Gilgun, J. (2005). The four cornerstones of evidence-based practice in social work. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 15(1), 52-61.
- Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and 'ethically important moments' in research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 261-280.

- Holloway, S., Black, P., Hoffman, K., & Pierce, D. (2009). *Some Considerations of the Import of the 2008 EPAS for Curriculum Design*. Retrieved from <http://www.cswe.org/CSWE/accreditation/2009-06+CompetencyPractice+Behavior.htm>
- Horsburgh, D. (2003). Evaluation of qualitative research. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 12, 307-312.
- Howard, M., McMillen, C., & Pollio, D. (2003). Teaching evidence-based practice: Toward a new paradigm for social work education. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 13(2), 234-259.
- Jenson, J. (2005). Connecting science to intervention: Advances, challenges, and the promise of evidence-based practice. *Social Work Research*, 29(3), 131-135.
- Johnson, R., & Waterfield, J. (2004). Making words count: the value of qualitative research. *Physiotherapy Research International*, 9(3), 121-131.
- Junker, B. H. (1960). *Field work: An introduction to the social sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kincheloe, J. (2001). Describing the bricolage: Conceptualizing a new rigor in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 679-692.
- Lietz, C. A., Langer, C., & Furman, R. (2006). Establishing trustworthiness in social work research: Implications from a study regarding spirituality. *Qualitative Social Work*, 5(4), 441-458.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 20, 15-25.
- McNeece, C. A., & Thyer, B. (2004). Evidence-based practice and social work. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 1(1), 7-25.
- Morrow, S. (2007). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: Conceptual foundations. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 209-235.
- National Association of Social Workers. (NASW). (1999). *Code of ethics*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Olesen, V. L. (2000). Feminisms and qualitative research at and into the millennium. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 215-255). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Padgett, D. (2008). *Qualitative methods in social work research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments of qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(3), 261- 283.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5-23.

- Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2010). *Research methods for social work*. Belmont, CA: Cengage/Brooks & Cole.
- Sandelowski, M. (1986). The problem of rigor in qualitative research. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 8(3), 27-37.
- Shek, D., Tang, V., & Han, X. (2005). Evaluation of evaluation studies using qualitative research methods in social work literature (1990-2003): Evidence that constitutes a wake-up call. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 15(3), 180-194.
- Shenton, A. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63-75.
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S., & Mandle, C. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 522-537.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Cynthia A. Lietz, School of Social Work, Arizona State University, 411 N. Central Ave, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ, 85004-0689. Email: clietz@asu.edu

Developing a Pedagogy of ITV Teaching Experience through a Teaching Circle

Kala Chakradhar
Llena Chavis

Abstract: *Objective: Distance learning through the use of interactive television (ITV) has been a part of Social Work education for more than two decades. Amidst abundant proof of the overall successes of ITV programs, there are limited accounts of the pedagogical experiences and challenges encountered by faculty who are called upon to teach distant learning courses. This paper describes a pedagogy of ITV teaching experience derived through a teaching circle in a rural undergraduate program. Method: A teaching circle comprised of four social work faculty enabled data gathering through focused discussion and critical thinking of the ITV teaching experience. Results: Extended preparation, augmenting instructional design and technology to enhance interactivity and instructor comfort with the technology emerge as key observations. Pragmatic barriers like the technology and restricted face-to-face contact are workable challenges. Conclusion: Social Work education would need a sincere examination of the interface of synchronous and asynchronous teaching with sensitivity to context and course curricula.*

Keywords: *ITV, teaching circle, pedagogy, rural, interaction, technology*

INTRODUCTION

With a century and a half of history, beginning with mail correspondence courses in Europe, 'distance education' has been described as the twenty-first century learner-centered model in higher education (Miller & King, 2003). Distance education has been defined [negatively] as "(f)ormalized instructional learning where the time/geographic situation constrains learning by not affording in-person contact between the student and instructor" (as cited by Miller & King, 2003, p.284). Raddon (2006) cites Perraton's definition of distance education as "an educational process in which a significant proportion of the teaching is conducted by someone removed in space and/or time from the learner" (p. 157). His analysis of the narratives of distance learners describes the 'absence' (space/time) as an opportunity for access amidst demanding work and family roles.

Advances in technology have revolutionized the medium of teaching for social work educators, proving that the traditional face to face method of teaching is not indispensable. Social work programs, particularly those located within larger institutions, have increasingly included distance learning, such as compressed video and interactive video technology (ITV/IVT). These distance learning options have become part of both graduate and undergraduate teaching delivery programs. Course management programs,

Kala Chakradhar, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor and Llena Chavis, MSW, LCSW, is a Lecturer, both in the Department of Social Work, Criminal Justice, and Gerontology at Murray State University in Murray, KY. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 33rd Annual National Institute on Social Work and Human Services in Rural Areas, Boise, Idaho, USA by the above authors and Ms. Merry Miller, ACSW, DCSW, LCSW (former Lecturer) and Mr. Jeff Wylie, ACSW, LCSW, Senior Lecturer in the same Department.

such as WebCT/Blackboard to enhance the delivery of such programs, are widespread (Pettracchi & Patchner, 2000; Vernon, Vakalahi, Pierce, Pittman-Munke & Adkins, 2009). According to Wilke and Vinton's (2006, p. 607-608) review, this growth has been a developmental process moving from the phase of 'off-campus programs' (faculty traveling to sites), to 'distributed education' (ITV), to 'computer-mediated education' (web-based courses), with at least sixteen percent of degree programs having gone this route. A recent online survey of social work programs (n=137) initiated by the Commission on Accreditation (Vernon et al., 2009) found that 40 percent of the programs at the BSW level and 50 percent at the MSW level were engaged in some form of distance education.

The outcomes of instruction using the ITV (interactive television) format have been evaluated predominantly in graduate programs out of large urban institutions. However, reports of outcome experiences in undergraduate programs have been limited, especially in rural areas (Pettracchi & Patchner, 2000; Vernon et al., 2009). Outcome studies show substantial evidence of the success of courses taught by ITV or the web in the form of student performance and feedback, particularly when drawing comparisons with traditional face-to-face methods (Freddolino & Sutherland, 2000; Huff, 2000; Pettracchi & Patchner, 2001; Potts, 2005). Nonetheless, such outcome studies have been limited in that they have not given adequate attention to the processes involved in the development of effective distance education programs. In particular, the description of processes of course evolution relative to the pedagogical experiences and challenges in streamlining a satisfactory learning environment has been scant.

The intent of this paper is to provide a case example of the processes involved, and challenges encountered, in creating and delivering an ITV program. This ITV based instruction was offered by social work faculty in a rural undergraduate program with limited ITV teaching experience. Observations of the collective experiences were gathered in a teaching circle formed by the faculty offering various undergraduate social work courses via ITV. The broad questions that this research addressed were: What was the sense of preparedness at venturing into teaching via ITV? What went into preparing faculty to teach via ITV generally and specifically for the course being taught? What were the teaching/course adaptations made to suit the new classroom environment? What were the lessons learned?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interactive video technology also referred to as Interactive Television (IVT/ITV), is a synchronous form of distance education, where learners are separated from the instructor by physical space but present at the same 'time.' The students and instructor are able to see and hear each other via television screens, though students and instructor are situated in different locations (Miller & King, 2003). Detailed descriptions of this classroom environment and the technology have been given by other studies (Coe Regan, 2008b; Pettracchi, 2000; Pettracchi & Patchner, 2000). The credibility of distance education has been established, both by social work programs and the Council on Social Work Education (Vernon et al., 2009). A fifteen-year review (1984-1998) of evaluations of the distance education mode of instruction by social work faculty reveals that it has equally

positive outcomes (compared to traditional face-to-face format), with ITV being the most widely used technology for course delivery (Abels, 2005a; Petracchi & Patchner, 2000).

The twin advantages of ITV instruction that clearly stand out are accessibility to nontraditional students in remote locations and proven cost effectiveness (Raymond, 2005). The interactive television alternative to course delivery offers rewards to students in rural areas in the form of opportunities for higher education. Specific to Social Work, benefits are seen in rural regions for the public child welfare specialty in the form of expanding the workforce and the right to service by competent practitioners (Glezakos, 2005; Kleinpeter, 2005). Coe Regan's review (2005) argues that the single most important challenge in higher education is assisting faculty to integrate technology into instruction.

Courses taught and reviewed for their learning outcomes have covered a major part of the curriculum (Freddolino & Sutherland, 2000; Potts & Hagan, 2000; Vernon et al., 2009; Wilke & Vinton, 2006), including specific courses on research (Petracchi, 2000; Petracchi & Patchner, 2000), statistics (Harrington, 1999), practice (Coe Regan & Elliott, 1999), policy (Huff, 2000), electives like substance abuse and child welfare (Hollister & McGee, 2000; Petracchi, 2000), and field instruction (McFall & Freddolino, 2000; Stocks & Freddolino, 2000; Wilke & Vinton, 2006). Entire programs that have adopted the ITV mode of course delivery have also been evaluated with reports of favorable outcomes (Wilke & Vinton, 2006). A recent report reveals that a majority of the distance education courses offered in social work are electives followed by practice courses (Vernon et al., 2009).

However, references to the experiences of instructors in the processes involved in adaptation to this technological change as well as improvisation required in course content and delivery have received limited focus (Mottet, 2000; Potts & Hagan, 2000; Smith & Wingerson, 2006; Stocks & Freddolino, 2000; Wolfson, Marsom, & Magnuson, 2005). This often necessary transition from traditional face-to-face (F2F) to technology enhanced instruction has not been devoid of faculty apprehension, with many having already "made peace with the technologies of instruction of face-to-face settings and mastered them to an acceptable degree of competence" (Natriello, 2005, p. 1890). New to distance education but otherwise experienced, instructors rely 'heavily' on the traditional classroom experience when beginning ITV instruction (Natriello, 2005; Vernon et al., 2009).

There is some limited reference to 'teaching' social work courses using ITV in the literature. Petracchi and Patchner (2001) compared live instruction and interactive televised teaching over two years. Sharing their teaching experience of a research methods course at the Master's level, they express that the distance instruction left students desiring more interaction with other students and with the instructor. Instructor availability was facilitated via telephone contact and e-mail. Facilitating interaction between sites was proposed by the authors as a plausible way of enhancing cohesion between the student groups within a course. They further emphasized that ensuring availability of course-related resources outside the classroom adds to effective course delivery.

The need to build a cohesive class and focus on engagement is alluded to by Potts and Hagan (2000) as well. They taught practice courses via ITV originating from the urban campus of California State University to rural campuses elsewhere in the state. Some strategies mentioned included traveling at least twice a semester to teach live, holding office hours and social events at off campus sites, adapting teaching techniques in the form of oral reports via technology between sites, and planning assignments requiring e-mail linkages between student pairs. Specific to the practice class, on-site remote coordinators facilitated role-play sessions and small group discussions. Over time, the course was taught with support from remote site liaisons.

At Michigan State University, field instruction using distance education was facilitated by accommodating employment-based placements by having Field Advisory Boards at each site (McFall & Freddolino, 2000). Additional assistance was also provided by liaisons, a local coordinator, a faculty associate, and adequate technical staff. This infrastructure reflected additional financial investments (Freddolino & Sutherland, 2000). Consequent recommendations called for looking into course-specific issues, and examining the compatibility between the technology and the specific course being taught. Their futuristic question, "What is the right mix of human and technological supports required to create comparable quality learning environments for undergraduate and graduate social work education?" (Freddolino & Sutherland, 2000, p. 127) is the same that was posed by the teaching circle discussed in this paper when it was formed.

A systems perspective framework highlights an equilibrium that has to be established through the combination of teaching, learning, interaction, technology, policy, and administration (Potts & Hagan, 2000). Sensing the unpreparedness of many institutions for the cultural changes that this initiative demands, a gap in terms of a clear pedagogical model is observed (Natriello, 2005; Wilke & Vinton, 2006). The pedagogical gap suggests the need for a more complete understanding of limitations and possibilities from the educator's perspective. The quest for gaining an understanding can serve as a learning opportunity (Natriello, 2003) and build knowledge for best practices (Forster & Washington, 2000; Miller & King, 2003).

Forster and Washington (2000) proposed a valuable model for developing and managing distance education programs, underscoring the importance of course adaptation when translating into interactive video format. They also emphasized the relationship between opportunities to develop pedagogical skills and teaching effectiveness of instructors. The need for development of pedagogical skills is reinforced by Ouellette, Westhuis, Marshall, and Chang's (2006) recommendation that future research target pedagogical discussions and online strategies that facilitate creation of a context for good learning and a better understanding of learning processes. Vernon and colleagues' (2009) survey identified a strong felt need for skill building in teaching when it came to distance education. They found that it is not a matter of simply transferring teaching strategies from the traditional setting and is in fact a source of pressure for instructors in efficacy building. The need to examine various pedagogical strategies in ITV teaching environments is especially stressed in the context of undergraduate social work programs in rural regions which are required to operate distance education programs to meet the need for BSW graduates (Hylton & Albers, 2007; Vernon et al., 2009).

Against this backdrop, this paper draws upon the initial ITV teaching experiences of a group of faculty in a rural undergraduate social work program who also started with uncertain pedagogical agendas. At the time, the instructors had been teaching in the ITV format for at least three semesters and a maximum of five semesters. During this developmental phase, the instructors struggled through course adaptations, invented suitable teaching and learning strategies and attempted to discover what strategies worked and what failed. The formation of a teaching circle was envisaged to encourage knowledge building, affirm mutual teaching experience and evolve workable strategies. The following sections will address the outcome of the experiences of this teaching circle which met over two semesters to review the ITV format of teaching. It is hoped that this will add valuable knowledge to undergraduate social work teachers in distance education, particularly in rural areas.

METHOD

The method of study is based on the outcomes of a teaching circle comprised of four social work faculty. The teaching circle focused discussions on eight social work courses taught using the interactive television (ITV) medium. Teaching circles have been described as a form of “peer review of teaching practices” driven by the shared purpose of understanding pedagogical goals and critically thinking through the processes involved in student learning (Marshall, 2008, p. 418).

In one of the only published reports found on teaching circles and social work (Strom-Gottfried & Dunlap, 2004) the authors bring attention to the limited training received by social work educators in equipping themselves for teaching. Comparing teaching circles to learning communities, Strom-Gottfried and Dunlap (2004, p. 67) see teaching circles as “structured to carve out convenient, consistent, common time for faculty to develop instructional skills and knowledge.” In listing the scope of the variety of curriculum issues that can form the content for teaching circles, they briefly describe at least a dozen of them. Technology-enhanced teaching is listed as one potential theme for teaching circles, in addition to sub-themes like creating effective assignments, supporting minority students, ethical dilemmas, grading standards and successes, to name a few. Their report also addresses some ways to evaluate the effectiveness of these teaching circles. For the purpose of this paper, the authors subscribe to the foregoing description and purpose in the use of the teaching circle to gain knowledge and enhance teaching skills in the ITV teaching environment. The teaching circle here has also been used as a data gathering tool through mirroring a focus group experience in a large part, in the validation building exercise.

The teaching circle met monthly during the fall semester of 2007 and spring of 2008. To guide and steer the discussion, a set of questions was presented by the first author for the teaching circle members to address in the context of their ITV teaching. These questions helped members look at their personal reactions to teaching via ITV, the preparations made, and changes adopted in course construction and method of instruction. In addition, through these questions, members were able to look at the teaching process (teacher- or learner-centered), specific instructional strategies used to

reduce social/psychological distance, differential student responses/attitudes between sites (if sensed), and individually analyze course-specific experiences.

Background to the Teaching Circle

The seeds for attempting an extended ITV form of distance education spanning various Social Work courses were sown in the spring of 2005, when a few introductory courses were already being delivered in the format. There were apprehensions in terms of the new format of delivery and embarrassments about how appearances on screen would play out. What seemed to drive decisions to forge ahead with the plan was to be able to be pioneers in the Western Kentucky region, where the university serves 18 counties including counties in the neighboring States of Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Tennessee. The primary teaching site being this Mid-Western State University, two of the distance sites were within 60 miles and another two about 100-140 miles away. A potential population was ensured since a good contingent of students was already commuting these distances. All these geographic areas had community colleges whose Associate degrees could be linked with the undergraduate social work courses. With substantial leg work accomplished by the Program Director, negotiating logistics with communities and colleges, social work courses were incrementally added to the long distance ITV schedule. The cumulative ITV teaching effort culminated in the first cohort of exclusive distance education students graduating in December of 2007.

Once the entire BSW degree became accessible via ITV, the implications were that it was no longer one or two professors, but every professor in the department teaching via ITV. The ambivalence about the logistics of implementation essentially included the question of how conventionally taught courses would be adapted to the ITV situation. Given a brief 10 minute orientation on the use of the technology, the reality was that one just took the plunge. It thus evolved into a 'learning by doing' set of strategies, testing the waters in the respective classes that were taught.

An ethical commitment to be able to deliver education to those with limited access to the same became another key motivation. The University's mission of academic outreach coupled with the Social Work program's mission of equipping students to serve rural and underserved populations complemented this commitment. Serving a predominantly rural area, a considerable number of post-secondary students are not only first-generation college degree seekers, but also potential candidates to add to the rural social work workforce. The distance education option offers many non-traditional students the flexibility to balance multiple roles and pursue a college degree.

However, a pervasive sense prevailed about wanting to know what was working and what was not and needing to validate classroom experiences, especially in the light of diverse Social Work courses that were being taught. Thus evolved the idea of a teaching circle to put forth individual pedagogical experiences and look for streams of convergence and unique strategies that were course-specific. An added purpose was to search for available literature to validate and build a knowledge base.

Paul Abels' (2005a) edited work on 'Distance Education in Social Work' was read by all members of the teaching circle and served as the starting point in initiating the

discussion. Giving exclusive attention to ITV in Social Work as a form of distance education, Abels predicts this form of teaching to be a viable medium for future social workers to attain their professional degrees, especially those from rural locations. Based on experience of its use in Master's level programs, Abels highlights the positive and comparable outcomes on student performance (vs. F2F classrooms). With due acknowledgement of the limitations of the absence of face-to-face (F2F) opportunities, glitches in technology, and restricted visual cues, social work's sensitivity and familiarity with group dynamics is seen as an asset that could open possibilities to work through these barriers. Abels shows that whole programs have been taught ITV at the Master's level, but experiences in BSW programs receive less mention. He in turn expresses that little attention has been devoted to instructor experiences, the teaching process and preparation for a new class environment.

With this background, the teaching circle, in monthly sessions during the fall semester of 2007 and spring of 2008, uncovered, through an inductive process, some of the common strategies that developed and evolved. In addition to some unique course-specific approaches to course delivery, the barriers that were experienced came to light as well.

RESULTS OF THE TEACHING CIRCLE EXPERIENCE

As a warm-up exercise, the members of the teaching circle shared thoughts on the unique context of the ITV teaching experience and individual responses to it. To begin with, what was available in terms of instructor preparation was a ten minute quick orientation to the ITV equipment by a technician. Primarily this included becoming familiar with alternate use of camera views of the instructor, computer (when being used) and a document camera (a modified chalkboard equivalent called the 'Elmo' used as a presentation tool) and use of microphones. Instructors were then immersed in the classroom situation, and it was noted that they relied on conventional F2F preparation skills to adapt courses to the ITV context.

Initially, because it was new to all in the program, little could be done to share experiences, especially when elements can be course-specific. Common to all, though, was the classroom context, in which one was on camera, able to view one's self on-screen, with one screen displaying the multiple site-based classrooms (a maximum of 4) in rotation. Students from the main site were seated in the classroom F2F with the instructor. The instructor must be stationary, on an elevated platform, facing the cameras, but must shift between the computer and the 'Elmo.' When using these forms of technology assistance, the instructor is blocked from students' sight at the distant sites, as only one view at a time is possible. Teaching circle members noted that not being able to move around the classroom was a barrier; due to the camera not being able to follow the instructor, the instructor must sit behind a desk in a positioned chair. As discussed in the teaching circle, this decreases the instructor's ability to interact with students—even distance learners—on a physical level.

A virtual learning environment in the form of Blackboard was a tool that the instructors came to use extensively to make up for the void in direct F2F communication.

Blackboard is a virtual course management system which consists of an integrated set of communication, assessment, and content management tools that instructors can use to mimic a regular classroom. The asynchronous communication enables e-mails, discussion boards, posting of course materials, links, announcements, tests, and grades (Littlefield, 2002).

Personal reactions to the prospect of teaching various courses through ITV varied among the members. The various courses taught by the members of this teaching circle via ITV included Introduction to Social Work, Social Work Practice with Individuals, Social work Practice with Families and Groups, Social Welfare Policy and Services, Social Work Research Methods, Quantitative Analysis (Statistics), Senior Seminar and Field Seminar. At that point, each of these courses had been taught in the ITV class environment for a minimum of two semesters and a maximum of five semesters. The last mentioned (Field Seminar) had just been started in the ITV format. It seemed, for the instructor teaching the Practice with Families and Groups class, that if it were a matter of choice she would have opted out, due to concerns of effectiveness of the ITV platform. This instructor described adapting method and materials as the course proceeded, sometimes stumbling on effective techniques. Another instructor had some previous exposure, having participated in state-wide class sessions delivered via ITV, and therefore had realistic expectations as well as a sense of the limitations. For the other members, there was a prevailing sense of unease and reluctance in venturing into an unfamiliar teaching setting, but the commitment to making education accessible and a desire to succeed became the driving forces. The following sections give an account of individual course teaching experiences as reflected upon and shared by respective instructors.

Introduction to Social Work. For the instructor teaching this course, the class size was relatively large (40-60) with the course taught mostly through lectures. Students at this beginning level tend to be less familiar with technology. Due to the limitations in opportunities for interaction, student engagement was considered important. A way to facilitate a positive situation for this class was establishing ground rules the first day of class. Giving an orientation to students on the class environment, student and instructor expectations, technology issues and especially for the distant sites “what happens if” situations (e.g., if communication was lost), was one strategy that worked well. Encouraging students, especially remote site students, to ask questions, and acknowledge the challenges of ITV (“this was hard” and it was best “to lay it on the table”) helped in the acclimation process for both instructor and students.

Student reticence to interact via ITV was a barrier for interaction during daily class discussions; encouraging students not just on the first day of class but also throughout the semester was deemed very important. Due to the inability of the instructor to see if a hand is raised at an offsite, a student must press a button and begin speaking; then the camera will move to their site. Only when a student from the distance site talks by pressing on the microphone is the camera activated and the site/student visible to the instructor. If students from an extended campus are not willing to take that initiative, they could feel disconnected from the class process. However, a rotation feature allows the instructor to view the sites automatically in rotation at about 30 second intervals. The

instructor also stressed the importance of contrasting the ITV experience from watching TV for entertainment, where the culture is to multitask or take breaks while only partly engaging with the medium. This multi-tasking is evident in the form of students conversing with each other, briefly leaving the classroom, using their laptops or reading other material. Students at off sites who view the instructor on a TV monitor had a tendency to slip into this culture and lose sight of the fact that they were being watched. The alternate distraction can convey lack of attention or indifference, and students in turn can miss important course content. The reminder of the TV culture analogy gradually helped students stay on task in the classroom and restrict break-taking.

Social Work Practice I (SW with individuals). Teaching the class posed a challenge, considering the interaction required and the need to use role-play as a teaching tool. Conducting role-plays becomes even more difficult when there is just one student at a site with no partner in a role-play situation. The first semester that this course was taught via ITV, role-play seemed impossible: students were given role-play assignments to try at home and discuss the experiences in class. Realizing that this did not accomplish any skill learning, the instructor attempted a “hot seat” exercise. In a “hot seat” exercise, a student is assigned a role by the instructor and students take turns in the “hot seat,” or social worker’s chair, in order to complete a psychosocial evaluation. One student would start out and when that student began to struggle, another student in the class would volunteer or be called upon to jump into the “hot seat” to complete the psychosocial assessment. Initially the exercise seemed awkward, since some students could not see each other due to the camera position, and there seemed to be a disconnect between on-site and offsite students’ level of involvement (a higher participation level from the on-site students was noted). Over time both on- and offsite students began moving into the “hot seat” without prompting. The “hot seat” game is now used weekly in this practice class to help students practice, develop, and critique their own skills. The learning curve was seen to be staggered and slower among distant site students when compared to on-site students.

Social Welfare Policy and Services. Implementation of ITV instruction in this class was not particularly difficult. The instructor had already innovated teaching strategies to be learner-centered, given the nature of a policy course. One such strategy was to give students chapter questions to complete before a class session so as to initiate interaction and discussion. However, small groups that were used to enable discussions in a live classroom were not as practical in an ITV classroom. Consequently at the distant sites, the limited students present became one discussion group. An additional difficulty with the small group technique was the difficulty the instructor had monitoring the participation of offsite participants. Panel presentations of policy analysis by student groups were not necessarily smooth due to difficulties in across-site communication. For instance, groups of three to four students that constituted a panel for a policy presentation were not all visible on screen and individual students would have to position themselves for the camera to be seen and heard. It seemed that the students at the main site had a “better” experience than the remote site students. As is evident, in this course traditional teaching methods were transferred to the ITV classroom and the nuances of the technology were accommodated.

Social Work with Families and Groups (Practice II). Teaching this course posed more challenges since the traditional format involved observation of in-class task groups as a learning exercise. With distant sites, mixing groups (between sites) was not practical and groups had to be formed within sites. For a better evaluation experience the instructor chose to travel to sites. Students, however, were not able to observe closely when watching a group onscreen. Closely observing non-verbal behaviors like facial expressions is very difficult, since zoom features are extremely limited on the ITV cameras. Trying out specific group exercises in class had to be withheld when there were only two or three students at a particular distance site. One strategy that was somewhat effective was to have students from all sites come to the main campus for a 'lab day,' where group demonstrations were presented. Though it was time-consuming and required extensive advance planning and coordinating with other faculty and class schedules, it was a worthwhile learning experience that accomplished course goals. Therefore, in this instance the instructor had to move away from the ITV classroom to the traditional F2F format to facilitate a better learning and skill-building experience.

Social Work Research. The already intimidating nature of research and statistics courses is made no better in an ITV learning environment. Strategies that were used in traditional classrooms to initiate favorable attitudes toward learning research methods were transferred to the ITV setting in the form of warm-up exercises, discussions of research as a professional activity, and soliciting student opinions and reactions. One way of enhancing the inclusion experience and replicating the feel of an onsite classroom was inclusion of presentations of research proposals. The primary objective was to have students present ideas to their peers and to interact and gain exposure to different contexts and issues. Geographical and other site-specific differences came into play in the kind of ideas presented. Wherever possible, in-class exercises were included that would get students involved. Sample student papers were also distributed as a way to get students oriented to writing literature reviews and proposals. It also helped to re-organize course content, space out topics and stagger the pace of course delivery in keeping with class readiness. This monitoring of pace was especially a felt need in the ITV class setting where students who are otherwise reluctant to ask questions/clarifications feel intimidated by the camera and microphones. The instructor takes on a more active role in posing questions and reviewing to get a sense of where the class is in relation to the topic.

Quantitative Analysis. Challenging mathematics content and (at least for the less computer-savvy) difficult software (Excel) pose challenges even in a conventional classroom. For ITV application, topics had to be simplified and the pace of delivery adapted to be more learner-centered than they are conventionally. As mentioned with the research course, the pace of student learning and understanding directed the pace of the course. In a F2F classroom, nonverbal cues from students give the instructor additional indicators of response to course material which are nonexistent (for distant site students) in the ITV classroom environment. Student dissatisfaction can also be heightened due to inability to meet the instructor after class. An added advantage was that students were able to use their laptops, when they had one, to simultaneously try out exercises on Excel. Laptops were made available for the students during class time at a couple of distant

sites. This was a feature that was accommodated wherein students in a traditional setting would work in a computer lab.

In the core assignment for this class, students administered a survey to the class, their sample, using the e-mail feature on Blackboard. They then worked through data organization and analysis steps to produce a report. The survey exercise not only got all the sites connected but also sensitized students to the vagaries of data collection and response rates. Although this assignment was originally part of a traditional teaching strategy, in the ITV classroom it served the much needed purpose of inclusion and connectedness. For this instructor, what was seen as paramount was ensuring a comparable immediacy of connectedness with students at all sites through prompt e-mail communication, clarification, and reaching out when there were concerns. Student comfort was enhanced when the instructor was in control and able to stay prepared in advance. This preparedness included faxing/mailing handouts/quizzes to sites, judicious use of Blackboard, and making backup plans in anticipation of possible technology failures. The last-minute inclusion of an interesting handout or quick print-out of a quiz or exercise before class is not a possibility in the ITV class. Visits to the remote sites when class schedules permitted were an essential complement.

Senior Seminar. This is the final course in the curriculum, a pre-field class taken by students in their last academic semester in preparation for their field experience. These seminars were greatly enhanced by the generous utilization of the Blackboard tool to post reading material, guidelines and the like, where previously they were printed and handed out in class. A switch to electronic mail to receive student assignments was made. Following a semester of planning logistics, students from the 'Social Work Practice with Individuals' class were enlisted to partner with students in this class for role play sessions to practice interviewing. Both classes were scheduled at the same time and therefore made this a mutually beneficial exercise. Other technological aids like videos and YouTube clips, also used in conventional classroom settings, complemented teaching efforts. Guest speakers from various sites also helped to enhance student interest. The instructor ensured availability through e-mail and cell phone access and also visited the sites at least twice in a semester. One of these visits was to plan field placement interviews and thus served a dual purpose.

Field Education. Based on student distribution among the sites, faculty liaisons were the best way to plan periodic face-to-face seminars with their respective field groups. At the time of this research there were three instructors who shared the internship supervision. On occasion, use of liaisons to facilitate seminars from other sites has added to the quality of the experience. However, budget constraints have made continued use of liaisons uncertain. The ITV classroom setup is only used for two seminars (first and last) when the entire field intern group is on the same chronological level. During the rest of the internship each site (section) meets as an independent group. It has been observed that the instruction and supervision work better when there is an on-site liaison available. The lack of this option requires the respective faculty member to travel to the site. The latter option is the practice even in a non-ITV situation. For the ITV setup, the creation of virtual discussion groups on Blackboard has been so well received and used that it

mirrors the face-to-face experience. In addition, Podcasts have been used to disseminate information prior to the discussion board exercise.

DISCUSSION

In reviewing the data gathered through the teaching circle experience, it was found that basic to making this form of synchronous distance learning work is being able to create a new classroom culture and a new learning community. The physical distance between students and between students and instructor created by the geographical distance and the bridging of this distance by the technology requires the instructor to facilitate this connection. This connection has to complement the basic commitment to instruction and engagement.

Common to all instructors was the need to get prepared for the different teaching environment. Assessing one's own technological and pedagogical skills and preparedness to adapt course content and teaching style is tied to taking those first steps. Feeling one's pulse on what will drive commitment to teaching in this format is also a good reflective exercise, especially for the less technologically savvy or the skeptical. Also evident, especially in a discipline like Social Work, was that planning course delivery and instruction is course-specific, driven by course content and expected outcomes. The limitations posed by restricted F2F contact and minimal sensing of nonverbal cues has to be compensated for by more active instructor presence and interaction. For the practice-oriented classes requiring role plays and group exercises, there is a suggestion about making a minimal class size requirement for off-sites to prevent the possibility of ending up with a site with only one student present. The monitoring of an optimum class size, however, will not compensate for the severe limitation in sensing nonverbal cues on screen (student-student and student-instructor) and the value of live interaction. The absence of nonverbal cues is indeed an imposing gap in the learning experience in practice-oriented classes with no known immediate solutions.

Thus, preparation and advance planning are essential with respect to tasks like copying and faxing or e-mailing handouts or materials for class exercises, scanning documents where necessary, and posting them on Blackboard in advance. Although not far removed from preparing for conventional classes, there is the added urgency to get the materials to the distant sites in time for use. In bridging the 'social distance,' asking direct questions of various sites by calling on students by names, and using the camera and zoom feature to focus on students when they speak (especially in presentations) helps in facilitating inclusion and group cohesion. The skill involved in engaging students in this environment includes the appropriate and planned interspersing of videos, PowerPoint, YouTube clips and Elmo with the lecture delivery. One instructor used news clips that featured information from the respective counties and cities (relevant to the class) to generate interest and participation. Although these strategies are no different from those common to on-campus classes, they could be deliberate choices necessary in the ITV class environment.

Apart from facilitating active interaction through inviting participation and strategic questioning within the classroom, an instructor's virtual presence through an alternate

learning environment like Blackboard is almost indispensable. Use of the virtual discussion board feature on Blackboard holds promise especially when the class is asynchronous, as in internship periods or online classes. While ITV students do have a synchronous classroom experience, the participation on asynchronous discussion boards fluctuates based on the assigned topics and participation credits. Additional supports at remote sites in the form of site coordinators or liaisons are a welcome boon. Flexibility to navigate the unexpected, travel to sites, and train oneself makes the ITV form of teaching an interesting challenge. At this institution, instructors do receive travel support every semester for the trips they make to the remote sites. At the beginning of every semester administrative coordinators at every distant site give an update of equipment and other infrastructure support available at their sites for the benefit of the instructors.

Barriers and Solutions

Some barriers identified in this ITV teaching experience range from issues with *technology* to *relational struggles*, including student-faculty relationships, classroom or peer-student relationships, classroom dynamics, and struggles with *time and logistics* around classroom planning and implementation. The technological barriers were the most pervasive, followed by relational issues, especially when considering the social work curriculum and courses that are oriented towards interactional skill-building. Initial struggles with students being intimidated by the technology (especially on-site students who were used to face-to-face classes) and technology failures impeding class projects were ubiquitous experiences. The more instructors overcame these barriers themselves over repeated semesters, the more they were able to put new students in these classes at ease.

Instructors also had to learn to anticipate and work with technological glitches at all sites and be prepared to compromise on class time, interruptions, and abrupt endings to a class session. Responding to such glitches by instructors requires establishing contact as soon as possible with the affected sites within or outside the classroom (as the situation demands) to keep them tuned in and give them updates of what they missed (if anything). Here, the 'Announcement' feature on Blackboard enables connecting with and updating the class as a whole. When visiting and teaching from other sites, one encounters dissimilar equipment that needs attention. With the increased use of cell phones becoming concerns even in non-ITV class settings, ITV classrooms have had the added challenge of cell phone sounds interfering with the transmission equipment. Laptop use by students within the classroom often needs monitoring; at distant sites the laptops could complement instructor use of Power Points or the web by providing more clarity. However, the absence of the instructor at the distant site perhaps encourages students to use the laptop for non-class purposes as well.

With regards to what could be termed *relational barriers*, the struggles include not being able to better understand student concerns, dealing with students competing with one another for instructor attention, and issues with helping students interact across sites. Attempts to form "open relationships" with students and address mutual fears (students' and professors') around readiness to try something different were ongoing. The negotiation of ongoing relational barriers calls for a certain cultural sensitivity to the

demographic and geographic differences and the dynamics that emerge, probable 'site specific tensions,' alliances, and discords. Offsite students do not have the advantage of an informal class discussion before and after class with the instructor. This constraint to meeting the instructor may need consideration when organizing class time. It thus demands more time than 'traditional classrooms' without any compensation or accommodations with respect to extended 'ITV air time.'

In discussing instructor investment the teaching circle members were drawn to look at the impact on teaching evaluations as well. Discovering that the ITV teaching setting did not engender favorable teaching evaluations, particularly in the experimental stages, there were suggestions about considering a different evaluation tool. This tool should take into consideration the instructor's skill level with ITV instruction, and should not include a tool that was used to evaluate teaching in traditional class settings.

Summary of Findings

It is evident that there is a need for understanding and accepting ITV instruction in rural educational settings. There are, however, manifest issues related to overcoming technical difficulties, integrating off-site with on-site classrooms, and developing relationships between instructors and their students. The primary struggle seems to be developing new pathways for classroom "interaction" removed from more traditional methods of teaching.

The experiences of the teaching circle discussed here reveal an increased need for instructors to engage in planning and exploring alternative methods of technology to augment teaching, as well as a willingness to travel to alternative sites. Improvement of interaction among students, as well as between students and instructors, requires a high level of creativity geared to the special dynamics of the course and the particular composition of a given group of students.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Having unraveled the pedagogical experiences of the teaching circle in a Midwestern rural undergraduate setting, a parallel exercise was to search for affirmation of the circle's conclusions by reviewing the literature. Circle members assigned themselves the task of delving into the literature to validate the discoveries made and understand the philosophy that guided the instruction. This concluding section attempts to identify the most relevant findings of the general literature that support the observations of this teaching circle.

For example, Glezakos (2005) compiled a list of 'lessons learned' from distance education that capture much of the experience of the teaching circle. This includes anxiety-provoking limited computer literacy, camera shyness, negative student reactions to an instructor's dry sense of humor, sharing the classroom with site-coordinators or other assistants, and the effect of student evaluations on faculty.

Also in keeping with the teaching circle is the conclusion that the two most important challenges are technological barriers (e.g., quality of audio/video, time loss, disruptions)

and the loss of F2F/personal contact (of instructor) with students and between students (Coe Regan, 2005; Hylton & Albers, 2007).

The repeated emphasis on 'interaction' or 'interactivity' is evident as quintessential in the literature on distance education. Instructors need to work towards infusing such interaction, especially due to loss of F2F contact (Coe Regan, 2005; Darabi, Sikorski, & Harvey, 2006; Dupin-Bryant, 2004; Knowles, 2002; Roblyer & Wiencke, 2003). Instructor comfort with the technology has a direct bearing on the teaching quality and management of classroom logistics (Coe Regan, 2008a; Darabi et al., 2006). So, the more instructional design components that instructors can add to augment meaningful interactions, facilitating collaboration between and among students and themselves, the greater the success (Roblyer & Wiencke, 2003). Some of the recommended exercises from the literature that were used by the teaching circle included ice-breakers, small group exercises, team-building activities, debates, and problem-solving sessions. The instructional design also included use of technology such as e-mail, podcasts, Blackboard, and blogs to maximize interactivity (Beldarrain, 2006; Kim, 2008; Roblyer & Wiencke, 2003).

In addition, it is stressed that instructors need to share responsibility with students to promote interactive learning and create an atmosphere supportive of favorable interaction and learner autonomy. Evidence of high instructor engagement is seen to be reflected in "timely, consistent and useful feedback" to students (Roblyer & Wiencke, 2003, p. 89).

Instructors in the teaching circle were also cognizant that a not so easy but encouraging note for current and future instructors is to have realistic expectations and to be aware that student non-responsiveness may influence teaching and quality of teacher-student relationships. As reported by Mottet (2000), the lack of nonverbal responsiveness may not relate to quality of instruction and need not color effectiveness as distance teachers. In the substantial absence of visual cues, paying attention to voice tones, pitch, and developing a 'keen sense of listening' are recommended (Mottet, 2000).

It became clear to the teaching circle that a competent distance teacher needs to manage the logistical aspects of the course (coordinate with personnel, have back-up plans, plan synchronous and asynchronous activities, ensure access to and functioning of equipment) (Darabi et al., 2006) and be more of a facilitator and mentor than lecturer or expert (Knowles, 2002). It is better for instructors to be "overprepared" and to make greater use of audio-visual materials, graphics and creative questioning techniques to draw students to engage and form a cohesive learning community. Conscious use of humor, monitoring one's nonverbal behavior, and paying attention to the pace of instruction are also recommended (as cited by Coe Regan, 2005; Hylton & Albers, 2007).

Abels (2005b, p. 18) alludes to McFall and Freddolino's "action steps" to meet fieldwork requirements for students in Social Work distance education programs. These action steps include resource building (community and office), enhancing cultural sensitivity to agency uniqueness, and giving due regard to confidentiality issues (individual and organizational). Glezakos (2005) suggests that knowledge of site-specific practice issues and diversity characteristics would assist in gauging student expectations and negotiating course requirements.

The teaching circle experience confirmed the finding of Kleinpeter (2005) that, in order to counter the challenges of the multi-site classroom environment, it is productive to engage site coordinators who can complement instruction by offering experiential exercises and discussions, proctoring exams, and conducting student advising. Technological support, monetary compensation and travel benefits have been emphasized in the literature as well. All of these combined, namely, training and support, have been underscored as most helpful contributors to successful course delivery (Coe Regan, 2005).

'Technology and teaching' is not a part of the accredited graduate curriculum in Social Work. Is a possible implication of this study that utilization of technology should be incorporated into the Social Work curriculum? Rural communities have a definite need as indicated by this research. At a minimum, graduate programs in rural communities may want to consider this as a possibility.

Despite substantial support from Social Work faculty for distance education, the existing gap in pedagogical experiential reports is obvious and in need of being bridged. While there have been scattered efforts at capacity building through training and even certification to teach in distance education (Abels, 2005c), published reports of the instructors' own pedagogical, course-specific discoveries are still scant. This research effort has made a beginning, and a continuation of this thread is recommended. Within this aspect of competence and its dissemination, proposals have also been made to reward ITV instructors through special recognition by tenure systems (Coe Regan, 2005).

In recognizing the value and credibility of the ITV format of distance education to empower 'underserved populations,' there is continued stress on the need to track graduates of this distance education stream. Such a follow-up would help recognize the professional performance, market value and competencies gained through a nonconventional medium of instruction (Potts, 2005).

On a concluding note, distance education is no longer a nonconventional approach given the changing demographics of students and growing demand for online education. For example, 24 percent of today's students are single parents, of whom 75 percent are nontraditional students (Gonick, 2010). The growing demand for online education (Ahala, 2009; Kim & Bonk, 2006; Vernon et al., 2009) and the complementary role of technologies such as wikis, blogs, podcasts, e-books and the like have opened avenues to examine the suitable integration of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning. Asynchronous teaching methods enhance cognitive participation while synchronous methods enable personal participation (Hrastinski, 2008).

Chernish and associates' (2009) comparative assessment of students in traditional, ITV and online classroom environments revealed no difference in learner achievement levels. However, students in the traditional classroom had the highest 'comfort' levels and 'group' sense, whereas students in the online environment had the lowest. Having established a firm foothold in the arena of distance education, social work educators have to undertake the task of understanding and establishing the goodness of fit given the variables of contexts and needs (curricular and learner). Ahala's (2009) examination of

the interface of online and F2F instruction with specific reference to social work education advocating for a blended learning approach is a case in point.

Last but not the least, the members of this teaching circle strongly recommend the use of the teaching circle for pedagogical pursuits as well as a knowledge building research tool. In today's environment of increased accountability, evidence-based practice and cost-efficient, quality-assured delivery of service, the teaching circle provides just the platform to realize some of these objectives.

References

- Abels, P. (Ed.) (2005a). *Distance education in social work: Planning, teaching and learning*. New York: Springer Publishing.
- Abels, P. (2005b). The way to distance education. In P. Abels (Ed.), *Distance education in social work: Planning, teaching and learning* (pp. 3-22). New York: Springer Publishing.
- Abels, P. (2005c). Issues and the future of distance education. In P. Abels (Ed.), *Distance education in social work: Planning, teaching and learning* (pp.143-154). New York: Springer Publishing.
- Ahala, J. S. (2009). Blended learning as a new approach to social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 277-288.
- Beldarrain, Y. (2006). Distance education trends: Integrating new technologies to foster student interaction and collaboration. *Distance Education*, 27(2), 139-153.
- Chernish, W. N., De Franco, A. L., Lindner, J. R., & Dooley, K. E. (2009). Does it matter? Analyzing the results of three different learning delivery methods. In A. Orellana, T. L. Hudgins, & M. Simonson (Eds.), *The perfect online course: Best practices for designing and teaching* (pp. 23-35). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Coe Regan, J. R. (2005). Faculty issues in distance education. In P. Abels (Ed.), *Distance education in social work: Planning, teaching and learning* (pp. 119-139). New York: Springer Publishing.
- Coe Regan, J. R. (2008a). Pedagogical rationale for technology supported teaching and learning. In J. R. Coe Regan & P. P. Freddolino (Eds.), *Integrating technology into the social work curriculum* (pp. 5-8). Alexandria, VA: CSWE Press.
- Coe Regan, J. R. (2008b). Overview of technology tools available for teaching and learning. In J. R. Coe Regan & P. P. Freddolino (Eds.), *Integrating technology into the social work curriculum* (pp. 9-16). Alexandria, VA: CSWE Press.
- Coe Regan, J. R., & Elliott, D. (1999). An evaluation of teaching direct practice courses in a distance education program for rural settings. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 35(3), 353-365.

- Darabi, A. A., Sikorski, E. G., & Harvey, R. B. (2006). Validated competencies for distance teaching. *Distance Education*, 27(1), 105-122.
- Dupin-Bryant, P. A. (2004). Teaching styles of interactive television instructors: A descriptive study. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 18(1), 39-50.
- Freddolino, P. P., & Sutherland, C. A. (2000). Assessing the comparability of classroom environments in graduate social work education delivered via interactive instructional television. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(1), 115-129.
- Forster, M., & Washington, E. (2000). A model for developing and managing distance education programs using interactive video technology. *Journal of Social Work*, 36(1), 147-158.
- Glezakos, A. (2005). The tribulations and rewards of distance education teaching. In P. Abels (Ed.), *Distance education in social work: Planning, teaching and learning* (pp. 71-83). New York: Springer Publishing.
- Gonick, L. (2010). Future of higher education. *Educause Quarterly*, 33(1). Retrieved from <http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Quarterly/EDUCAUSEQuarterlyMagazineVolum/FutureofHigherEducation/199391>
- Harrington, D. (1999). Teaching statistics: A comparison of traditional classroom & programmed instruction/distance learning approaches. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 35(3), 343-352.
- Hollister, C. D., & McGee, G. (2000). Delivering substance abuse and child welfare content through interactive television. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 10(4), 217-227.
- Hrastinski, S. (2008). A study of asynchronous and synchronous e-learning methods discovered that each supports different purposes. *Educause Quarterly*, 31(4), 51-55.
- Huff, M. T. (2000). A comparison study of live instruction versus interactive television for teaching MSW students critical thinking skills. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 10(4), 400-416.
- Hylton, M. E., & Albers, E. (2007). The use of interactive television in a BSW Program: Comparing experiences of distance and campus-based learners. *The Journal of Baccalaureate Education*, 13(1), 52-66.
- Kim, C. (2008). Using email to enable e³ (effective, efficient and engaging) learning. *Distance Education*, 29(2), 187-198.
- Kim, K., & Bonk, C. J. (2006). The future of online teaching and learning in higher education: The survey says.... *Educause Quarterly*, 29(4), 22-30.
- Kleinpeter, C. B. (2005). Managing the distance: Distance education administration. In P. Abels (Ed.), *Distance education in social work: Planning, teaching and learning* (pp. 43-59). New York: Springer Publishing.

- Knowles, A. J. (2002). E-learning in social work education: Emerging pedagogical and policy issues. *Currents: New Scholarships in the Human Services*, 1(1). Calgary: University of Calgary Press. Retrieved from http://www.fsw.ucalgary.ca/currents/articles/documents/Currents_knowles_v1_n1.pdf
- Littlefield, M. B. (2002). Student-identified strengths and challenges of using Blackboard for group projects in a social work course. *Advances in Social Work*, 3(1), 72-83.
- Marshall, M. J. (2008). Teaching circles: Supporting shared work and professional development. *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture*, 8(3), 413-431.
- McFall, J. P., & Freddolino, P. P. (2000). Quality and comparability in distance field education: Lessons learned from comparing three program sites. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36 (2), 293-307.
- Miller, T. W., & King, F. B. (2003). Distance education: Pedagogy & best practices in the new millennium. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 6(3), 283-297.
- Mottet, T. P. (2000). Interactive television instructors' perceptions of students' nonverbal responsiveness and their influence on distance teaching. *Communication Education*, 49(2), 146-164.
- Natriello, G. (2005). Modest changes, revolutionary possibilities: Distance learning and the future of education. *Teachers College Record*, 107(8) 1885-1904.
- Ouellette, P. M., Westhuis, D., Marshall, E., & Chang, V. (2006). The acquisition of social work interviewing skills in a web-based & classroom instructional environment: Results of a study. *Journal of Technology in Human Sciences*, 24(4), 53-75.
- Pettracchi, H. E. (2000). Distance education: What do our students tell us? *Research on Social Work Practice*, 10(3), 362-376.
- Pettracchi, H. E., & Patchner, M. A. (2000). Social work students and their learning environment: A comparison of interactive television, face-to-face instruction and the traditional classroom. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(2), 335-346.
- Pettracchi, H. E., & Patchner, M. A. (2001). A comparison of live instruction and interactive televised teaching: A 2-year assessment of teaching an MSW research methods course. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 11(1), 108-117.
- Potts, M. K. (2005). Measuring the distance: Evaluation of distance education in social work. In P. Abels (Ed.), *Distance education in social work: Planning, teaching and learning* (pp. 97-117). New York: Springer Publishing.
- Potts, M. K., & Hagan, C. B. (2000). Going the distance: Using systems theory to design, implement and evaluate a distance education program. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(1), 131-145.

- Raddon, A. (2006). Absence as opportunity: Learning outside the institutional space and time. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 30(2), 157-167.
- Raymond, F. B. (2005). The history of distance education in social work and the evolution of distance education modalities. In P. Abels (Ed.), *Distance education in social work: Planning, teaching and learning* (pp. 23-40). New York: Springer Publishing.
- Roblyer, M. D., & Wiencke, W. R. (2003). Design and use of a rubric to assess and encourage interactive qualities in distance courses. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 17(2), 77-98.
- Smith, P. R., & Wingerson, N. W. (2006). Is the centrality of relationship in social work at risk with IVT? *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 24(3), 23-37.
- Stocks, J. T., & Freddolino, P. P. (2000). Enhancing computer-mediated teaching through interactivity: The second iteration of a world-wide web-based graduate social work course. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 10(4), 505-518.
- Strom-Gottfried, K., & Dunlap, K. M. (2004). Talking about teaching: Curricula for improving instructor's classroom performance. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 24(3/4), 65-78.
- Vernon, R., Vakalahi, H., Pierce, D., Pittman-Munke, P., & Adkins, L. F. (2009). Distance education programs in social work: Current and emerging trends. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 263-276.
- Wilke, D., & Vinton, L. (2006). Evaluation of the first web-based advanced standing MSW program. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 42(3), 607-620.
- Wolfson, G. K., Marsom, G., & Magnuson, C. W. (2005). Teaching notes changing the nature of discourse: Teaching field seminars online. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 41(2), 355-361.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Kala Chakradhar, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Social Work, Criminal Justice & Gerontology, 101S Applied Science Bldg., Murray State University, Murray, KY 42071. Email: kala.chakradhar@murraystate.edu

Enhancing Self-Awareness: A Practical Strategy to Train Culturally Responsive Social Work Students

Nalini J. Negi
Kimberly A. Bender
Rich Furman
Dawnovise N. Fowler
Julia Clark Prickett

Abstract: *A primary goal of social justice educators is to engage students in a process of self-discovery, with the goal of helping them recognize their own biases, develop empathy, and become better prepared for culturally responsive practice. While social work educators are mandated with the important task of training future social workers in culturally responsive practice with diverse populations, practical strategies on how to do so are scant. This article introduces a teaching exercise, the Ethnic Roots Assignment, which has been shown qualitatively to aid students in developing self-awareness, a key component of culturally competent social work practice. Practical suggestions for classroom utilization, common challenges, and past student responses to participating in the exercise are provided. The dissemination of such a teaching exercise can increase the field's resources for addressing the important goal of cultural competence training.*

Keywords: *Cultural competence, cultural responsiveness, self-awareness, teaching exercise*

INTRODUCTION

Social work's specialized focus on social justice requires an active engagement in finding the best strategies to address the needs of marginalized and ethnically/racially diverse populations. The importance of effectively reaching marginalized groups is especially compelling in the face of ethnic/racial minority populations' underutilization of social services (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 2004). In an attempt to narrow the health disparities gap, the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and the Social Work Code of Ethics underscore the importance of cultural competence training in social work education. These standards require that all American social work graduates understand forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and demonstrate the ability to practice with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' backgrounds (CSWE, 2008; NASW, 2001).

Schools of social work have undertaken the difficult task of preparing social work students to facilitate and promote culturally responsive services. Social work educators and researchers have long identified barriers to this important task, including the lack of specific operational understanding of CSWE's mandates (Horner & Borrero, 1981;

Nalini J. Negi, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Kimberly A. Bender, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. Rich Furman, Ph.D., is Director and Associate Professor in the Social Work Program at the University of Washington, Tacoma. Dawnovise N. Fowler, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Texas, Austin. Julia Clark Prickett, MSW, is a student in the School of Social Work at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Roberts & Smith, 2002), and students' lack of readiness for understanding multicultural content (Lee & Greene, 2003). In response to the complexities of training social workers for culturally competent practice, educational models such as the Newcastle model (Gibbons & Gray, 2002) and Sakina-Mama's (2001) educational model have been developed to emphasize the value of experiential learning in social work education. However, the literature remains limited on *practical* teaching assignments that incorporate experiential methods to enhance students' preparation and motivation for culturally responsive social work practice.

This article outlines one such practical strategy, referred to as the Ethnic Roots Assignment, which has been used over several semesters in a graduate social justice course at a public university in the Southwest. Initial qualitative results have demonstrated the effectiveness of the assignment in engaging students in a process of self exploration and investment in culturally responsive social work practice (Bender, Negi, & Fowler, 2010). With a focus on offering specific strategies for facilitating student self-awareness, this article describes detailed components of the Ethnic Roots Assignment, practical suggestions for implementation (including classroom utilization and navigating potential challenges), and concludes with student responses to the assignment.

The Importance of Self-Awareness in Building Cultural Competency

Social work educators, in developing teaching models for culturally competent social work practice, have emphasized the important role of self-awareness development in preparing culturally responsive social workers (Colvin-Burque, Zugazaga, & Davis-Maye, 2007; Messinger, 2004). Guided by CSWE educational principles to "engage diversity and difference in practice," social work educators encourage students to "gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups" (CSWE, 2008, p. 5). Solely addressing the importance of learning about the *other's* culture is not sufficient as it absolves individuals from learning and understanding the impact of their own sociopolitical and ethnocentric biases on their work with clients who are racially/ethnically or culturally different from themselves. Cultural competence training must then not only encourage the continued aspiration to learn about other cultures but also aim to foster self-awareness (Green et al., 2005; Lum, 2007).

In order to prepare students for culturally responsive social work practice, social work educators have developed specific educational models to facilitate student self-reflection. For example, Sakina-Mama's (2001) educational model emphasizes the need to incorporate an understanding and acceptance of one's own culture, knowledge of other cultures, and recognition of diversity as normative. This is a paradigm that can be used as a framework for selecting readings, assignments, and facilitating classroom discussions. Gibbons and Gray's (2002) Newcastle Model similarly stresses the importance of experiential learning as instrumental in teaching cultural competence. They emphasize teaching social work students the meaning of their own personal cultural history and how to integrate this knowledge in social work practice. For example, they underscore the importance of using relevant videos, professionals in the field, and client groups to elicit critical analysis, foster student exploration and discovery, and develop intervention skills.

The Self and Other Awareness Project (SOAP) model of instruction has also been developed as an instrument for training in cultural competence (Colvin-Burque et al., 2007). Recognizing self-awareness as a vital component of cultural competence, the SOAP model goes into more depth to identify various teaching strategies in fostering self-exploration. Through the use of large and small group activities, journal assignments, videos, guest speakers, and self-evaluations, this model has demonstrated potential to enhance student self-awareness (Colvin-Burque et al., 2007). Each of these models contributes greatly towards the development of pedagogical frameworks that allow for the selection of teaching materials that will instigate student self-awareness. However, there is a gap in literature that outlines specific teaching exercises to build self-awareness within these frameworks.

THE ETHNIC ROOTS ASSIGNMENT

One specific educational exercise that has qualitatively demonstrated promise in increasing student self-awareness regarding cultural responsiveness is the Ethnic Roots Assignment (Bender, Negi, & Fowler, 2010). This paper assignment asks students to explore their families' ethnic roots and processes of acculturation as well as the implications of their families' experiences of their own sense of ethnic or racial identity. It also asks students to translate this renewed understanding of self to their ideas regarding cultural competence. To do so, the assignment requires students to interview their family members to gather family histories with a particular emphasis on their ancestors' processes of immigration. In addition, students are required to apply required readings regarding theories of acculturation and White-conformity to develop a critical understanding of how their family members, and, in turn, the students themselves have integrated into mainstream U.S. society (see McLemore, Romo, & Baker, 2001). In this assignment, the process of acculturation is understood as being on a continuum influenced by families' degree of membership in the dominant culture or racial group as well as generations of immigration in the United States. For a more detailed description of the Ethnic Roots Assignment, see Appendix A. The Ethnic Roots Assignment is essentially a two-part exercise that requires students to both investigate their family history and then to write about this process in a paper. The pedagogical rationale for each section of the exercise is discussed below.

Investigating Family History

Furthering one's self-awareness is a multi-layered and dynamic process (Richardson & Molinaro, 1996). Assigning students to interview their family members is one important way that students can begin to access their own personal history. Family interviews may give students a venue to ask their family members potentially difficult questions regarding race, ethnicity, immigration, and acculturation. The goal of this investigative exercise is to unravel patterns of privilege and discrimination that have affected their families' trajectories in the U.S.

The interview process requires students to assign meaning to facts given to them by their family members by incorporating theory about acculturation processes. This experience of eliciting information from family members will vary by student and

provide important learning opportunities (Bender et al., 2010). Students should be able to critically examine the meaning behind what information is shared and not shared by family members. For example, for some students, family history may have been purposefully forgotten, untold, or kept a secret. This can often be an important component of the assignment and students need to be cognizant of these nuances.

Writing the Ethnic Roots Paper

The second part of the Ethnic Roots Assignment requires students to organize their experiences and thoughts, regarding the exercise of investigating their backgrounds, into a structured paper (See Appendix A). The process of investigating their own ethnic roots may be the first time many students have attempted to personalize the experience of immigration, marginalization, and acculturation. Although this process of self-discovery and self-awareness is a highly complex and mostly internal process, the paper assignment allows students to develop their thoughts more cohesively as well as provides the instructor a glimpse of this internal process. The paper is inherently descriptive but it also requires students to critically analyze these historical facts about their family through a theoretical understanding of acculturation.

IMPLEMENTING THE ETHNIC ROOTS ASSIGNMENT

Classroom Utilization

Authentic use of self. Educators using the Ethnic Roots Assignment are placed in the challenging position of creating an authentic and open atmosphere in the classroom. An introduction by the instructor at the beginning of the semester that acknowledges her/his own identity in regards to ethnic/racial background, age, gender, and experience may set the stage for students to feel comfortable exploring their own backgrounds within the classroom. Instructors must also be explicitly cognizant of the various power and racial dynamics that may exist within the classroom. By demonstrating an awareness of the role of racial dynamics, the instructor further personalizes the meaning of these dynamics as opposed to simply understanding it as a theoretical construct. For example, one co-author utilized her experience as an African American professor in a predominately White classroom as an example of how racial dynamics can play a role even within the classroom (Patton, 1999).

Drawing students' attention to their own reactions to classroom dynamics may initiate students on a path of reflection. The instructor, however, must be cautious, as the use of self requires a delicate balance between overstepping boundaries and authentic self-disclosure. The overarching goal is to create a challenging yet secure environment for discussion regarding power.

Preparation for the assignment. In addition to the educator introducing her/himself authentically, lectures preceding the Ethnic Roots Assignment should help students understand the meaning of concepts such as authenticity, identity, and genuine sense of self. Moving beyond surface-level discussions of 'treating each other with respect' and 'appreciating differences,' lectures can help students explore the psychological and social

components of their own identity formation, thus laying a foundation for the exploration of their ethnic roots. Through such a discussion students can gain a more profound understanding of themselves as individuals with biases that must be explored in order to competently serve diverse client populations.

In preparing for the Ethnic Roots Assignment, instructors should anticipate that the intense exploration of pre-existing beliefs and biases will create anxiety for many students. This is not necessarily problematic, as instructors can help students understand their own performance issues. For the purposes of meeting the learning objectives of this assignment, instructors must present the assignment in such a way that clearly illustrates several key aims for students: 1) take ownership of their education; 2) understand the aims of the assignment; 3) be willing to grapple with an assignment for which there are no clear cut “correct answers;” 4) utilize the material for their own growth. Below is one example of how an instructor addresses these potential challenges with her students:

I challenge all of you to think about what it means to be in a social justice course about to complete an assignment about your ethnic roots. It is an opportunity for you to grow and gain new perspectives about yourself, your background, and your current viewpoints. This assignment is rumored by past students to be challenging, controversial, powerful, critical, scary, dynamic, evolving, and inspiring. Many of these rumors may hold true for you as you complete this ethnic roots assignment.

This experience has the potential to be emotionally charged. You will be challenged to think about your family’s history and how that has formed who you are today. You will also have to consider the genuine thoughts, feelings, and perspectives you’ve developed as a result of your background. For some of you, the issues and ideas that are brought up through completing this assignment may be very emotional or feel threatening, for others it may be quite difficult to reach a depth of emotion and you may find yourself discussing ideas at a more intellectual level. It is to be expected that we will each have different reactions to exploring where we come from and how it affects us today. However, I challenge all of you to “go there”—to give yourself permission to begin this journey of thinking about how you think, and feeling what you really feel, authentically thinking about ourselves and each other and our place in society. Accepting this challenge opens the door to immense growth and the development of improved skills as future social workers.

By making such statements, the instructor can help students anticipate possible reactions to completing the assignment, recognizing that the experience will vary greatly across students. The instructor should also aim to encourage students to explore a deeper level of insight necessary for culturally competent social work practice.

After reading the assignment to students aloud, the instructor may encourage students to discuss the assignment in small groups. This allows students to normalize the struggles and challenges that they may experience as a result of the Ethnic Roots Assignment. After the assignment is discussed in small groups, students should be encouraged to ask questions or discuss any concerns.

Debriefing the assignment after completion. Several factors should be considered when planning classroom debriefing after the completion of the assignment. Instructors should carefully consider the timing of the semester and the level of comfort developed in the classroom when deciding if students are ready to share insights gained from the assignment. A moment should be given before students turn in their assignments to discuss any residual feelings that may have risen due to the assignment's requirements. The instructor can open up the class for discussion by asking a general question such as, "Does anyone want to share before we turn in our assignments?"

If debriefing is not given careful consideration by the instructor, several problems may arise. For example, students may have concerns about evaluation and grading, especially early in the semester, which may make sharing about the assignment uncomfortable and superficial. Discussing the experience in this superficial manner can be reductionist and may diminish one of the main goals of the assignment, to elicit depth of student participation. Alternatively, discussing the assignment with too much depth may risk the potential of crossing professional boundaries as students may over-share private or sensitive information to the class and may come to regret it.

Understanding and Addressing Challenges

Student responses. While the Ethnic Roots Assignment can be helpful for many students, it should be noted that facilitating the process of self-awareness related to cultural responsiveness can be very challenging as it often involves sensitive and controversial topics (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2005). Students may resist the level of self-reflection required to complete the Ethnic Roots Assignment. Potential sources of student resistance or apprehension include students' resistance to accepting the role of privilege in their own lives, downplaying the presence of oppression in society, and the fear of responsibility for change. For example, student resistance to exploring their racial and ethnic identity has manifested in papers that focus on a discussion of regional identity (i.e. being Texan) versus an exploration of ethnic roots and its subsequent impact on privilege or marginalization in their lives.

Furthermore, the challenge of critically analyzing oneself can be an overwhelming and an uncomfortable experience. Students have been known to respond to the Ethnic Roots Assignment with confusion, discomfort, anger, or an inability to answer the assigned questions. The assignment may be particularly challenging to those students who have difficult family relationships or may not be in communication with family members. In these cases, instructors should provide the necessary accommodations by allowing students to explore their ethnic roots in alternative ways. While a detailed exploration of an alternative assignment is outside of the scope of this article, instructors are encouraged to think through an alternative assignment for students with such difficult family backgrounds by requiring them to critically think through their ethnicity. To achieve this, students can be asked to reflect on the similarity or dissimilarity of their racial or ethnic backgrounds to their adopted or family of choice and its subsequent impact on their lives (values, ethnic identity, understanding of cultural responsiveness, among others). However, it is important that this alternative is only offered on a case by case basis and after careful examination of the student's background as instructors walk a

fine-line between being supportive of students versus being overly caretaking. Students should be encouraged to struggle with the material enough to be challenged, but not so much that they are angry, frustrated, or disrupt class room dynamics.

Maintaining boundaries. Since the Ethnic Roots Assignment facilitates the process of self-reflection—which requires students to expose themselves emotionally—it is important that the instructor establish guidelines for appropriate disclosure early in the class. It is vital for the instructor to initiate the class with a discussion underscoring the importance of boundaries and professionalism within the classroom. Instructors should work to establish the difference between educational processes and psychotherapy. While the importance of encouraging students to engage in self-reflective processes is evident, there are also risks to which the instructor must attend. Some students find that engaging in self-reflection is a stressful and sometimes emotionally taxing process. Students with mental health concerns may be particularly vulnerable to feelings of guilt and shame over this type of self-exploration. Instructors should inform students of these potential risks by addressing these issues both in the syllabus and verbally in the beginning of the semester as well as making themselves available to discuss concerns about engaging in this type of self-reflection outside of the classroom. It is important to note that students who demonstrate serious problems maintaining boundaries should be referred to discuss their concerns with their own mental health providers.

Group dynamics. The Ethnic Roots Assignment cannot be implemented without a clear understanding of group dynamics. Every classroom of students will have their own dynamics and bring into the classroom their own backgrounds, characteristics, and experiences. The level of guardedness or open-mindedness of a few students can affect group interactions as a whole. As a class, students may work through many of the stages of group formation and these processes can affect individuals' abilities to gain insight into their own experiences. It should be expected that many students avoid disclosing their individual thoughts and experiences, while other students may more openly share their insights. Educators must be aware of the group dynamics at work and frame discussions in the context of these dynamics.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF THE ETHNIC ROOTS ASSIGNMENT

In an effort to explore students' processes and reactions to the assignment, the Ethnic Roots Assignment was collected and analyzed qualitatively over the course of one semester (Bender et al., 2010). Students were informed about the study and were asked for voluntary participation through submission of their Ethnic Roots Assignment paper electronically or as hard copies. All papers were de-identified before analysis. This study's protocol was approved by the Institutional Review board (IRB). The sample included the papers of 23 graduate social work students. Content analysis revealed eleven main themes emerging from the qualitative data analysis, including students' enlightenment of their privilege, experiences of cultural loss, and acknowledgement of biases and empathy as integral parts of culturally competent social work practice (detailed results are reported elsewhere in Bender et al., 2010). In general, students reported that the process of completing the Ethnic Roots Assignment challenged them to critically think through their familial history and how structural forces worked to

privilege or marginalize their family's incorporation into mainstream American society. The findings of this study indicate that graduate social work students felt that the Ethnic Roots Assignment presented them with many eye-opening insights regarding their own history of privilege and/or marginalization in America. Student responses revealed an increased empathy for the struggles of marginalized populations and a renewed commitment to the provision of culturally responsive services. Specifically, four key themes revealed the utility of the exercise as a culturally responsive teaching exercise. First, students developed an understanding of the role of race in social work clinical practice. Particularly, White students gained perspective of their own privilege and how this may potentially translate in building a working alliance with their clients. Students expressed developing an understanding of the importance of acknowledging ethnicity and race as important variables within the therapeutic process. For example, one student wrote, "Being part of a dominant ethnic group, I have been afforded the luxury of ignorance on many issues regarding ethnicity. Through the process of exploring the history of this phenomena and my personal history further, I recognize that what was a non-culture ('White') just feels that way to me because it is the dominant culture and I am a part of it." Secondly, students recognized a need for social workers to be empathetic to the many struggles and obstacles people face when they do not belong to the dominant group. Students acknowledged that social workers, especially those of the dominant group, must begin to understand their position of privilege to be more culturally competent. One student quote reads:

By recognizing the lack of hardships I have experienced as an assimilated citizen of this country, I must consider the undeniable fact that some or many of my clients will not have had a similar experience to my own. They may not feel welcome in this country, due to legislation that tries to deny them services, curriculum that is taught in our schools, or even the way people treat them based on race, ethnicity, language, religion, dress, etc. I need to be sensitive to these differences and aware of barriers and prejudices that people from different backgrounds experience.

Thirdly, students discussed that, in order to understand clients and their backgrounds, social workers must be open and willing to learn more about their clients' worldview. Finally, students further recognized that self-awareness is an ongoing process, thus underscoring the value for continued reflection and its influence on social work practice.

While many students explicitly described the insights they gained through the process of developing self-awareness, educators using this tool should be aware that not all student growth will be so evident. One educator's perspective on the impact of this assignment follows:

The overarching purpose of the ethnic roots assignment is to foster social work graduate students' understanding of the interplay between their cultural and familial backgrounds, identity constructs, and present beliefs, values, and biases. Achieving this level of depth in self-awareness from one assignment is obviously challenging. A major part of the professor's role is facilitating this process. It is noteworthy, however, that professors often will not be privy to all of the 'light

bulb' moments that students experience during the process nor will all of these epiphanies be unmasked in the final product of the assignment. This is to be expected and is acceptable because the depth and breadth of the process of self-understanding is such that significant parts may and should remain confidential to enforce the format of the educational classroom ethic. Ultimately, that which is most important, the impact on the student toward self-understanding, and the foundation of what this means for their future social work practice with clients, nonetheless has occurred.

The instructor's role, therefore, should be to guide students through each stage of the assignment, facilitating students' unique forms of progress toward self-awareness and cultural competence.

CONCLUSION

Social work educators continue to shoulder the challenge of training culturally responsive practitioners despite a dearth of published educational strategies designed to promote cultural responsiveness (Boyle & Springer, 2001). The Ethnic Roots Assignment, with its focus on self-awareness as a vital component of cultural competence, is one such promising teaching exercise that has been demonstrated qualitatively to facilitate students' understanding and motivation to engage in culturally responsive practice. It should be noted that while this assignment shows considerable potential to increase students' self-awareness regarding cultural responsiveness, a limitation, consistent with other qualitative inquiries, is the small sample of participants included in the analysis of this exercise. Future work is then needed to quantitatively test the effects of the Ethnic Roots Assignment on student competencies and to revise the assignment to adapt to varying contexts. Furthermore, other exercises with similar goals should be shared and empirically investigated in order to broaden the field's resources for addressing the important goal of cultural competence training. As ideas and teaching techniques, such as the Ethnic Roots Assignment, are more widely disseminated across schools of social work, educators will be better equipped to employ diverse pedagogical methods in training culturally responsive social workers.

References

- Atkinson, D. R., Morten, G., & Sue, D. W. (2004). *Counseling American minorities* (6th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Bender, K., Negi, N. J., & Fowler, D. (2010). Exploring the relationship between self-awareness and future cultural competency for social work graduate students. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 19*(1), 34-53.
- Boyle, D. P., & Springer, A. (2001). Toward a cultural competence measure for social work with specific populations. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 9*(3/4), p. 53-71.
- Chizhik, E. W., & Chizhik, A. W. (2005). Are you privileged or oppressed? Students' conceptions of themselves and others. *Urban Education, 40*(2), 116-143.

- Colvin-Burque, A., Zugazaga, C. B., & Davis-Maye, D. (2007). Can cultural competence be taught? Evaluating the impact of the SOAP model. *Journal of Social Work Education, 43*(2), 223-242.
- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (2008). Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Retrieved from <http://www.cswe.org/CSWE/accreditation>
- Gibbons, J., & Gray, M. (2002). An integrated and experience-based approach to social work education: The Newcastle model. *Journal of Social Work Education, 21* (5), 529-549.
- Green, R. G., Kitson, G., Kiernan-Stern, M., Leak, S., Bailey, K., Leisey, M., et al. (2005). The multicultural counseling inventory: A measure for evaluating social work student and practitioner self-perceptions of their multicultural competencies. *Journal of Social Work Education, 41*(2), 191-208.
- Horner, W., & Borrero, M. (1981). A planning matrix for standard 124(A). *Journal of Education for Social Work, 17*, 36-43.
- Lee, M. Y., & Green, G. J. (2003). A teaching framework for transformative multicultural social work education. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 12*(3), 1-28.
- Lum, D. (2007). *Culturally competent practice: A framework for understanding diverse groups and justice issues*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- McLemore, S., Romo, H., & Baker, S. (2001). *Racial and ethnic relations in America* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Messinger, L. (2004). The good, the bad, and the ugly: A teaching innovation to help students develop cultural competence. *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work, 10*(1), 61-74.
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW). (2001). NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice. Retrieved from http://www.socialworkers.org/sections/credentials/cultural_comp.asp
- Patton, T. O. (1999). Ethnicity and gender: An examination of its impact on instructor credibility in the university classroom. *Howard Journal of Communications, 10*(2), 123-144.
- Richardson, T. Q., & Molinaro, K. L. (1996). White counselor self-awareness: A prerequisite for multicultural competence. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 74*(3), 238-242.
- Roberts, T. L., & Smith, L. A. (2002). The illusion of inclusion: An analysis of approaches to diversity within predominantly white schools of social work. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 22*(3-4), 189-211.
- Sakina-Mama, R. (2001). Preparing social work students to work in culturally diverse settings. *Social Work Education, 20*(3), 373-382.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Nalini J. Negi, Ph.D., University of Maryland School of Social Work, 525 W. Redwood Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. Email: nnegi@ssw.umaryland.edu

APPENDIX A: OUTLINE OF ETHNIC ROOTS ASSIGNMENTEthnic Roots Paper

Each student will write a 5-7 page paper that explores his/her “family” ethnic roots and the unique experiences of parents, grandparents, and/or other significant caregivers in the student’s life. In the paper a) describe the “family” system, b) identify the variations that arise from cultural processes, such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and/or urban/rural differences, and c) the implications of assimilation on social and economic justice for you and your family.

The purpose of this assignment is for students to explore their own ethnic roots and examine the unique experiences of parents/grandparents/great grandparents and beyond/or other significant caregivers that have shaped their path in life. This paper will allow students to look at their roots globally as well as those prevalent in the southwestern region of the United States, if applicable.

The paper should be double-spaced, in APA format, and responding to the following set of questions. Specific information from the McLemore, Romo, and Baker (2001) reading should be incorporated and each student should personally address parts a) – d) below:

- a) Background: Very briefly describe yourself (age, birthplace, social class and status when you were growing up, current cultural orientation, etc.)
- b) Background of Parents/Grandparents/Great Grandparents and so on
 - Description of what you know about your (1) mother, (2) father, (3) maternal grandparents, (3) paternal grandparents, (4) maternal and paternal great grandparents, and so on.
 - How did ancestors enter into the United States (e.g., were they voluntary immigrants, involuntary through conquest, time of entry, etc.?).
- c) Experiences with Anglo Conformity and Factors Affecting Inclusion
 - By the standards of Anglo Conformity, were individuals related to you included or excluded in American society?
 - How did they avoid/attempt/achieve assimilation and integration? (e.g., were names changed to fit into mainstream American society? Were ethnic roots emphasized or downplayed? Were traditions/language/customs suppressed or passed down?).
 - What role did social class and social power play in their experiences?

- Describe experiences of family members in terms of the presence or absence of (1) cultural assimilation by addition, (2) cultural assimilation by substitution, and (3) marital assimilation.
 - Does the “three-generations process” of assimilation described in the reading apply to your family’s experience in this country? Why or why not?
- d) Conclusion: What conclusions do you personally draw about your own current status of assimilation based on your ethnic roots, socialization, and personal experiences and its implications for cultural sensitivity and culturally competent practice?

Text: McLemore, S., Romo, H., & Baker, S. (2001). *Racial and ethnic relations in America* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

I Found Myself at this Practicum: Student Reflections on Field Education

**Sabrina Williamson
Carol Hostetter
Katherine Byers
Pamela Huggins**

Abstract: *The field experience is understood to be pivotal in social work education. In this qualitative study, BSW students reflected on their learning outcomes and processes in their field experiences. They highlighted how their work in agencies helped them to operationalize social work values and ethics, develop an awareness of themselves as social workers, and enhanced their confidence. Implications for strengthening the practicum experience through more reflective experiences and enhancing the preparation of field instructors is discussed.*

Keywords: *Field education, reflective practice*

INTRODUCTION

For most BSW students, the field practicum is the first setting in which they are able to integrate and apply social work theory, values, skills, and knowledge under the supervision of a professional social worker (Barretti, 2004; Dalton, Stevens, & Maas-Brady, 2009; Vayda & Bogo, 1991). The field placement is where students put into practice what they have learned in the classroom with respect to micro, mezzo and macro skills and also with respect to upholding professional values and following ethical codes of conduct.

Though field coordinators and other faculty serve as liaisons to the student and the field instructor throughout the course of the practicum, there are many experiences that students have with their field instructors apart from those listed in the learning plan and discussed in the field seminar. As students near graduation and prepare for either their first professional positions or further education, a more complete picture of their field experiences can be gained from gathering their reflections on their field experiences in a way that differs from the typical final input they may have in their evaluations with their field instructors or faculty liaisons.

One obvious benefit to this data gathering process is that the student reflections can be used to assess strengths and limitations in current field placement settings. More importantly, however, the authors posit that this time for self-reflection on practice (Furman, Coyne, & Negi, 2008) is, of itself, an essential aspect of students' learning. As students recount meaningful experiences in their field placements, they have the opportunity to explore these experiences in a different way, critically reflect upon them,

Sabrina Williamson, Ph.D., and Carol Hostetter, Ph.D., are Associate Professors, and Katherine Byers, Ph.D., is Associate Professor and Director of the BSW Program, all at the Indiana University School of Social Work, Bloomington campus. Pamela Huggins, MSW, ACSW, LCSW, is an Associate Clinical Professor at the Saint Louis University School of Social Work.

and perhaps develop a new perspective on the situation. While this process has the immediate effect of helping a student reflect on his or her current level of professional development, this process may also model for students the importance of continued reflection on their professional practice.

Obtaining student reflections on their field placements can also be of benefit to social work programs seeking accreditation or reaccreditation. In 2008, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) outlined revised educational policy and accreditation standards (EPAS). The EPAS clearly define that field education is the “signature pedagogy” for the social work profession (CSWE, 2008, p. 8). In other words, the field education component is the primary venue in which social work students are socialized to be professionals (CSWE, 2008). In accordance with the new EPAS, schools and departments of social work are called upon to demonstrate an “integrated curriculum” for classroom and field (CSWE, 2008, p. 9). Given the renewed importance of demonstrating student outcomes in the field, and the fact that educators will be dependent on student products to illustrate outcomes, it is critical to understand not only what students learn in the field, but also to understand how they reflect on their learning, and how they make connections between the classroom and the field setting.

This paper presents findings from a larger study in which faculty in a baccalaureate social work program in the Midwest engaged in a self-study of the field program. The focus of this paper is to share student reflections on their professional development and offer some implications for social work education that will enhance the ways in which social work faculty work with students to build a foundation for their professional development.

The following section of the paper includes a brief review of the relevant literature. Next is an explanation of the methodology employed in the larger study and a discussion of student reflections. The paper concludes with a discussion of limitations and an offering of the implications for social work education.

REVIEW OF FIELD EDUCATION LITERATURE

Social work educators expect the transfer of learning from classroom to practice to occur in the field practicum, with field instructors providing the primary, on-site supervision of that transfer (Cavazos, 1996; Knight, 2001). The practicum serves as the experience in which students are able to integrate and apply social work theory, values, skills, and knowledge (Bogo, 2005; Vayda & Bogo, 1991). In the field, students develop practice skills; apply theory to actual practice situations, and otherwise “test their ability to be professional social workers” (Fortune, McCarthy, & Abramson, 2001, p. 111). There is a substantial and growing literature on various aspects of field instruction. Researchers have studied the motivation to become field instructors (Bogo & Power, 1992; Globerman & Bogo, 2003), student satisfaction in the field (Fortune et al., 2001), learning opportunities valued by students (Fortune & Kaye, 2002; Fortune et al., 2001), availability of field instructors to students (Barretti, 2009), student performance (Fortune et al., 2001; Zosky, Unger, White, & Mills, 2003), and student motivation in the field practicum (Fortune, Lee, & Cavazos, 2005).

A link between reflection and learning has been discussed in the social work literature (Mishna & Bogo, 2007). Mishna and Bogo define *reflection on practice* as "... reflection after the experience to derive learning and new understanding from a situation" (2007, p. 531). A compatible definition, although broader, is that reflection involves "those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations" (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985, p. 19). Ellis (2001) emphasizes the confidence that can result from reflective practice, enabling the student to better deal with future practice challenges. D'Cruz, Gillingham, and Melendez (2007) also propose that using reflections to acknowledge uncomfortable emotions such as anxiety can promote a stronger field instructor and student relationship. From this fertile soil, self awareness can occur and subsequently can enhance practice (D'Cruz et al., 2007). Lam, Wong, and Leung (2007) found that disturbing events and the self-discovery reflected in student reflection logs during practicum aided the learning process, particularly by focusing on "... individual values, beliefs, strengths and weaknesses" (2007, p. 96).

METHODS

Research Design

At the beginning of this study, the authors committed to using a collaborative, strengths-based (Saleebey, 2008) approach in their interviews with students. This primarily involved providing a space to hear the voices of students as they shared their experiences and reflections on their own learning. Specifically, the interviewers asked questions to draw out students' capacities and assets as they reflected on their field work in addition to asking about challenges that were faced.

Description of Sample

Data for this study were collected over the course of three academic years. All graduating seniors in three cohorts (N=74) were invited to participate in the study and 38 chose to participate. All participants were students on the same campus of a large, public, Midwestern university. The sample was 95% female, and 92% were of a traditional student age, between 21 and 23 at the time of the interview. All sample members except one were full-time students who completed each of their field placement experiences in either the home county of the university, or in one of the surrounding counties. The remaining member of the sample had been a part-time student for several years. This sample accurately mirrors the student body of the social work program on campus. Likewise, the participants' field placement sites were representative of all available practicum sites.

Of the field placement experiences, 31% were in a public school system; 31% were in non-profit agencies serving youth or families; 13% were in a non-profit agency providing services to people experiencing homelessness; 7% were in public or private agencies providing services to older adults; 7% were in a non-profit agency providing services to people experiencing domestic violence and the remaining field placements

(11%) were in various settings including those for addictions treatment, community development programs, and political or legal settings.

Data Collection and Analysis

At the time of data collection, the program under study utilized a model of field placements that had students completing one practicum placement in their second semester of the junior year (15 hours a week on average) and completing a second placement in the first semester of senior year (20 hours a week on average). This arrangement afforded students with learning opportunities in two different agencies which meant that they gained experience working with a broader array of client populations and challenges.

The sample was one of convenience, with the use of inclusionary criteria in order to create a purposive sample (Patton, 2002). Sample members (n=38) all met the following criteria; seniors in an undergraduate social work program who had completed two semesters of field placement (the first in the spring of the junior year and the second in the fall of the senior year) and who were in their final semester of academic course work.

A structured interview protocol was developed to ensure the comparability of data obtained across sample members and researchers (Maxwell, 1996). The interview protocol is found in Table 1.

Table 1. Interview Protocol

1.	Tell me about your first field placement.
a.	Probes: Where was it? What were some significant learning experiences you had? To what extent was it a fit for you?
2.	Tell me about your field supervisor at your first field placement.
a.	Probes: Did he or she have an MSW or BSW? What did he or she do to facilitate your skill development?
3.	Tell me about some of the ways you saw your skills develop at this practicum.
4.	Tell me how you saw core values of social work embodied.
5.	Tell me about your second field placement:
a.	Probes: Where was it? What were some significant learning experiences you had? To what extent was it a fit for you?
6.	Tell me about your senior year field supervisor.
a.	Probes: Did he or she have an MSW or BSW? What did he or she do to facilitate your skill development?
7.	Tell me about some of the ways you saw your skills develop at this practicum.
8.	Tell me how you saw core values of social work embodied.
9.	Anything else you want to say about your field placement experiences at IUB?

Interviews were conducted for three cohorts of BSW seniors over the course of three academic years. All interviewers were faculty members in the School of Social Work at the same university but none had responsibility for field placement or field liaison duties. The use of the structured protocol, by which participants were asked a set of questions about their first field placement and then were immediately asked the same set of questions about their second field placement, addressed the challenge of obtaining comparable information from each student about each of their two placements.

Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. One interviewer/researcher had primary responsibility for analysis. The strategy of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was used to identify themes that emerged from the raw data. As similar themes emerged, the researcher grouped like codes together in order to form conceptual categories. The interview transcripts, codes, and conceptual categories were shared with the co-principal investigator for feedback and continued analysis. As additional interviews were completed, initial codes were referred to in a process of constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As interviews were conducted just prior to the students' graduation ceremonies, member checks could not be employed.

FINDINGS

The findings presented here center on the reflections that students provided concerning their professional development. It is important to note that, no matter their overall perceptions about the agency or satisfaction with their field instructors, all participants reflected that learning and development had occurred in the field placement. One student summarized it well when she said, "...this is where the light popped on."

The experience of having the light "pop on" was echoed, to some extent, by every participant. This self-awareness of knowledge and skill emerged because the students got to do "in real life" the things they had practiced in their classes. For example, students discussed recording and documentation responsibilities, assessments they had conducted, referrals they had made, and ways in which they had built rapport with clients. While this discussion of practicum learning is always reassuring for a faculty member/researcher to hear, there was little that was surprising in this recounting of tasks and meaningful experiences because of the general expectation that students will practice these types of skills in their practicum placements.

More provocative, however, in terms of thinking about social work pedagogy, were the students' reflections on what we categorized as *becoming a social worker*. This category captures the major themes that students discussed when they were reflecting on their field experiences. Within this category were three primary themes: *values and ethics*, *awareness of self in practice*, and *confidence*. Students reflected on each of these as being a part of their growth from *social work student* to *professional social worker*.

Values and Ethics

The way in which students articulated their perceptions of values and ethics in the field indicated that this was an area of importance for them. Students clearly saw that, the majority of the time, social workers operated with a set of ethical standards and values

different from those held by other staff in the setting. Major themes that emerged included the importance of maintaining confidentiality, establishing professional boundaries, and operationalizing the social work value of *dignity and worth of the person*.

Some students spoke about confidentiality being broken in ways such as “having staffing in a room next to the lobby, when people can hear through the door” and having an unlocked records room, “where clients actually got in and read other clients’ files.” Other students gave examples of non-social work staff talking about clients in break rooms of agencies and of staff in general leaving “confidential paperwork out where the public could see it.”

Another theme that emerged related to values and ethics was that of boundaries between professionals and clients. One interviewee stated that while confidentiality at her agency was observed in a way that she expected, she was surprised by the lack of boundary setting by the staff (none of whom was a social worker), that they were “really close with the teens, and sharing personal things with them.” Another student reflected that in her placement, there was another student intern from a different discipline, and that while the person’s clinical skills were good, “she has no clue about setting boundaries with clients.”

Though there were instances other than the ones above related to non-social workers and boundary issues, more often our interviewees discussed being relieved that a social worker in their setting had modeled for them the importance of establishing and maintaining boundaries. One student reflected that “boundary building was the biggest skill I accomplished” in the first placement, and another student shared,

The other thing I learned a lot about is dual relationships and boundary issues. The men would ask you out, ask for your phone number and stuff like that. [My field instructor] told me, taught me how to handle this. She also helped me to learn to set boundaries with clients who only wanted to talk to me for hours on end.

In terms of operationalizing dignity and worth of the person, students were quick to point out ways in which they saw this value enacted and ways in which the agencies and staff members fell short of this goal. One student, a self-identified “investigator,” said that she had grown the most at one of her placements in her ability to demonstrate dignity and worth. “Families are definitely treated with a lot of respect and dignity, even when they are extremely challenging. No matter how challenging a family presents, there is always someone who can look for the strengths and propose a way of how to use them.” Another student, placed at a shelter for survivors of domestic violence, said,

We talk a lot about client self-determination in social work. In that practicum I was challenged by that, to really put that into practice. Facilitating a group where women had a desire to return to abusers was challenging. I really wanted to say ‘don’t go back there’ – but I had to learn how to explore this with them.

In anything related to values and ethics, it was clear that the soon-to-be-graduates held social workers to a higher standard than they did other professionals because of the

Code of Ethics (NASW, 1999). When social workers were observed to be in violation of the letter or spirit of the Code, the students were more distressed than when staff members from other disciplines took actions that were in conflict with social work values. One student said that while her supervisor was “compatible with social work values,” another social worker, in charge of recruiting patients, had values that “were off the chart, in the wrong direction, in terms of trying to get people to come to [the agency] for services.” Another student talked about some inappropriate signs and bumper stickers on the office wall that belonged to her (social work) supervisor and still another student talked about how one of the social workers had handled confidential information inappropriately.

Throughout the interviews, it was evident that students had learned a great deal about social work values and ethics in their coursework. As they were interviewed, most related situations that demonstrated that they not only understood the social work value and ethical framework but also embraced it as the desirable framework for effectively serving clients and developing an awareness of appropriate boundaries.

Awareness of Self in Practice

The majority of study participants shared how one or both of their practicum experiences helped them find their niche in social work. As one student said, “I found myself at this practicum.” Many interviewees, however, also realized that working with people who are vulnerable is not about “warm fuzzies” for the social worker. Similarly, one student shared, “Trying to find local low-income housing for people was a huge challenge. Sometimes it seemed hopeless but I still had to be hopeful. It was hard because some times there were not the best options available to a mother with three children and addiction problems.” Along these lines, another student stated,

My knowledge base grew about what it was really like to deal with clients. We have these theories at school, and a homework assignment, and it seems like there is a right answer. But in real life with real clients, it takes awhile to come up with answers.

Students also realized that they needed to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in terms of coping with stress and interacting with others. Talking about her increased confidence, one student said, “I became more comfortable in communication, and was seeing how what I said affected clients. I learned how to not overpower them...” Also in this regard, a student shared, “We had to do drug screens and house searches. Those are pretty personal. It forced me to be professional and not take things personally. I became more aware of my own limitations.... I learned to be open with my supervisor so she could help me with situations.” Another interviewee remembered a time when “there was a client that I had talked to a lot...she blew up at me when she was having conflict with another person. She threatened me, but I knew how to make contact with her because of [my relationship with her]. After it happened I broke down and was shaking.”

The impact of challenging practicum experiences clearly prompted awareness of self in a way that classroom discussions and activities may not. As a group, students reporting challenging and uncomfortable experiences in the practicum were also able to follow up

with a self appraisal of how their actions, communications, and/or skill development changed as a result. This self awareness seemed vital as well as they worked on becoming social workers.

Confidence

Not surprisingly, almost every study participant reflected on his or her confidence and how it had grown during field placements. Most of the respondents talked about feeling an increase in confidence in interacting with clients and colleagues, feeling as though they had a professional voice in addition to feeling more confident about their skill set. One student faced many challenges at one of her placements, including being one of the few social workers in a legal setting. Despite her frustrations, she shared,

I am still processing that placement. I am angry at school for putting me in a place where I wasn't supported. That's been difficult for me, and for the other person who was placed there, but I also have these moments where I think 'wow I haven't been so challenged in a long time'. ...I ended up figuring out how to have a strong voice.

Another student articulated, "I think practicum really makes you understand whether you are cut out for social work or not." Clearly, students found the practicum experience to be the primary venue for developing confidence in their abilities to be good social workers.

Summary of Findings

In asking students to reflect on their learning in the BSW field placements, three important themes were identified. First, their knowledge and skills went beyond identifying values and ethical issues in practice. The students demonstrated a strong ability to analyze practicum situations and how unethical approaches might adversely affect the client or themselves. This finding was especially supported by their reported discomfort in observing non-social workers' approaches with clients and by their experiences in setting professional boundaries.

Second, students recognized that self awareness was a part of becoming a professional social worker. Self-awareness was seemingly promoted at times when the students felt uncomfortable or were confronted with the realities of some social problems. Finally, as students reflected on their practicum experiences, the increase in their level of confidence from the beginning to the end was an important product of the overall learning in the practicum. The findings underscore the importance of Barretti's statement that "... a socialized identity is not a continuous process of reacting passively to curricular knowledge and professional experiences but may depend more on students' negotiations of their dilemmas and interactions with significant others" (2004, p. 277).

LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

As with any qualitative study, a primary limitation for this research lies in the inability to generalize findings to the larger population. Another limitation to the study

involves the use of interviews as a primary source of data collection and analysis (Padgett, 1998). One element of this limitation lies in the chance that the respondent in an interview may give answers that he or she feels are socially desirable. To counteract this possibility, all respondents were reminded prior to the interview that their names would remain confidential, and that the purpose of the study was to learn about the strengths and challenges of their field placements, not to “name names” for purposes of reward or criticism. Additionally, the interviews were conducted in the spring semester of the participants’ senior year and interviewers did not have the participants in class at the time. Consequently, students did not have to be concerned that their interview responses would affect their grades.

Another aspect of the limitation to conducting interviews lies in the chance that the researcher/interviewer may be the source of bias or error (Patton, 2002). It is possible that the researcher’s verbal and nonverbal cues prompted the respondent’s discussion and reflection in some cases, and inhibited it in others. To minimize the impact of researcher bias, semi-structured protocols were used. The use of the protocols increased the likelihood that questions and probes were used uniformly.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The results of this study have implications for teaching, research, and the overall approach to field education. The study validates that the practicum, the signature pedagogy (CSWE, 2008; Shulman, 2005) of social work, is critical in helping students find themselves and enhance their development as social workers. As a result, social work education should continue to focus on the overall quality of field education through a number of current and specific ways.

The current EPAS for social work education include ten core competencies with articulated practice behaviors for each. The field placement is a logical, even necessary, venue in which to demonstrate student achievement of these competencies and behaviors. As social work educators and administrators begin to prepare for accreditation and reaccreditation processes, it is important to continue obtaining students’ perspective on their practicum work. The process of determining whether or not, and to what extent, a program’s graduates demonstrate mastery of a particular competency cannot be done without student input. While many programs likely have an understanding the nature of experiences that students routinely have in the field, it is also important to understand how the students are processing their own learning.

One possibility would be to engage in this type of reflective process with students as we are reviewing “products” from their practicum work (i.e. assessments, genograms, process recordings, etc.). By doing this, we can ascertain not only how students performed that task at a particular point in time, but we will also be able to understand how they took that initial feedback (whether a grade or field instructor evaluation) and used it to further their own knowledge in this area.

The findings from this study also provide guidance to social work educators regarding the “implicit curriculum” identified in the new EPAS (CSWE, 2008, p.10). The implicit curriculum is defined as the environment in which the explicit curriculum is

delivered. The training and support of field instructors can certainly be considered an aspect of the implicit curriculum. Social work education must move beyond a brief field instructor orientation to an advanced educational or training module which assists field instructors to develop and use strategies that systematically explore values and ethics, develop self awareness, and build confidence.

While many field education programs focus on aspects of strong supervision, this study underscores the need to help field instructors develop as teachers and develop daily or weekly strategies to promote student reflection as a key part of their learning. Some of the current tools, such as process recording, journaling, values conflict discussions, and case analysis, continue to be useful in the ongoing development of the thinking of a social worker. Each of these assignments is included in courses leading up to the field placement, as well as in the field seminar, in the program where the study was conducted. In the interviews, students identified these assignments as being helpful transitions from the classroom to the field. To the extent that field instructors can be more aware of classroom tools and assignments, they will be even better prepared to reinforce learning.

The skills needed for ongoing reflection could also aid the field instructors in their own professional practice. Then, in turn, they would become stronger role models and mentors for future students. In addition to the focus on the school's responsibility to train field instructors, schools of social work should also evaluate potential placements for an environment where the student would have the time and interest from a field instructor who would go beyond the minimal teaching tasks. As Kanno and Koeske assert, the quality of field instruction is highly important for student satisfaction and sense of efficacy (2010, p. 34).

The value of integrative seminars is underscored as another important part of the socialization process as a student becomes a professional social worker (Barretti, 2009). The seminars provide many assignments requiring students to reflect in a focused way on practicum experiences and their reactions. While seminars are primarily viewed as providing support to students in the field, the opportunities apart from the rest of the curriculum for verbal and written reflection promoting self-awareness tend to be greater in these settings. As students discuss client situations, values and ethical challenges, or broader social issues, they are able to add to their practice skills and knowledge. Additionally, they are able to build on their self-awareness and confidence. The key factor for successful integrative seminars would be to ensure that they are student-centered, with students teaching other students through case presentation and analysis, peer feedback, and consultation models. In addition to integrative seminars, social work programs could design an overall program assessment or plan that engages students in reflection at several points in their journey toward the degree. These assessments could range from a series of questions where students respond in a reflective journal or paper to an added dimension to existing assignments. This engagement would foster development and confidence through on-going self awareness and appraisal. Faculty would need to commit to completing the loop through providing feedback and assistance in response to reflections. Professional socialization of social work students is complex and challenging, and the literature at this point raises more questions than it answers (Barretti, 2004).

Many "Introduction to Social Work" courses have reflection assignments based on volunteer work or reactions to various target populations or social challenges. These opportunities can continue as we engage students to think critically and reflect on new information that is provided in policy or human behavior courses as well. As we teach in relation to social work practice, students also see the holistic attention as they move from student role in class to practicum student, prepared for the field.

Lastly, the study has implications for social work research. Though important, research on field education continues to be lacking. Select reflection papers, journals, or assignments could be analyzed using qualitative analysis. Pre- or post-testing could be designed around the themes identified in this study: infusion of values and ethics, the value of self awareness, and the importance of building confidence. Further study could focus on a comprehensive exploration of the student's experience by comparing the field instructor's and student's perceptions in these areas. Additionally, research on students' view of the discrepancies between their ideal of social work practice and their lived experience of it would be beneficial (Barretti, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Through asking students to reflect on learning experiences in the practicum, social work educators are able to know more about preparing the next generation of social workers. This study has reinforcing implications for many current methods employed in social work education such as integrative seminars, orientation and selection of field instructors, and use of various assignments. Assignments such as journals, process recordings, supervision meetings and other activities that promote self-awareness and reflection appear to be especially important in the development of social work practice skills (Lam et al., 2007). Additionally, the study sheds light on the importance of additional factors not always addressed in a practicum evaluation, such as the growth and development of confidence and awareness of self. It also focuses attention on the need to provide advanced education for field instructors to help them develop as stronger "teachers" in the field. In addition to the many wonderful learning moments that can and do happen in social work classrooms, there is no substitute for guided learning in the field. As one student reflected,

Watching my supervisor was the most beneficial learning experience that I've had in any environment. She's a very centered, balanced person who knows what she's doing. She was able to convey that, to teach by example and not by being directive, with staff, parents, kids, me.... When I was dealing with certain circumstances, I would think about her and draw on her.

This student echoes the findings about the power of positive modeling by field instructors on professional socialization (Barretti, 2009).

Clearly, the practicum remains integral to social work education and all efforts to further understand how students learn in this pedagogy will serve to continue to enhance the quality and outcomes of the experience.

References

- Barretti, M. (2004). What do we know about the professional socialization of our students? *Journal of Social Work Education, 40*(2), 255-283.
- Barretti, M. (2009). Ranking desirable field instructor characteristics: viewing student references in context with field and class experience. *The Clinical Supervisor, 28*(1), 47-71.
- Bogo, M. (2005). Field instruction in social work: A review of the research literature. *The Clinical Supervisor, 24*(1/2), 163-193.
- Bogo, M., & Power, R. (1992). New field instructors' perceptions of institutional supports for their roles. *Journal of Social Work Education, 28*(2), 178-189.
- Boud, D, Keogh, R., & Walker, D. (Eds.). (1985) *Reflection: Turning experience into learning*. New York: Kogan Page.
- Cavazos, A. (1996). Measuring BSW student learning in field instruction. *Journal of Social Work Education, 32*(3), 329-398.
- Council on Social Work Education. (2008). *Educational policy and accreditation standards*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Dalton B., Stevens, L., & Maas-Brady, J. (2009). Surveying the BSW field director. *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work, 14*(2), 17-29.
- D'Cruz, H., Gillingham, P., & Melendez, S. (2007). Reflexivity, its meanings and relevance for social work: A critical review of the literature. *British Journal of Social Work, 37*, 73 -90.
- Ellis, G. (2001). Looking at ourselves—Self-assessment and peer assessment: Practice examples from New Zealand. *Reflective Practice, 2*(3), 289-302.
- Fortune, A. E., & Kaye, L. (2002). Learning opportunities in field practica: Identifying skills and activities associated with MSW students' self-evaluation of performance and satisfaction. *Clinical Supervisor, 21*(1), 5-28.
- Fortune, A. E., Lee, M., & Cavazos, A. (2005). Special section: Field education in social work achievement: Motivation and outcome in social work field education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 41*(1), 115-129.
- Fortune, A. E., McCarthy, M., & Abramson, J. S. (2001). Student learning processes in field education: Relationship of learning activities to quality of field instruction, satisfaction, and performance among MSW students. *Journal of Social Work Education, 37*(1), 111-124.
- Furman, R., Coyne, A., & Negi, N. J. (2008). An international experience for social work students: Self-reflection through poetry and journal writing exercises. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 28*(1/2), 71-85.

- Globerman, J., & Bogo, M. (2003). Changing times: Understanding social workers' motivation to be field instructors. *Social Work, 48*(1), 65-76.
- Kanno, H., & Koeske, G. F. (2010). MSW students' satisfaction with their field placements: The role of preparedness and supervision quality. *Journal of Social Work Education, 46*(1), 23-38.
- Knight, C. (2001). The process of field instruction: BSW and MSW students' views of effective field supervision. *Journal of Social Work Education, 37*(2), 357-380.
- Lam, C., Wong, H., & Leung, T. (2007). An unfinished reflexive journey: Social work students' reflection on their placement experiences. *British Journal of Social Work, 37*, 91 -105.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mishna, F., & Bogo, M. (2007). Reflective practice in contemporary social work classrooms. *Journal of Social Work Education, 43*(3), 529- 547.
- National Association of Social Workers. (1999). *Code of Ethics*. Washington DC: NASW.
- Padgett, D. K. (1998). *Qualitative methods in social work research: Challenges and rewards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Saleebey, D. (2008). Commentary on the strengths perspective and potential applications in school counseling. *Professional School Counseling, 12*(2), 68-75.
- Shulman, L.S. (2005, Summer). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Dædalus, 134*, 52-59.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Vayda, E., & Bogo, M. (1991) A teaching model to unite classroom and field. *Journal of Social Work Education, 27*(3), 271-278.
- Zosky, D. L., Unger, J. M., White, K., & Mills, S. J. (2003). Non-traditional and traditional social work students: Perceptions of field instructors. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 23*(3/4), 185-201.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Sabrina Williamson, Indiana University Bloomington, 1127 E. Atwater, Bloomington, IN 47401. Email: sabawill@iupui.edu

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Service Integration: A Mixed Methods Study of a Strengths-Based Initiative

**Cynthia A. Lietz
Kathleen L. Andereck
Richard C. Knopf**

Abstract: *Arizona's Department of Economic Security (DES) engaged in a strengths-based initiative to increase quality and integration of human services. Twenty teams including employees from state agencies, community leaders, and families were brought together to discuss and implement improvements to a variety of social services. A mixed methods study was conducted to explore the complex process of forming diverse teams to strengthen social services. Specifically, the research team conducted focus groups to collect qualitative data from a purposive sample of the teams to explore their experiences in greater depth. Analysis of the data led to the development of an online survey instrument that allowed all collaborative members an opportunity to participate in the study. Findings suggest that while the teams faced many challenges, a commitment to the process brought perseverance, communication, and creativity allowing this collaborative to initiate 105 activities to bring about positive changes in social services within their communities.*

Keywords: *Strengths perspective, service integration, mixed methods, family voice*

INTRODUCTION

The issues facing families are complex. Problems such as poverty, child maltreatment, delinquency and crime affect the safety of our communities, the stability of our families, and can have negative effects on the growth and development of children. As states seek to respond to these challenges, many recognize the need to increase communication and collaboration between service providers while also seeking involvement of families in the planning and decision making process. Arizona's Department of Economic Security (DES) engaged in a year-long initiative known as the Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Service Integration (BSCSI). This effort brought together agency staff from multiple DES programs and community leaders from social service agencies with service recipients to form 20 teams across Arizona for the purpose of better addressing the complex needs of families. The purpose of this article is to present the findings from a mixed methods study that explored this collaborative process to identify both the challenges and advantages of this approach to social work practice.

Social Work Practice with Families

Some claim that social work practice with children and families developed from a deficits-based model seeking to diagnose problems and provide treatment to ameliorate

Cynthia A. Lietz, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work, Kathleen L. Andereck, Ph.D., is Professor and Director, School of Community Resources and Development, and Richard C. Knopf, Ph.D., is Professor and Director, Partnership for Community Development, School of Community Resources and Development, all in the College of Public Programs at Arizona State University in Phoenix. This research was funded by the Arizona Department of Economic Security. The authors are grateful for the support and guidance of the Office of Community Partnerships and Innovative Practices (CPIP).

symptoms (Early & GlenMaye, 2000; Itzhaky & Bustin, 2002; Leon, 1999; Saleebey, 2001). Chapin (1995) asserts public policies stemmed from a similar perspective with an emphasis on the identification of societal problems focused on minimizing factors found to increase risk for dysfunction. Practitioners within social service programs responded by adopting diagnostic terminology that would aid those engaged in the helping professions to identify pathology by attaching a label to particular behaviors or experiences ultimately leading to a prescribed treatment (Leon, 1999).

Over time, many have critiqued social work's adoption of the medical model due to the overemphasis on diagnosis and treatment of problems (Blundo, 2001; Goldstein, 1997; Leon, 1999; Lietz, 2006; Saleebey, 2001). Saleebey (2006) asserts that over-attention to deficits hinders a social worker from seeing the strengths and capabilities of an individual, family, or community. Others suggest the medical model does not fit social work's value of collaboration as this perspective creates a hierarchy reinforcing the idea that professional social workers hold the expertise to assess and treat pathology, potentially hindering the voice of families (Itzhaky & Bustin, 2002; Weick, Rapp, Sullivan, & Kisthardt, 1989). Still others cite concerns regarding the language of pathology that fails to empower clients to see their abilities, to reflect on past successes, and to foster resilience (Goldstein, 1997; Greene, Lee, & Hoffpauir, 2005).

Proponents of the strengths perspective seek to shift focus away from problems to instead emphasize the inherent strengths that are present in all people, families, and communities (Blundo, 2001; Brun & Rapp, 2001; Cohen, 1999; Kisthardt, 2006; Saleebey, 2006). The language of the strengths perspective includes concepts such as membership, wellness, resilience, and hope, seeking to replace words that draw attention to pathology with ones that empower people to see their capabilities (Greene et al., 2005; Rapp, Saleebey & Sullivan, 2005). Social workers engaging in strengths-based practice develop collaborative relationships that acknowledge the expertise of families and communities in knowing what works best when addressing the problems families face (Boyes-Watson, 2005; Colby, 1997). The dialogue and collaboration between family and worker seek to highlight abilities, resources, and past successes to accomplish current goals identified by the family (Sousa, Ribeiro, & Rodrigues, 2006). In addition to collaboration between families and workers, we argue that the strengths perspective also highlights a need for communication between service providers and an enhanced integration of services. Critical to this perspective is the idea of partnering with families and communities in a way that raises their voice in the discourse about intervention and integration of social services (Boyes-Watson, 2005; Brun & Rapp, 2001; Colby, 1997; Leon, 1999).

Critics of the strengths perspective claim this practice philosophy simply attempts to reframe problems and fails to acknowledge the real problems that families face (Saleebey, 2006). According to recent data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007), almost 900,000 children were found to be victims of abuse or neglect in 2005. This suggests that 12 of every 1,000 children in the U.S. face maltreatment. Findings reported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) (2007) suggest that 1.1 million teens were not in school and did not have high school diplomas in 2003. That same year, the drop-out rate for minority

groups ranged from 8 to 15% (AECF, 2007). Other data suggest that one in five American children live in poverty while many live just above the poverty line (AECF, 2007). American families face many challenges of concern to the field of social work and to public policy makers.

Those who advocate for taking a strengths perspective do not claim the real challenges families face are ignored. Nor do they suggest that children are not heard as they speak of maltreatment or that parents struggling to care for their family are not provided with support needed to meet basic needs. On the contrary, proponents of the strengths perspective care deeply about these concerns. What makes the strengths perspective different is not the concern for the well-being of children and families, but instead, the approach taken as social workers address these issues.

Service Integration

As local governments seek to provide for the needs of their communities, one effort that has gained attention is the strategy of service integration. Hassett and Austin (1997) define service integration (SI) as “efforts to reduce or eliminate divisions or boundaries between categorically defined and provided services” (p. 10). Similarly, O’Looney (1994) describes SI as “specific changes believed to make the system more efficient, effective and comprehensive” (p. 32). The strategy of service integration seeks to make improvements to social services that have been found to be fragmented, uncoordinated, inflexible, and confusing (O’Looney, 1994; Reitan, 1998; Waldfogel, 1997). Some believe these problems stem from specialization within social services requiring one family to be referred to multiple agencies to meet a variety of needs (Leon, 1999; O’Looney, 1997). In a system divided through specialized expertise, there may be little communication between service providers, causing families to feel like they are starting over with each new referral.

Although the SI movement can be traced back to the mid 1900s, there was a renewed interest in this practice in the late eighties and early nineties (Hassett & Austin, 1997; O’Looney, 1997). Currently, there are examples of SI initiatives in several states including Georgia, California, Kentucky (O’Looney, 1997), Maryland, Colorado (Waldfogel, 1997), and Arizona. Hassett and Austin (1997) describe mixed motivations for SI efforts. Client advocates see integration as an opportunity to provide more comprehensive and effective services to families. Agency administrators and governmental leaders may look to SI as a more efficient and cost-effective way to provide services.

In addition to mixed motivations for employing SI practices, there are other factors complicating implementation. For example, Halley (1997) states “SI has been characterized as lacking crisp language, being, at once, a philosophy, an objective and a set of strategies and structural arrangements” (p. 146). Lack of clarity and direction may affect the effectiveness of such initiatives. In addition, O’Looney (1997) suggests implementing SI is limited by a lack of current research informing this practice. It appears that further development of the idea of SI along with research findings may be needed to better inform future efforts.

Arizona's Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Service Integration (BSCSI)

In 2003, social service leaders in Arizona were concerned regarding the number of families who were living in poverty, involved with the child welfare system, and at-risk for inadequate housing, nutrition, and healthcare. DES leaders desired to increase access and coordination of social services in an effort to better address these issues. DES approached the Annie E. Casey Foundation regarding implementing the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) model as a way of implementing responsive, creative solutions to these complex social problems. Through financial and technical support provided by the Casey Foundation, a planning team was put in place to: (a) form a collaborative of 20 teams for the purpose of increasing service coordination and efficiency, (b) plan the learning summits needed to train and support teams in the BSC process of change adopted for this project, and (c) offer general oversight to the project.

The planning team asked each division within DES to nominate members who were ultimately assigned to one of the 20 teams located in their geographical area. The collaborative brought together groups of people representing three interests. Under the umbrella of Arizona's DES, there are many social services including the administration of programs to address child maltreatment, financial need, and child support. Each BSCSI team was formed through nominations of representatives assigned from each division of DES. In addition to DES professionals, each division nominated community leaders who were involved in each local area who were also invited to serve on a BSCSI team. These BSCSI participants could be administrators or practitioners from non-profit agencies, pastors or elders from faith institutions, or other community members concerned with social services. Finally, each team also recruited family members to bring the important perspective of service recipients. Brun and Rapp (2001) conclude "proponents of the strengths perspective risk being one of the oppressors themselves if they do not systematically and consistently seek the opinions of individuals receiving strengths-based services" (p. 279). Understanding the collaborative could not adequately address social service issues without hearing directly from recipients; a key priority was the recruitment of family partners. Ultimately, throughout this year-long effort, the collaborative included the participation of 93 family partners, 107 community partners, and 118 DES partners who were assigned to one of 20 local teams.

The entire collaborative came together at the first learning summit in January of 2006. At this meeting, teams were formed and oriented to their purpose. The purpose of each team was to identify barriers to services and to explore creative actions that could lead to increased integration of services in each community. Specifically, each BSCSI team was trained in the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) process (Deming, 1986) for initiating small tests of change that can be spread across to other communities and, ultimately, across the state. Teams met locally each month to identify creative ways to strengthen social services for a period of one year. Two additional learning summits were held with the entire collaborative in May and October of 2006 to provide further support to the teams.

The goal of service integration through collaborative processes fits SI practices. One unique aspect of this SI initiative was the deliberate attention paid to engaging families

on each BSCSI team. Although there are several principles underlying the strengths perspective, “the first is a belief that people have the capacity to determine what is best for them” (Weick et al., 1989, p. 353). Colby (1997) suggests “a community must have ownership of the project” (p. 9), while Chapin (1995) similarly concludes “social policy that reflects the reality of its intended recipients is more likely if the policymakers are also the people directly affected by the policy” (p. 509). We contend that bringing the strengths of professionals, community leaders, and families together through collaboration for the purpose of seeking creative solutions provides an illustration of a strengths-based, community initiative on service integration.

METHODS

Arizona State University’s Partnership for Community Development (PCD) was approached to conduct a study to examine the process of the BSCSI. The research team utilized a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods through a sequential exploratory design (Creswell, 2003) to understand the functioning of these teams. Specifically, the research team initially collected qualitative data through focus groups conducted with 13 of the 20 BSCSI teams. An analysis of this data suggested the qualitative sample cited strengths and barriers related to the functioning of their teams. This qualitative analysis was used to develop a survey instrument with closed-ended items to further test the variables identified in the focus groups. This survey was sent to the entire collaborative, allowing all members the opportunity to participate in at least one component of this study. The study was approved and monitored by ASU’s Institutional Review Board.

Qualitative Methods

The qualitative component of the research was used to examine the experiences of the teams in greater depth. The researchers used purposive sampling to identify 13 of the 20 teams to participate in the qualitative component of the study. Specifically, the researchers desired to seek a sample of teams that represented diversity across the collaborative. Therefore, rather than choosing a random sample of teams, teams were chosen from all geographic locations across the state leading to an oversampling of rural areas. Specifically, six teams representing metropolitan areas in Phoenix and Tucson were included whereas the other seven teams came from locations across Arizona. A semi-structured interview guide provided in Table 1 was used to conduct focus groups with each team to explore their perceptions regarding the purpose of the collaborative, the functioning of the teams, and the effectiveness of their efforts to initiate change.

The focus groups were co-facilitated by two members of a team of five researchers. The team included the Principal Investigator (PI) of the qualitative component of the project and four masters level social work research assistants (RA) who were trained and supervised by the primary researcher. Consistency in facilitation was established through: (1) an initial training provided by the PI for all of the RAs, (2) weekly RA supervision meetings led by the PI, (3) attendance of RAs at two focus groups facilitated by the PI for the purpose of modeling facilitation, and (4) the use of an interview guide.

Table 1: Interview Guide

1.	What led you to become involved in this team?
2.	What about being on this team have you enjoyed?
3.	Were there any barriers that made it difficult for you or someone else to participate fully on this team?
4.	What do you see as the purpose of this team?
5.	In what ways has your work as a team led to improved services for families in AZ?
6.	Can you share a few examples of how your work in this team has led to improved outcomes for a family?
7.	If the Breakthrough Series is to continue successfully, what do you think needs to happen to move forward?

The focus groups ranged in length from 50 to 120 minutes and were audio-taped and transcribed to prepare for analysis. Ultimately, of the 318 registered collaborative members, 97 participated in one of the 13 focus groups. Important to note is that not all 318 people who were registered as collaborative members were actively participating at the point of the study. This sampling frame includes any person who attended a meeting at any time, even if that person only attended one meeting or event. Although exact numbers are not available, leaders of the collaborative estimate that the number of active participants ranged from approximately 150 to 200 at the point of the study. Therefore, this suggests the 97 qualitative participants represent about half of the active collaborative members.

To analyze the qualitative data, the research analysts used both open and theoretical coding as described by Coleman and Unrau (2008). Open coding involved a team of five analysts reading the transcripts for common words or ideas that were expressed. Based on this initial reading, master codes were identified leading to the development of a protocol used for secondary coding. The analysts used the protocol to go back into the data and code each meaning unit according to the codes established through the initial analysis. All quotes assigned to each code were integrated allowing for an in depth vertical analysis of all meaning units contained within each theme. Additionally, horizontal analysis was conducted that involved looking at relationships across themes. The findings were ultimately reconstructed and presented to the collaborative at the final BSCSI summit.

The qualitative research team used various strategies to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. First, triangulation by observer (Padgett, 2008) was used such that five researchers were involved in data analysis to increase the likelihood that important perspectives on the data were not missed. Additionally, reflexivity, a thoughtful consideration of one's effect on the research process (Horsburgh, 2003), was used.

Specifically, the team met before analysis to identify preconceived notions regarding service integration and the BSCSI project. The team also met twice during data analysis to reflect on how social location could affect the data analysis process. Finally, although member checking was not conducted, the PI presented the findings to the entire collaborative at their final learning summit. Anecdotally, several professional, community, and family partners approached this researcher at the end of this presentation and reported the findings captured their experiences. As of result of these efforts and this informal feedback, we believe we increased the confidence that these findings represent a trustworthy portrayal of the data.

Quantitative Methods

Once the qualitative researchers completed their analysis, the prevailing themes were identified and used to develop a quantitative instrument to test these findings with a larger sample of the collaborative. Specifically, the quantitative component of the BSCSI evaluation consisted of an instrument developed by the survey team and administered online or by mail. The evaluation consisted of several sections measuring a series of variables. The survey measured (a) the perceived level of functioning of the community teams, (b) the extent to which participants felt the work of their team was effective, and (c) the perceived barriers to effectiveness.

All of the following groups of items were derived from the focus groups' results. Nine items asked the extent to which team members felt *characteristics* related to successful team outcomes were descriptive of their teams. These were measured on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Five items were asked regarding the extent to which team members felt various *actions* related to successful team outcomes were descriptive of their teams. These were measured on a five-point scale ranging from "not helpful" to "extremely helpful." Twelve items were asked regarding the extent to which team members felt various problems created *barriers* to achieving successful team outcomes. These were measured on a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

The next variables incorporated into the survey related to the experiences respondents had with their teams. They were asked questions regarding the formats for their meetings and the level of participation of different types of team members. They were then asked to respond to several questions related to their experiences with the team measured on a five point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." These questions were drawn from Krile (2006). Finally, they were asked to provide an overall satisfaction assessment of their team's progress (five-point scale where 1 = not satisfied and 5 = extremely satisfied).

The instrument was sent or made available to all team members generally following Dillman's (2007) approach. Team members were first sent an email message from BSCSI staff letting them know the study would be conducted and encouraging their participation. They were then sent an email message with a link to the web-based survey by the researchers. This was followed by two email message reminders several days after the original message. For team members with no email address, essentially the same

procedure was followed by mail, with a cover letter, paper evaluation, and postage paid reply envelope sent initially and postcard reminders sent later. A total of 315 team members (contact information for three participants was not available) were contacted by email or mail to complete the questionnaire with 145 responses for a response rate of 46%. The demographic profile of survey respondents is included in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (N=145)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	92	78.6
Male	25	21.4
Age (mean = 48.6)		
24-39	19	17.6
40-49	39	36.1
50-59	38	35.2
60+	12	11.1
Education		
Less than high school	1	0.9
High school diploma	7	6.1
Some college	37	32.2
Two year college degree	21	18.3
Four year college degree	34	29.6
Advanced degree	15	13.0
Annual income		
\$20,000 or less	6	5.4
\$20,001-40,000	38	34.2
\$40,001-60,000	33	29.7
\$60,001-80,000	14	12.6
\$80,001+	20	18.0
Race/Ethnicity		
Caucasian	66	57.9
Latino	34	29.8
American Indian	9	7.9
African American	4	3.5
Other	4	2.7
Type of participant		
Family partner	13	11.0
DES partner	72	61.0
Community partner	33	28.0

FINDINGS

The qualitative data analysis led to the identification of three themes each explained by a set of sub-codes. Specifically, when describing their experiences with the BSCSI, findings suggest participants in this research: (1) experienced a series of barriers to their efforts, (2) demonstrated a sincere commitment to the principles of service integration, and (3) relied on strengths to overcome challenges to achieve positive outcomes. These findings were supported by the responses on the quantitative instrument as well.

Barriers and Challenges

As team members discussed their experiences, three barriers were consistently identified: (a) confusion regarding roles and purpose, (b) lack of support from the larger social service system, and (c) difficulty maintaining and recruiting family partners.

Table 3: Barriers Experienced by Team Members

Barriers	Percents					Mean
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	
Confusion about who was in charge of the team	10.9	34.0	20.4	20.4	12.9	2.9
Confusion about the purpose of the project	4.8	21.8	20.4	34.7	17.0	3.4
Lack of knowledge about the project by the larger DES community	1.4	13.6	14.3	32.7	36.1	3.9
Not feeling that the team was valued	8.8	27.2	29.3	20.4	12.9	3.0
Lack of resources needed to implement actions	2.7	15.0	20.4	32.7	27.2	3.7
Lack of authority to implement actions	5.4	13.6	21.8	25.9	32.0	3.7
Difficulty engaging family partners	0.7	10.2	12.9	25.2	49.7	4.1
People moving in and out of the team	1.4	8.2	12.9	42.2	32.0	4.0
Took a while to get started	1.4	19.7	15.6	36.1	25.9	3.7
Establishing team cohesiveness took some time	1.4	21.1	14.3	42.9	19.0	3.6
Extranet/computer problems	3.4	16.3	27.9	22.4	27.2	3.6
Overly complex process	2.7	21.8	25.9	28.6	19.7	3.4

Confusion regarding roles and purpose. Several participants discussed facing confusion early on in the project regarding their purpose. One community partner stated, “I think in the beginning people didn’t know which way they were going and what was their role” while a DES partner stated, “I think a lot of it early on was confusion. We were spinning our wheels a lot at the beginning.” Some DES partners thought they were required to participate in the collaborative despite contrary communication suggesting involvement was to be voluntary. Family and community partners also expressed a lack of clarity regarding their purpose and role. This issue was also noted by respondents to the survey (Table 3). A number of participants agreed that there was a lack of clarity regarding the purpose, and some noted confusion about who was in charge of the team. When asked about actions that could have helped, nearly all indicated that increased clarity of the project and process would have been at least moderately helpful (Table 4).

Table 4: Support for Teams

Team suggestions	Percents				Mean
	Not helpful	Slightly helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful	
Increase clarity of the project and process	2.0	9.5	35.4	51.7	3.4
Increase knowledge about this project relative to the larger DES system	1.4	7.5	33.3	56.5	3.5
Increase acknowledgment and encouragement for the teams	2.7	19.0	32.0	43.5	3.2
Provide incentives for family partner participation	1.4	14.3	24.5	57.8	3.4
Support from DES for engaging more family partners	4.8	10.9	27.2	55.1	3.4

Lack of support from the social service system. DES partners and some of the community and family partners discussed experiencing a lack of support from the larger social service system as one significant barrier to the work of their BSCSI team. Lack of support was perceived by these participants in different ways. Some team members who were social service professionals felt their supervisors did not support their participation in the collaborative, they received criticism for time spent away from their jobs, and they did not receive workload reduction for the time spent on BSCSI activities. One team member stated, “There’s no buy in from supervisors.” In addition, many felt administration did not support the work of the BSCSI teams. One community partner stated, “We could not get our ideas approved” while another partner stated, “The larger system has not bought into the service integration philosophy creating resistance to the ideas generated through PDSAs.” Survey participants reported these types of barriers as

well. Most felt that the larger DES community was not knowledgeable about the project (Table 3) and that increased knowledge about the project would have been at least moderately helpful (Table 4). They also felt the teams did not have the resources or the authority to implement actions (Table 3). The respondents tended to be split between agreeing and disagreeing that their team was valued, and a large percentage (76%) felt that more acknowledgement and encouragement for the teams would have been helpful (Tables 3 and 4).

Difficulty maintaining and recruiting family partners. All the teams we spoke to expressed a clear commitment to incorporate family and community voice on these teams. When family and community voice was included, the teams clearly saw the benefit. They reported increased insight and understanding regarding how to improve services for families. At the same time, all but two teams discussed significant difficulty maintaining family voice on their teams. The teams reported that some families would verbally commit to attendance but then not show up for meetings. When they did come, attendance was inconsistent making it difficult to fully engage family partners in the process. One DES partner explained, “Our biggest challenge was keeping the family partners. Although initially we had three family partners that were involved and interested and excited, one by one other things in their lives took priority, and they became less interested in us.” Teams discussed conflicts in scheduling meetings and events as families needed evening or weekend meetings while DES partners and many community partners preferred day events. Many teams were quite creative and diligent in their attempts to accommodate and engage family partners. However, when changes were made to accommodate families, sometimes families would not attend and the teams would also lose DES and community participation as a result of changing the meeting time. All teams reported a desire for further education and support regarding this barrier. The concern regarding including family members was clearly reiterated in the quantitative results. Over 75% of respondents agreed that difficulty engaging family partners was a barrier (Table 3) and nearly all felt that incentives and additional support from DES would have helped in engaging family partners (Table 4).

Commitment to the Service Integration Philosophy

Findings suggest the BSCSI teams experienced many barriers to their efforts ranging from confusion regarding their roles or purpose, difficulty retaining family partners along with a perceived lack of support and time constraints. Considering these struggles, one might expect that some of the teams would not have made it through the full year of this project. Yet, as the research team examined the experiences of the collaborative, we discovered that *all* teams were still meeting, pursuing small tests of change through the PDSA process and making improvements in services in their communities. As we pondered this finding, we identified many statements in our interviews that were coded as “commitment” that explained why the teams kept going despite the struggles they faced. This finding was also apparent in the survey results with 75% reporting agreement to a commitment to the philosophy of the program (Table 5).

Table 5: Characteristics of Successful Teams

Team characteristics	Percents					Means
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	
Commitment to the philosophy of the program	2.0	4.1	17.0	49.0	26.5	4.0
Strong participation by family partners	17.7	22.4	16.3	27.2	15.6	3.0
Strong participation by community partners	4.1	16.3	11.6	40.8	26.5	3.7
Diverse knowledge and experience represented on the team	0.7	1.4	4.8	52.4	40.1	4.3
Strong leadership for the team	0.7	11.6	22.4	38.1	25.9	3.8
Good relationships among team members	2.0	2.0	8.8	51.7	34.7	4.2
Having fun during meetings	2.0	4.8	15.0	46.3	31.3	4.0
Maintaining flexibility during the process	3.4	4.8	13.6	50.3	27.2	3.9
Demonstrating innovation	2.7	6.8	16.3	45.6	26.5	3.9

Many reported that as the year progressed, some of the original participants left and the remaining partners were the ones most committed to the philosophy. The teams may be smaller, but in some ways, became stronger through their shared commitment. Demonstrating this commitment, one DES partner reported:

In the past, it's always been DES making decisions and never hearing the voice of DES customers. Finally, that's changed and through the Breakthrough Series this is happening. So that's a good thing! It's been a really good experience.

Similarly, a family partner stated, "I saw all these people in one room saying we can make difference, we want to understand what it's like. I want to be a part of that so bad! I want to be a part of change!" Our research team observed members committed to the project, who desired for this philosophy to continue such that services would be improved through service integration.

In addition to demonstrating a commitment toward service integration, participants consistently spoke of their desire to incorporate family voice in social service delivery. One DES partner illustrated this commitment stating, "This is the first time we have listened to families. DES has always made the decisions, it didn't matter what anybody else thought. Now, the roles are kind of reversed, and it's really having a good impact for

the customers.” Similarly, one community partner concluded, “We wouldn’t even know some things are problems without hearing it from our families.” DES and community partners consistently discussed the insight gained from the involvement of families.

Along with increased insight, many partners also discussed how their motivation elevated when they saw the impact of their work first hand. For example, one DES partner talked about a renewed passion for her job. She stated:

I stick with this because my families are benefiting from it. So, it makes me more professional as a social worker, and it makes me fall in love with my job more and with other people with the same passion and purpose.

DES and community partners reported many intrinsic benefits of collaborating with families on their BSCSI teams. One striking finding related to family voice was the benefits identified by the family partners themselves. While family voice brought insight to social service workers, families also came to understand more about the perspective of the worker through their involvement in the BSCSI. For example, one family partner shared:

Being part of the Breakthrough Series, I get to see them actually doing their job and I see the passion. I have something to offer, because I have been through it. But, they are not just learning what it’s like to be on my side. I am also learning what it is like for them. Everyone has been learning.

In addition to increased insight, family members also developed self-esteem as they were involved in the BSCSI. One family partner stated:

When she asked me to participate, I just burst into tears, I was just so excited. Just the fact that she would ask me to participate in something to help other people showed that she did have faith in me. It gave me what I needed to continue in my sobriety. If I didn’t have the Breakthrough Series to be involved in, I don’t know where I would be.

Another family partner stated, “Being a part of the Breakthrough Series changed my life. Before I was nobody, now I am somebody.”

Overcoming Barriers and Challenges

As the teams discussed overcoming the challenges, it was clear that their commitment to the service integration philosophy and their desire “to make a difference” allowed them to move forward. In addition to this commitment, the teams described several strengths that helped support them as they sought to overcome these barriers. A spirit of perseverance fueled by a sense of hope, collaboration and communication, effective leadership, and relationship building helped these teams to persevere despite these struggles.

A spirit of perseverance driven by a sense of hope. As participants discussed barriers they faced during their involvement in this collaborative, our research team observed a spirit of perseverance that defined the character of these teams. As these BSCSI teams identified obstacles, they also discussed many strategies used to overcome

these struggles. Collaborative members used phrases like “we just wouldn’t give up” and we “stuck with it” illustrating this spirit. One DES partner illustrated this point stating, “We’ve had a lot of barriers, but, I am really proud of the team members because they’ve stuck through it all. We kept trying and trying and trying.” These teams simply would not give up. Along with a spirit of perseverance, the research team also identified a sense of hope woven throughout much of our conversation. One family partner stated, “Being involved in the BSC gives me more hope for the future” while a DES partner shared, “What we did for families gave me a ray of sunshine, of hope, that we’re moving in the right direction.” When asked about his involvement in the collaborative, one community member responded, “What keeps me coming back? Hope. Hope that whatever services we’re providing can help and we’re united by that one goal.” As these teams talked about their work with the collaborative, they asserted their belief that they could make a difference. It appeared as if they looked past obstacles in order to see the possibilities. The findings suggest perseverance was realized for teams through a pervasive sense of hope.

Collaboration and communication. In addition to their spirit of perseverance and a sense of hope, these teams consistently talked about the importance of collaboration and communication in their process. How did they overcome the barriers they faced? Put simply, they worked together. The ability to bring partners together coming from diverse experiences and backgrounds allowed these teams to understand the problems in a new way. Having multiple perspectives allowed the teams to identify more creative solutions. Working together and talking things out appeared to help these teams overcome obstacles leading to improved outcomes. One DES partner asserted this idea stating, “We worked together, discussing issues and how can we resolve it, and how we can help one another. I felt that a collaborative spirit was there.” Another DES partner summed up this point stating, “DES can’t do it alone. Community partners can’t do it alone. Family partners can’t do it alone. But, when we come together and work toward a common goal, that’s the key!” Involvement by community members was an important aspect of successful teams according to survey respondents, however the challenges of participation by family members was once again evident (Table 5). Having multiple perspectives also allowed the teams to identify more creative solutions. This was strongly reiterated by survey respondents with 92% agreeing that diverse knowledge and experience was a characteristic of a successful team (Table 5).

Effective leadership. One idea discussed by several participants of the BSCSI was coded as “leadership.” Many teams who were pleased with the accomplishments of their team gave credit to team leaders for their ability to keep the team organized, on track and informed. One family partner discussed this concept stating, “I think leadership helps. He’s got great leadership. Our team leader keeps us well informed. He keeps us involved.” Similarly, a DES partner stated, “Our leader has all the qualities to lead a team like this. I just wanted to recognize her as somebody who I have a lot of respect for, for not giving up and continuing to lead us,” while another DES partner concluded, “I think our team leader is a wonderful example of someone who has the right attitude and personality to work with a diverse group of people like we have.” This qualitative finding

was reemphasized in the survey in which 64% of respondents felt this was a characteristic of a successful team (Table 5).

Relationship building. Finally, one of the most consistent comments we heard during our time with BSCSI participants highlighted the importance of relationship building during this project. Words such as “bonds,” “connections,” and “friendships” were used when participants spoke about what helped their team succeed. Relationships were also identified as what many participants enjoyed most about being involved in the collaborative. Survey respondents echoed this sentiment noting that both good relationships among team members and having fun during meetings were hallmarks of successful teams (Table 5). One community member concluded, “It’s the people that keep me coming back to this team. It’s the heart they have for what they are doing.” Similarly, one family partner explained, “There are lots of different personalities, different ways of doing things, but, still, the bond, the bond that we continue to create is there.” The relationships that were formed on these teams allowed diverse groups of people to come together, identify commonalities and move forward in the work of their team.

DISCUSSION

There are limitations to this study. These findings are not generalizable, and data gained through focus groups may be hindered by social desirability. The additional quantitative data that was collected allowed all members of the collaborative to participate. However, there is no way to ascertain whether the 46% response rate may have represented many of the same people who participated in the focus groups. In addition, there was significant missing data in the quantitative survey, particularly for the demographic questions, another limitation of the study. Finally, this project focused on the process of the teams, not outcomes. We are unable to draw conclusions about the success of the efforts, but instead focused on the perceptions of the people most intimately involved in the work of this collaborative for the purpose of understanding more about the experiences of those involved in this initiative.

Despite these limitations, the data provide some important insights into the experiences of participants of this strengths-based initiative. Specifically, findings highlighted the challenges faced when collaborative teams are brought together for the purpose of improving services through integration. Confusion, lack of support, and practical issues such as scheduling conflicts made this task difficult. However, a striking finding was the commitment the remaining members of this collaborative maintained to the service integration philosophy and to their team approach. This commitment led to perseverance, increased communication, and relationship building to accomplish their goals. At the end of the project, teams were pleased with their progress and were able to cite specific examples regarding how their efforts translated into positive outcomes for families.

Specifically, the collaborative implemented 105 innovative strategies to improve social services, including procedures to increase community education and awareness of services, efforts to enhance efficiency of service delivery, and activities to improve

customer service. For example, 19 efforts involved increasing access to services by developing service directories, improving telephone systems, and providing more accurate information in the lobbies of social service areas. Another 19 activities sought to increase efficiency by streamlining application procedures, creating new forms and case tracking processes, and implementing new ways of sharing information across the divisions within DES. Twenty-three of the strategies sought to increase communication between service providers and recipients by holding community forums and further exploring client satisfaction with services. Seven of the innovations related to education and training such as offering GED classes during both day and night hours, conducting prevention workshops for teens about dating violence, and providing job training for youth. Finally, 37 of the activities related to improving customer service and enhancing the physical environment of places at which services are delivered. For example, one team was able to solicit volunteer artists to paint a mural in a lobby, one team created a waiting area for children inclusive of toys and furniture appropriate for young children, and one team partnered with seniors to provide artwork in the waiting areas.

As the collaborative brought social service professionals, community leaders, and families together for the purpose of improving services in Arizona, it is important to note a few of the unexpected positive impacts that were also discussed by partners in this project. First, social workers identified a renewed passion for their jobs as they had the opportunity to sit at the table with families to improve services. As social workers came to see families not as clients, but as people seeking positive change for their communities, this commonality encouraged many of the professionals involved in the collaborative. Considering challenges facing the social work workforce such as burnout and turnover, striking comments made by professionals involved in this collaborative suggested this type of work may have an impact on one's renewed commitment to the mission of the field. Second, families acknowledged an increased respect for the professionals as they talked about seeing the struggles and barriers social workers face in a new way. Increased insight and understanding between families and professionals may help to bridge the gap of misunderstanding common in these relationships. In addition to increased respect for workers, family partners also discussed being empowered by their work on the collaborative. Several family partners suggested that being asked to serve in this capacity raised their self esteem, brought purpose to their lives and brought relationships they found meaningful. Although this study did not deliberately explore the impact of the BSCSI on participants, many of the comments from the qualitative data suggested this was an unexpected but positive finding.

IMPLICATIONS

As agencies consider collaborative efforts such as these, it may be helpful to review implications from this study. First, it is important that early communication seeks clarity for team members regarding their purpose and roles in the process. A decrease in ambiguity may have helped maintain some of the partners who left the collaborative. Particularly when people are engaged in volunteer efforts, it seems critical that they be able to see the purpose and potential benefit realized through their efforts to encourage ongoing involvement. Second, team members need to be supported by agency

administration such that their efforts have the ability to affect change within the organization. Volunteers and professionals alike experience frustration when they face ongoing barriers to implementation of new ideas. This discouragement can undermine community efforts such as these. Therefore, increased communication and collaboration is needed between these teams and the larger social service delivery system in similar efforts that seek to improve and integrate services.

Even with improved coordination, barriers can be expected. Practical support and acknowledgement are needed to encourage teams to move forward despite the obstacles they face. Similarly, flexible yet consistent leadership is critical as the teams must negotiate diverse schedules, opinions, and needs while maintaining their commitment a common vision. Team leaders play an essential role in facilitating productive dialogue and organizing efforts so that action is taken. Finally, as collaborative efforts seek to include family members, clearly one of the hallmarks of this initiative, teams need more support in making this happen. Future research is needed to help community-based initiatives understand how to better recruit and engage family partners in such efforts.

CONCLUSION

The BSCSI provides an example of a strengths-based initiative seeking to improve social services through increased integration by creating a collaborative of 20 diverse teams coming together to dialogue about problems and solutions across these local communities. The findings from the mixed methods examination of this effort allowed the researchers to observe a complex process seeing both the challenges faced along with the ability to persevere and ultimately observe the impact for families living in these communities. Lessons learned from this initiative can be helpful to other organizations who similarly value community-based efforts to address complex problems.

References

- Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). (2007). *The Annie E. Casey 2007 Kids Count data book: State profiles of child well-being*. Baltimore, MD: Author.
- Blundo, R. (2001). Learning strengths-based practice: Challenging our personal and professional frames. *Families in Society*, 82(3), 296-304.
- Boyes-Watson, C. (2005). Seeds of change: Using peacemaking circles to build a village for every child. *Child Welfare*, 84(2), 191-207.
- Brun, C., & Rapp, R. C. (2001). Strengths-based case management: Individuals' perspectives on strengths and the case manager relationship. *Social Work*, 46(3), 278-288.
- Chapin, R. K. (1995). Social policy development: The strengths perspective. *Social Work*, 40(4), 506-514.
- Cohen, B. (1999). Intervention and supervision in strengths-based social work practice. *Families in Society*, 80(5), 460-466.

- Colby, I. C. (1997). Transforming human services organizations through empowerment of neighbors. *Journal of Community Practice*, 4(2), 1-12.
- Coleman, H., & Unrau, Y. (2008). Analyzing qualitative data. In R. Grinnell & Y. Unrau (Eds.), *Social work research and evaluation* (8th ed., pp. 387-408). New York: Oxford Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Deming, E. W. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering.
- Dillman, D. A. (2007). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Early, T., & GlenMaye, L. (2000). Valuing families: Social work practice with families from a strengths perspective. *Social Work*, 45(2), 118-130.
- Goldstein, H. (1997). Victors or victims? In D. Saleebey (Ed.), *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (2nd ed., pp. 21-35). New York: Longman.
- Greene, G. J., Lee, M. Y., & Hoffpauir, S. (2005). The languages of empowerment and strengths in clinical social work: A constructivist perspective. *Families in Society*, 86(2), 267-277.
- Halley, A. (1997). Applications of boundary theory to the concept of service integration in the human services. *Administration in Social Work*, 21(3/4), 145-168.
- Hassett, S., & Austin, M. J. (1997). Service integration: Something old and something new. *Administration in Social Work*, 21(3/4), 9-29.
- Horsburgh, D. (2003). Evaluation of qualitative research. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 12, 307-312.
- Itzhaky, H., & Bustin, E. (2002). Strengths and pathological perspectives in community social work. *Journal of Community Practice*, 10(3), 61-73.
- Kisthardt, W. (2006). The opportunities and challenges of strengths-based, person-centered practice: Purpose, principles, and applications in a climate of system's integration. In D. Saleebey (Ed.), *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed., pp. 171-195). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Krile, J. F. (2006). *The community leadership handbook: Framing ideas, building relationships, and mobilizing resources*. St. Paul, MN: Fieldstone Alliance.
- Leon, A. M. (1999). Family support model: Integrating service delivery in the twenty-first century. *Families in Society*, 80(1), 14-24.
- Lietz, C. A. (2006). Uncovering stories of family resilience: A mixed methods study of resilient families, part 2. *Families in Society*, 87(4), 575-582.

- O'Looney, J. (1994). Modeling collaboration and social services integration: A single state's experience with developmental and non-developmental models. *Administration in Social Work, 18*(1), 61-86.
- O'Looney, J. (1997). Marking progress toward service integration: Learning to use evaluation to overcome barriers. *Administration in Social Work, 21*(3/4), 31-65.
- Padgett, D. K. (2008). *Qualitative methods in social work research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rapp, C. A., Saleebey, D., & Sullivan, W. P. (2005). The future of strengths-based social work. *Advances in Social Work, 6*(1), 79-90.
- Reitan, T. C. (1998). Theories of interorganizational relations in the human services. *Social Service Review, 72*(3) 285-309.
- Saleebey, D. (2001). The Diagnostic Strengths Manual? *Social Work, 46*(2), 183-188.
- Saleebey, D. (2006). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sousa, L., Ribeiro, C., & Rodrigues, S. (2006). Intervention with multi-problem poor clients: Towards a strengths-focused perspective. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 20*(2), 189-204.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2007). *Child maltreatment 2005*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing.
- Waldfoegel, J. (1997). The new wave of service integration. *Social Service Review, 71*(3), 463-484.
- Weick, A., Rapp, C., Sullivan, W. P., & Kisthardt, W. (1989). A strengths perspective for social work practice. *Social Work, 34*(4), 350-354.

Author's note:

Address correspondence to: Cynthia A. Lietz, School of Social Work, Arizona State University, 411 N. Central Ave, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ, 85004-0689. Email: clietz@asu.edu

Strategies for Engaging Men as Anti-Violence Allies: Implications for Ally Movements

Erin Casey

Abstract: *As ally movements become an increasingly prevalent element of social justice efforts, research is needed that illuminates effective strategies to initially engage members of privileged social groups in anti-oppression work. This study presents descriptive findings regarding ally engagement strategies and barriers from a qualitative study of a particular ally movement – male anti-violence against women activism. Twenty-seven men who recently initiated involvement in an organization or event dedicated to ending sexual or domestic violence were interviewed regarding their perceptions of effective approaches to reaching and engaging other men in anti-violence work. Participants viewed tailored engagement strategies that tap into existing social networks, that allow men to see themselves reflected in anti-violence movements, and that help men make personal, emotional connections to the issue of violence as most effective. Implications for engaging men in the project of ending violence against women, and for ally movements more generally are discussed.*

Keywords: *Ally development, engaging men, domestic violence, sexual assault, prevention*

INTRODUCTION

Ally movements are predicated on the notion that institutionalized oppression will persist until members of “dominant” social groups become actively involved in ending it. Of central relevance to Social Work’s core values of pursuing social justice and social change, these overlapping anti-racism, anti-heterosexist, and anti-sexism efforts endeavor to engage people who are privileged by oppressive social systems in the project of dismantling those very sources of unearned advantage (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000). While significant work has conceptualized processes through which members of “dominant” groups come to recognize their own sources of unearned social privilege (e.g., Helms, 1990), scant research has examined how members of these groups are then best supported in translating this awareness into active engagement in working to disassemble systems of oppression.

This study examines ally engagement through the lens of a particular ally movement – men organizing against violence against women. Given that sexual and domestic violence persist as significant public health crises, and are largely perpetrated by males (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998), a consensus is emerging that reducing and preventing violence against women requires the participation of men who can model non-violent behavior, and hold their male peers accountable for sexist or abusive conduct (e.g., Flood, 2005). Like ally movements more generally, however, few studies have taken up the question of what approaches best serve to engage “average” men (i.e., men who do not currently see violence against women as an issue relevant to their lives) as potential anti-

Erin Casey, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Washington, Tacoma.

violence allies. The purpose of this study is therefore to present findings from a study of new male anti-violence allies regarding the strategies they perceive to be relevant to other men. Implications of these findings for ally development efforts more broadly will then be discussed.

Men's Anti-violence Organizing Groups

Men's anti-violence organizations are increasingly prevalent in communities and on college campuses, and typically involve males in violence prevention education, skill building related to responding to disrespectful peer behavior, and mentorship of other boys and men (DeKeseredy, Schwartz, & Alvi, 2000; Katz, 1995). Inherent in this work is often an effort to build a critical consciousness among men about the prevalence and impact of violence against women, the links between the embodiment of traditional forms of masculinity, male privilege and violence perpetration, and the role of men in addressing other men's abusive behavior (Hong, 2000). Examples of existing programs include the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program (Katz, 1995) and the Men Can Stop Rape program in Washington, DC, whose "Men of Strength" (MOST) clubs provide adolescent and young adult men the opportunity to critically interrogate notions of masculinity and to enhance their capacity to take a more active stance against male violence (Men Can Stop Rape, 2010). A non-experimental evaluation of MOST club participants found that high school aged boys reported a greater willingness to intervene to stop a peer's inappropriate behavior after 16 weeks of club participation (Hawkins, 2005).

Although some evidence is emerging about the impact of involvement in anti-violence programs, little is known about the nature or effectiveness of the strategies employed to encourage men's initial participation. A handful of studies have examined factors associated with individual men's decisions to become involved in anti-violence work. These factors include sensitization to or personal experience with the issue of violence (Casey & Smith, 2010; Coulter, 2003), peer mentorship or support for involvement (Coulter, 2003), a pre-existing social justice consciousness regarding other issues of oppression (Funk, 2008), and concrete involvement invitations that highlight men's strengths and potential contributions (Casey & Smith, 2010). These factors may therefore also be relevant to ally outreach and engagement strategies. Indeed, evidence from studies of racial ally development suggest that anti-racism involvement is precipitated by exposure to and reflection about race-based oppression, as well as personal connection with mentors and peers who both model ally behavior and invite active participation (Reason, Roosa-Millar, & Scales, 2005). Finally, numerous anti-violence scholars and practitioners have also suggested the importance of using positive engagement strategies that approach men as having a critical role to play in solving violence, rather than approaching men as potential perpetrators or "part of the problem," a method that is likely to foster defensiveness and disengagement (Berkowitz, 2002; Flood, 2005).

Findings from efficacy studies regarding sexual and domestic violence prevention education may also provide hints about elements of effective ally engagement. Although not directly addressing initial outreach strategies for getting men "in the door," these

findings highlight possibly compelling characteristics of engagement programs for men. For example, consensus is emerging within prevention research that single sex (Brecklin & Forde, 2001), male-facilitated (Kilmartin, 2001) prevention programming is more effective in changing men's attitudes than is co-educational programming. Additionally, culturally-tailored efforts that match presentation content to and employ facilitators from within audiences' cultural communities are associated with greater resulting attitude change (Heppner, Neville, Smith, Kivlighan, & Gershuny, 1999). Thus, initial ally engagement techniques which are facilitated by and for men and are culturally relevant may hold greater appeal for potential allies. Still, these components have not been explicitly examined in relation to efforts to reach out to previously uninvolved men.

Purpose of Study

In summary, although evidence is emerging about the impact of participation in anti-violence organizations or curricula on men and the factors that predispose men to seek these opportunities, very little research has examined the strategies that may best foster initial interest among and engagement of male allies in particular, or of anti-oppression allies more generally. To this end, this study examines qualitative data from interviews with 27 men who recently initiated membership or involvement in an anti-sexual or domestic violence effort. Specifically, this study aims to 1) describe the strategies perceived by these allies as effective in engaging other men, 2) identify the barriers to reaching out to potential allies, and 3) evaluate the implications of anti-violence men's engagement strategies for ally development efforts more broadly.

METHODS

Participant Recruitment

Data for these analyses were drawn from a larger study examining factors that precipitate anti-violence involvement for recently recruited male allies. In accordance with procedures approved by the institution's human subjects committee, respondents were recruited via notices disseminated on several topic-relevant national email listservs, through announcements at relevant community meetings throughout a Northwest state, through leaders of men's anti-violence groups in the Pacific Northwest, and through referrals from participants themselves. Potential respondents contacted the researcher directly, and were screened for eligibility. Participation eligibility criteria included initiating on-going involvement in an anti-violence against women organization, event, or group within the past two years at the time of contacting the researcher, and being a man 18 years or older. Because the primary aim of the larger study was to understand the most current influences on men's entrée into anti-violence involvement (these findings are described elsewhere (Casey & Smith, 2010)), recent initiation into anti-violence work was included as an eligibility criterion. This eligibility decision was made in consultation with current male activists, who felt that although data exist on factors associated with long-time involvement in anti-violence men's organizations (e.g. Funk, 2008), knowledge about how to attract and engage "new," and more broadly representative

recruits to the movement is needed. Findings regarding ally engagement presented here therefore reflect the experiences and perceptions of those newly initiated male allies.

Sample

Forty-three men contacted the study and were screened for eligibility. Of these, 14 reported long-term anti-violence involvement and an additional two did not return consent forms and were therefore ineligible for participation. The final sample consisted of 27 men, ages 20-72. All but one identified as White; one man identified as Latino. Of the 16 men ineligible for the study, five identified as African American, one as Latino and 10 as White. Participants came from all regions of the U.S. Length of involvement in anti-violence work at the time of the interview ranged from one to approximately 30 months (only one participant had been doing anti-violence work more than two years at the time of the interview; this discrepancy resulted from a delay in conducting the actual interview). Participants' involvement in anti-violence work generally fell into two categories. First, 11 of the men (41%) were post-college aged respondents who worked (3 participants) or volunteered (8 participants) with a domestic and/or sexual violence-related program, government agency, or partnering men's group. These participants' roles ranged from doing direct advocacy with survivors of violence, to volunteering in a shelter or a prevention education program for youth. The other 16 participants (59%) were involved in college campus-based organizations in which they were engaged in activities such as facilitating educational presentations for other college students, organizing campus-wide anti-violence awareness events, or designing activities or events aimed at garnering additional male participation.

Data Collection and Analytic Strategy

Nine participants were interviewed in person and the remaining 18 were interviewed by phone. Interviews varied from 45 to approximately 90 minutes in length and were semi-structured, with general questions designed to elicit information about engagement strategies and barriers, followed by tailored follow-up questions to explore relevant issues in greater depth. Question topics included the nature of men's involvement, their use and perceptions of effective and ineffective strategies for engaging other men, and the barriers they encountered in efforts to reach men. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Eight participants chose to review and approve the written transcripts of their interviews.

Data were analyzed as transcripts were completed using techniques drawn from grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Analysis proceeded in two stages using the qualitative analytic software program ATLAS-Ti. Because of the paper's primary focus on engagement, all transcripts were first coded by two researchers for general domains, with like domains pertaining to discussions of engagement grouped together. Next, following techniques described by Charmaz (2006), inductive, line-by-line coding on relevant domains was done with the author using extensive simultaneous memoing to uncover concepts within the data. Particular analytical attention was paid to the dimensions of concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), such as temporality, notions of "effectiveness," affective components, etc., which were enhanced using a constant

comparative method both within and between cases. From this comparison, layers of concepts related to both engagement and barriers to engagement were uncovered, which resulted in the construction of a two-tiered framework (see Table 1). Once saturation of concepts was reached, all transcripts were re-read and compared for both confirming and disconfirming cases. Resource constraints did not allow for re-interviewing or theoretical sampling at this point. Trustworthiness was then enhanced in three ways; through review by the second researcher, through six member checks, and through third party checks by two independent readers who evaluated the face validity of concepts and the data used to support them.

RESULTS

Participants described two tiers of strategy for reaching other men. These layers are summarized in Table 1 and are described in turn below. Counts of the number of participants mentioning each theme are provided to further contextualize the data and to speak to “internal generalizability” (Maxwell, 2010, p. 478), or the validity of concepts based on the degree to which they characterize individuals within the sample vs. subgroups within the sample, vs. the sample as a whole. On the surface, men talked about a variety of ways to gain initial access to men, or create venues for engagement. Secondly, respondents discussed tactics or particular ways of approaching deeper conversations about violence and being an ally that they believe hold promise for connecting with other men. These strategies cut across approaches to “gaining access” and are summarized under the “delivering the message” section in Table 1. At both of these levels of engagement, participants described related barriers or challenges to successfully reaching and connecting with other men.

Gaining Access

Participants identified a variety of strategies for “getting men in the door,” and a majority of respondents had personally implemented more than one. Twenty-one of the men (78%) reported that gaining access through personal networks was the most effective approach. This largely occurred through tailored, individual conversations with men in their existing social, family or professional networks. All of the college-based allies endorsed this strategy, while about half of the community-based men mentioned it. Participants identified five additional strategies for gaining access to men (noted below), but many felt that, in isolation, these less personalized approaches are less likely to attract longer term anti-violence involvement among men. Fourteen participants (52%), mostly college-based allies, reported active involvement in presenting or facilitating educational presentations or regarding dating or sexual violence. Eight allies (30%) had participated in organizing larger anti-violence community events or in arranging speakers. Five respondents (19%) took part in staging pledge campaigns (events at which men are encouraged to pledge non-violence or support for ending violence against women), and 5 respondents (19%) were involved in outreach to male youth. Seven men (26%) speculated that larger anti-violence media (TV/radio) campaigns are needed to reach men, although only one had experience implementing this kind of effort. A higher percentage of community-based participants endorsed this strategy. As previously noted,

however, a majority of participants felt that broad, generalized approaches such as media campaigns or large public events are likely to be ineffective at engaging men in a meaningful or longer-term way unless coupled with more personalized opportunities for discussion (see below for further discussion).

Table 1: Proportion of Participants Endorsing Engagement Strategies and Barriers

Theme	College-based allies (n=16) n (%)	Community-based allies (n=11) n (%)	Total (n=27) n (%)
Gaining Access Strategies			
Using personal networks	16 (100)	5 (45)	21 (78)
Educational presentations	12 (75)	2 (18)	14 (52)
Community events or speakers	6 (38)	2 (18)	8 (30)
Media campaigns	3 (19)	4 (36)	7 (26)
Pledge campaigns	4 (25)	1 (9)	5 (19)
Outreach to youth	2 (13)	3 (27)	5 (19)
Barriers to Gaining Access			
Non-personal approaches	10 (63)	4 (36)	15 (55)
Male social privilege	9 (56)	6 (54)	15 (55)
Not identifying with the messenger	8 (50)	3 (27)	11 (41)
Structural barriers	5 (31)	2 (18)	7 (26)
Delivering the Message			
Meeting men where they are			
Tailoring conversations	8 (50)	4 (36)	12 (44)
Relevant role models	5 (31)	4 (36)	9 (33)
Using masculinity	3 (19)	2 (18)	5 (19)
Use of self	9 (56)	2 (18)	11 (41)
Strengths-based approach to men	6 (38)	4 (36)	10 (37)
Survivor stories	5 (31)	3 (27)	8 (30)
Broader conversations	6 (38)	2 (18)	8 (30)
Compelling Communities	2 (13)	3 (27)	5 (19)
Barriers to the Message			
Perceived negativism toward men	8 (50)	2 (18)	10 (38)
Ambivalence about "feminism"	3 (19)	2 (18)	5 (19)

Barriers to Accessing Men

Based on their own experiences of attempting to engage other men's interest in anti-violence work, as well as their perceptions of their own past barriers to engagement, participants described a number of factors that they believed prevent men from attending educational or involvement opportunities. These fell into four general themes. First, 15

respondents (55%) identified *non-personalized approaches* as ineffective at reaching other men. These respondents, mostly college-based allies, perceived that generalized strategies such as posting flyers, sending out letters or mass emails, using posters, billboards or media campaigns, or holding broader community events were often unsuccessful at attracting men's attention or attendance. Participants speculated that because many men view sexual or domestic violence as "women's" issues, they are not motivated to engage with materials or messages that raise these issues in a general way. Respondents suggested that without more personal or individualized links to the issue of violence, men are unlikely to notice educational opportunities or to see them as relevant. One participant expressed frustration with multiple attempts to garner male interest for a campus-based men's anti-violence group through advertising campaigns:

I guess our big problem is that even though we can do advertising or send out e-mails, not many people are willing to sign up, or who knows if they're even reading them because I have no reasons for why they would. We really wanted to get our name out there... but it just didn't work for us. (MAV16)

Second, 15 respondents (55%) identified *male social privilege* as a significant engagement barrier. Participants alternatively described this barrier as other men's beliefs that violence against women is not a significant problem or does not apply to men, or as other men's performance of "stereotypical masculinity" that results in minimizing, making light of, or even tacitly perpetuating the problem of sexual or domestic violence. As one participant noted, "A lot of people, you know, they've grown up with this [attitude] their whole lives, and they just don't see anything wrong with it. They think it's just fine... either, 'I just don't want to get involved, this is not my problem,' or 'yeah, that's just a normal thing to do.'" (MAV1) Another participant described male privilege as a tendency and ability to avoid the topic:

I think that me being an older student, and having lived a little bit of life, I know that just about anything that is very honest about the problem turns men off. It's not something we want to admit to. It's not something we want to acknowledge. It's not something that we willingly want to be confronted with. (MAV14)

Next, 11 respondents (41%) described *not identifying with the messenger* as a barrier for many men. These participants, a higher percentage of whom were college-based, suggested that the identity, perceived identity, age or "outsider" status of some male anti-violence messengers may have reduced the degree to which they influenced other men or convinced them to attend an event or presentation. One college-based participant shared:

We [men against violence group] had an outsider come in... And one time he came in to kind of rouse the masses, and the second time he came in to kind of pull in everybody else... and it didn't really grab many people. So you know that really didn't work. It didn't really work all that well getting someone who was seen as an expert in the field. (MAV11)

Some speculated that the title of anti-violence or men's organizing groups might not offer a point of connection for many men, or that stereotypes of anti-violence men as

“liberal,” or “soft,” deterred men from joining, as evidenced in the following community-based respondent’s comments:

I think that in terms of getting involved in women’s issues, one of the hesitations is a lot of guys think the guys that are involved are like my friend... meek, pony-tailed, soft-spoken, Birkenstocks.... And they don’t want to be associated with that kind of like, asexual, sort of meek stereotype. (MAV3)

Finally, seven participants (26%) mentioned structural barriers such as a lack of time, lack of an accessible anti-violence group in some men’s communities, and lack of support from campus administrations or other social structures as factors in impeding men’s anti-violence engagement.

Delivering the Message

Participants described a variety of specific, intentional approaches to framing messaging about anti-violence work to men. These “delivery” strategies were at the core of what participants identified as strategic and effective approaches to engagement. Six “delivering the message” approaches were described, and are summarized in Table 1.

Meeting men where they’re at. The most common set of engagement strategies employed by men in the study was to approach other men in a tailored and individualized way. Comprised of three sub-themes, “meeting men where they’re at” is a group of strategies generally intended to allow other men to personally relate to anti-violence efforts or conversations and to build on the knowledge and attitudes they hold at the moment they are engaged. Inherent in this set of strategies was an effort to help a potential ally find a personal point of connection to the issue of violence, or to a compelling “harm” done to him or his loved ones because of the existence of violence. Many of the “meeting men where they’re at” strategies seemed to parallel, or perhaps be a response to the barriers to engagement described later in this article.

Tailoring conversations. This first sub-theme in “meeting men where they’re at” was reported by 12 respondents (44%). These participants used an open approach to engaging men individually or in groups that involved asking them questions, assessing their attitudes, learning about them and/or using what they know about the men to frame the way they subsequently engaged in discussion related to the issue of violence. This strategy was reported by half of college-based participants, and about one third of community-based allies. As one participant noted, “I think it’s vitally important to listen to where people are at and truly understand where people are coming from because there’s no way that we can engage people effectively until we know where they are coming from” (MAV24). For some participants, meeting men where they’re at meant literally going to the places men are likely to be – fraternities, elks club, workplaces, etc. Participants endorsing this strategy did not have a prescriptive approach to how they talked about violence with other men, but tailored their conversation to their audience in the moment, such as the approach described by the following participant:

I don’t really go in with a set strategy of how I’m going to work with a person. I kind of go in, I feel out the situation, I see what’s going on, and we might not

even get into that first day. It might just be me making friends with them that day and then talking about it at a later point. But I always go back to it. (MAV15)

Relevant role models. Nine respondents (33%) described the importance of having messengers in their anti-violence group who appeal to, are respected by, or are reflective of the men they are speaking to, so that men could literally “see themselves” in the group. Connected to this is the idea that men should get the message that they don’t have to be someone else, or change in order to be involved. Not mentioned in this category by participants, however, was diversity among messengers in terms of race/ethnicity. One respondent described his groups’ efforts to appeal broadly to their college peers:

I think it’s really important to show that men that are already involved are average, normal people... Because I know that when I had heard presentations before I could never really relate to the person giving the presentation about sexual assault, and it’s never someone that I could really see as... similar to me. And so ... we’ve shown the men on our campus that the men of [anti-violence group] are average Joe type guys. Like they’re a lot like you. They like to go out. They’ve been to a college party before. They have friends, possibly have girlfriends. And it’s because of either they know a victim of sexual assault, or they have girlfriends, and they don’t want a sexual assault to happen to them is why they get involved. And I think like if you could show men that it’s all right to speak up about this subject, more men are going to get involved. (MAV12)

Using masculinity. Finally, five respondents (19%) described strategies that capitalize on or appeal to “traditional” or stereotypical aspects of masculinity as a way to “meet men where they are.” For example, one respondent described using an approach based on his perception that “challenges” appeal to men and draw them in:

... it may even be a cultural stereotype in and of itself, but I think guys tend to... like challenges and respond to them in a positive way for the most part. So if you can sort of frame it in that idea that, ‘We don’t want you to go against the norm simply for the sake of going against the norm; we want you to step up because this is something that we think is an important issue. Hopefully we’ve convinced you that it’s an important issue, and you know we want to challenge you to be the one to take a stand. (MAV2)

Use of self. The second “delivery” strategy was described by 41% of participants, a majority of whom were college-based. This approach was generally characterized by participants being open about their own experiences, faults, past “sexist” mistakes, or vulnerabilities in conversations with other men, or by being a visible advocate or role model and demonstrating the kinds of behaviors he is hoping to see in others. One participant described how he allows other men access to his own emotional processing as a way to engage their empathy:

I will kind of just allow myself to become emotional and just say, ‘You know today was really rough at the meeting... when we talked about this one woman that was sexually assaulted on our campus.’ Or if I get a really intense call on the hotline, you know I’ll come back and say... ‘I got a call and she was saying

how her boyfriend is stalking her and how she's scared he's going to become violent towards her.' You know? I do it because I want people to know that those issues are real, and ...they're in front of our face. (MAV28)

A strengths-based approach to men. A common “delivery” strategy was to relay to men that they are a critical ingredient in ending violence against women. Endorsed by 10 respondents (37%), this strategy is founded on an assumption that men generally want to help, have important strengths to lend, and will be more compelled to become involved if they are approached as “part of the solution” than as the source of the problem. One participant noted:

I think we sometimes believe that men... How can I say this? That men aren't as intelligent about this issue as they really are, and the conversations that I have really show a level of intelligence and a level of integrity that a lot of men have about this issue. And frankly... if you ask a group of men, “What do you guys think about rape and sexual assault,” almost every single one of them... will say, ‘That’s terrible. I would never want that to happen to another person.’ And I think that’s a real key of starting this kind of work, is that men think sexual assault is a bad thing. (MAV 12)

Exposing men to survivor stories. Eight participants (30%) felt that hearing stories, either directly or indirectly, from survivors of violence serves as a powerful way for other men to make emotional connections to the issue of violence and its impact. Several men specifically mentioned Take Back the Night rallies as a particularly compelling awareness and recruiting tool. Other venues mentioned by participants for communicating survivor stories included readings, trainings and videos.

Broader conversations: An additional eight respondents (30%) described organizing trainings, workshops or conversation groups in which education and engagement related to violence was a piece of a larger discussion. These events tackled topics such as sex, dating, masculinity and communication and contextualized issues of violence within these potentially more broadly appealing topics.

Creating compelling communities. Finally, five participants (19%) talked about being a part of or intentionally fostering groups that others would admire and want to join. For these men, the experience of being in a fun, visible, engaged, mutually supportive community was both a transformative personal experience and a persuasive tool for inviting other men’s participation. One participant mused:

Well for me personally, the community aspect of it is unlike anything I’ve ever had. And that definitely keeps me coming back. It keeps me coming. And it’s weird because that was what hooked me in the first place, and I’m still like dumbfounded by this, like really? It’s something that just never gets old, that still kind of surprises me that I walk into a room and talk about my feelings with other men. Like that still amazes me. (MAV30)

Barriers to Message Delivery

Participants described two primary barriers to men “hearing” anti-violence messaging, or connecting with the engagement strategies employed by respondents. First, 10 respondents (38%) noted that any strategy with a remotely *negative approach to men* was ineffective. These mostly college-based participants described negative approaches as dwelling on statistics about the proportion of perpetrators who are male, giving men behavioral “don’ts” to avoid rape, or talking about men’s responsibility for the problem, and suggested that these strategies create an environment in which men feel defensive, “bashed,” or blamed. Respondents suggested that because most men are not perpetrators, hearing about men as perpetrators may feel inordinately shaming, or make the content seem irrelevant. One participant noted that extra caution is needed to guard against a blaming message to men:

...when people talk about this kind of stuff... to men, [the men] are being made to feel guilty as a man. Like, ‘All this sexism exists, and part of it’s your fault.’ I think that’s what a lot of men are hearing. Regardless of whether that’s what people say, that’s what a lot of men are hearing. (MAV19)

Secondly, five participants (19%) felt that men’s ambivalence about or *resistance to “feminism,”* along with their association of violence against women as a “feminist” issue creates a barrier to seeing the contribution they might make in anti-violence work. Respondents speculated that some men may feel confusion about how to simultaneously negotiate their own masculinity and oppose violence against women, or about how to be active against violence without endorsing everything that they feel “feminists” are proposing. One participant summed up this dilemma:

I think a lot of men are afraid that if they embrace feminism... they’re suddenly going to be hypocrites if they still want their wife to please shave her legs. Or if they hold the door for a woman, and that sort of thing. If they look at pornography, you know – ever – they’re going to be a big hypocrite. (MAV3)

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ALLY BUILDING

As a vehicle for examining the process of ally recruitment, this study examined strategies identified by male anti-violence allies as potentially effective for reaching out to other men. Across the tactics described by respondents, three themes emerge that hold implications for both the practice of engaging men in anti-violence efforts, and for thinking about ally development projects more generally. Many of these implications are congruent with core tenets of Social Work practice and are described more fully below.

Use of Social Networks

Across the domains of both gaining access and delivering the message to potential allies, respondents highlighted their belief that reaching men through their existing social networks was more effective than generalized approaches to advertising anti-violence messages. All of the college-based participants and nearly half of the community-based men leveraged their own social, professional and familial ties as a means of reaching out.

In addition to the relatively easier access allies have to their own social circles, engaging men within personal social networks enhances the probability that potential anti-violence recruits will see the movement as relevant, and will view the “messenger” as credible. This strategy is supported by social psychological evidence that individuals may be more influenced by the perceived beliefs of their closest referents, such as friends and family members than by general norms emerging from their community (Cialdini & Trost, 1998), as well as by the evidence cited in the introduction to this paper that culturally-relevant prevention approaches are more effective (Heppner et al., 1999). Further, research suggests that men’s own reported willingness to intervene in the disrespectful behavior of other males is related to their perception of their male friends’ willingness to do the same (Stein, 2007). Ally building efforts more generally may benefit from leveraging allies’ existing social networks as a core strategy for creating personalized and compelling conversations and relationships. Indeed, previous research on social justice ally formation has found that allies’ entrée into activism is often predicated on friendships or mentoring relationships with other allies (Broido, 2000; Reason et al., 2005).

However, prioritizing the leveraging of allies’ social networks may limit access to groups of potential allies who are outside of the “choir” familiar with anti-violence or anti-oppression movements. Here again, prevention research may be instructive. Popular Opinion Leader approaches (POL) identify and recruit natural, charismatic leaders within specific social networks, who are then trained to initiate conversations and skill building with their friends regarding specific health behaviors. POL approaches have been successfully applied in several fields, including HIV prevention (Fernandez et al., 2003), and may be powerful tools within ally-building to harness the influential power of ever-widening circles of social networks.

Starting Where Potential Allies Are

Like the Social Work mantra of “starting where the client is,” participants in this study highlighted the perceived effectiveness of assessing men’s current beliefs and attitudes, and of tailoring conversations to an ally’s level of violence-related awareness at the time of engagement. This tailored engagement is likely assisted by participants’ focus on and perceived success with leveraging their own social networks, as described above. Inherent in this individualized approach was a focus on helping each potential ally to recognize or form a personal connection with the issue of violence against women, in order to foster an emotional commitment to the topic. To do this, study participants used survivor stories, their own experiences, and their knowledge of what is important to the potential ally to personalize their message. Interestingly, although college-based and community based participants endorsed these strategies in somewhat different proportions, all engagement approaches were mentioned by at least some members of both groups, highlighting the importance of tailored efforts.

Participants in this study also echoed the sentiments of anti-violence activists and scholars (e.g., Berkowitz, 2002) in stressing the importance of strengths-based approaches to men that communicate men’s important role in ending violence. Indeed, in previous analyses of this data, and in other research related to social justice ally

development, a specific, tangible, and tailored involvement invitation is often a necessary pre-requisite to initiating formal ally involvement (Broido, 2000; Casey & Smith, 2010). All of this suggests that efforts to encourage potential allies to consider involvement likely need to account for and embark from the current set of beliefs with which they are operating. Further, reaching out to potential allies by highlighting their individual strengths and specific potential contributions is likely a compelling element of engagement.

Negotiating Privilege

Meeting potential allies “where they are” also raises the complication of how and when to assist those allies in confronting their unearned social privilege. Participants in this study, and voices within violence prevention movements more generally (i.e., Flood, 2005), argue for engagement of expanded numbers of men as a way to viably combat violence. This may include men who may identify with or perpetuate problematic aspects of male privilege. Indeed, several of the participants in this study identified male privilege and ambivalence about “feminism” as fundamental barriers to “average” guys becoming involved in anti-violence work. Some of the strategies described by respondents were, concordantly, designed to prevent or deflect male defensiveness related to the issue of violence against women. To overcome these barriers, participants endorsed tailored engagement strategies that highlighted potential male allies’ strengths that at times made strategic use of stereotypical masculinity, and that accounted for the current belief system of the men they were approaching. These strategies create a potential tension between the value of “meeting men where they are” and risking reinforcing or reproducing male privilege within anti-violence efforts. Indeed, in conceptual work regarding “aspiring” social justice allies, Edwards (2006) notes that allies who lack an understanding of the underlying systems of inequity that support violence may unknowingly support those very systems by acting to “protect” women rather than working in partnership with them.

Navigating this tension likely requires a “both-and” approach that combines tailored outreach with increasingly pointed opportunities to consider issues of oppression. Similar to the formation of a social justice consciousness (Helms, 1990), ally-formation is apt to be developmental. Ally efforts can incorporate progressive discussions and learning opportunities regarding privilege while simultaneously calibrating specific involvement activities to individual allies’ current knowledge and ability, in an effort to avoid possible harm to members of marginalized groups. It may also be important to connect with men both around positive aspects of masculinities as well as around ways that some aspects of stereotypical masculinity constrict their own well-being or relationships. For example, Men Can Stop Rape places an emphasis on generating “counterstories” to dominant, narrow conceptualizations of masculinity, which reframe “strength” in terms of men’s contributions towards ending violence and promoting respect. Many current activists also note the importance of building in explicit mechanisms for consulting with and accountability to women and women’s organizations (Flood, 2005; Funk, 2008). As a whole, this suggests that ally engagement efforts should simultaneously demonstrate to individuals the need for their unique contributions within social movements, while

providing progressive opportunities for accountability and for deeper analysis of social inequity.

Limitations

Study limitations include the racial homogeneity of the study sample. Findings presented here almost exclusively reflect White men's perceptions of anti-violence ally development and the factors relevant to their own ally experiences, which was in part an unanticipated consequence of limiting the sample to recent initiates into anti-violence work. A glaring gap in both the findings presented here, and research about male anti-violence allies more generally remains the experiences of men of color around anti-violence mobilization. The small, self-selected nature of the sample also represents a limitation as findings may represent a sub-group of male anti-violence allies whose experiences may not be more broadly generalizable. Future research with larger, more diverse samples is needed to evaluate the replicability of these findings. Research that empirically evaluates the effectiveness and impact of the various engagement strategies surfaced by respondents is also warranted.

The limitation of the study sample to men who had joined anti-violence efforts within the past two years likely circumscribed the range of engagement strategies discussed by participants, and potentially narrowed the focus to strategies relevant to men who are relatively early in their ally formation process. Long-term activists have very important and perhaps different insight into the outreach strategies they experience as effective, and future research would do well to capture this knowledge. Finally, because this study focused only on men who have successfully been engaged in anti-violence work, the voices of non-involved men and what they might find compelling or unappealing are missing. Additional scholarship focusing on the discriminating factors separating male anti-violence allies from non-involved men may shed light on how to design engagement strategies to maximize effective male participation.

CONCLUSION

Social justice ally movements are an important component of efforts to dismantle oppressive systems such as pandemic violence against women. Fostering these movements requires an understanding of the strategies that best engage and retain potential allies in the project of understanding and challenging social injustice. Participants in this study of male anti-violence allies surfaced several engagement strategies that hold promise for recruiting other men into the movement. Specifically, respondents perceived that effective strategies are grounded in potential allies' own social networks, are tailored to and reflective of their diverse identities, and help them make personal connections to the issue of violence. Future research will need to more rigorously test the effectiveness of these engagement strategies, both with anti-violence movements and across social justice ally efforts more broadly.

References

- Berkowitz, A. (2002). Fostering men's responsibility for preventing sexual assault. In P.A. Schewe (Ed.), *Preventing violence in relationships: Interventions across the life span* (pp. 163-196). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Bishop, A. (2002). *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression in people* (2nd ed.). Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood.
- Brecklin, L. R., & Forde, D. R. (2001). A meta-analysis of rape education programs. *Violence and Victims*, 16, 303-321.
- Broido, E. M. (2000). The development of social justice allies during college: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41, 3-18.
- Casey, E. A., & Smith, T. (2010). "How can I not?" Men's pathways to involvement in anti-violence against women work. *Violence Against Women*, 16, 953-973.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Cialdini, R. B., & Trost, M. R. (1998). Social influence: Social norms, conformity and compliance. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th ed., pp. 151-192). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Coulter, R. P. (2003). Boys doing good: Young men and gender equity. *Educational Review*, 55, 135-145.
- DeKeseredy, W. S., Schwartz, M. D., & Alvi, S. (2000). The role of profeminist men in dealing with woman abuse on the Canadian college campus. *Violence Against Women*, 6, 918-935.
- Edwards, K. E. (2006). Aspiring social justice ally identity development: A conceptual model. *NASPA Journal*, 43, 39-60.
- Fernandez, M. I., Bowen, G. S., Gay, C. L., Mattson, T. R., Bitai, E., & Kelly, J. A. (2003). HIV, sex and social change: Applying ESID principles to HIV prevention research. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 32, 333-344.
- Flood, M. (2005). Changing men: Best practice in sexual violence education. *Women Against Violence*, 18, 26-36.
- Funk, R. (2008). Men's work: Men's voices and actions against sexism and violence. *Journal of Intervention and Prevention in the Community*, 36, 155-171.
- Hawkins, S. R. (2005). *Evaluations findings: Men Can Stop Rape, Men of Strength Clubs 2004-2005*. Retrieved from www.mencanstoprape.org
- Helms, J. E. (1990). Toward a model of White racial identity development. In J. E. Helms (Ed.), *Black and White racial identity: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 49-66). Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.

- Heppner, M. J., Neville, H. A., Smith, K., Kivlighan, D. M., & Gershuny, B. S. (1999). Examining immediate and long-term efficacy of rape prevention programming with racially diverse college men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46*(1), 16-26.
- Hong, L. (2000). Toward a transformed approach to prevention: Breaking the link between masculinity and violence. *Journal of American College Health, 48*, 269-279.
- Katz, J. (1995). Reconstructing masculinity in the locker room: The Mentors in Violence Prevention Project. *Harvard Educational Review, 65*, 163-174.
- Kilmartin, C. T. (2001). *Sexual assault in context: Teaching college men about gender*. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publications.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2010). Using numbers in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*, 475-482.
- Men Can Stop Rape (2010). The Men of Strength Club. Retrieved from http://www.mencanstoprape.org/usr_doc/MOST_Club_Brochure_&_Criteria.pdf
- Reason, R. D., Roosa-Millar, E. A., & Scales, T. C. (2005). Toward a model of racial justice ally development. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*, 530-546.
- Stein, J. L. (2007) Peer educators and close friends as predictors of male college students' willingness to prevent rape. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*, 75-89.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (1998). *Prevalence, incidence and consequences of violence against women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

Author's Note:

Address correspondence to: Erin Casey, 1900 Commerce, Box 358425, University of Washington, Tacoma, WA 98402. Email: ercasey@uw.edu

Does Police Intervention in Intimate Partner Violence Work? Estimating the Impact of Batterer Arrest in Reducing Revictimization

Hyunkag Cho
Dina J. Wilke

Abstract: *A variety of societal interventions in intimate partner violence have been established for decades, including the police actively arresting perpetrators. However, it is difficult to find consistent study results to show if arrest is effective. Moreover, there are far fewer studies on victims than on perpetrators. This study utilized the National Crime Victimization Survey to examine if victims whose partners were arrested were less revictimized than those whose partners were not arrested. Results clearly showed that arrest of perpetrators was effective in reducing revictimization, controlling for victims' characteristics and the nature of violence incidents. Also, separated or divorced women showed the highest risk of revictimization. Comparisons with previous studies and implications on police policies are discussed.*

Keywords: *Intimate partner violence, domestic violence, criminal justice, police, revictimization*

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women by their male intimate partners has been recognized as a serious social problem for decades. According to the National Violence Against Women Survey, approximately one quarter of women have been victimized by intimate partners in their lifetime compared with only 8% of men (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) suffer severe physical, mental, and psychological consequences of violence (Goodman, Koss, & Russo, 1993a, 1993b; Monahan & O'Leary, 1999; Schumacher, Feldbau-Kohn, Slep, & Heyman, 2001). More tragically, 33% of the women killed in the U.S. in 2004 were murdered by their male partners (Fox, 2006).

A variety of societal interventions were established to address IPV throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Domestic violence shelters have provided supportive services for victims and their children such as a temporary safe refuge, childcare, and legal advocacy. Police departments have encouraged officers to arrest perpetrators, while prosecutors have proceeded with charges against batterers without victims' participation. Victim protection orders have been issued by courts to prevent batterers from being in close physical proximity to the victim, and voluntary- or court-ordered batterer treatment programs have been developed (Cho & Wilke, 2005; Roberts & Kurst-Swanger, 2002).

Historically, the police disregarded IPV as a private and family matter (R. Berk, Berk, Loseke, & Rauma, 1983; Browne, 1995; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; LaFree, 1981), and had taken "a do-nothing approach" by just "cooling off" the batterer (Roberts & Kurst-Swanger, 2002, p. 103). More recently though, since IPV was recognized as a crime, the police moved from the traditional passive approach to IPV into taking a more active role

Hyunkag Cho, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at Michigan State University. Dina J. Wilke, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the College of Social Work at Florida State University.

in controlling it. Upon arriving at a reported domestic violence incident, the police are expected to arrest the batterer if necessary and provide victims with emergency aid and relevant information. Major intervention strategies of the police include warrantless arrest and pro-arrest policies which have increased arrest rates up to 70% from 1984 to 1989 following the implementation of pro-arrest policies (Baumer, Felson, & Messner, 2003). When 111 grantees funded by the Arrest Policies Program established under the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 were reviewed, the arrest rates significantly increased across all grantees (Archer, DuPree, Miller, Spence, & Uekert, 2003). Another study that looked at IPV incidence and arrest data from Maryland also found that the warrantless arrest policy had a significant positive impact on arrest likelihood (Simpson, Bouffard, Garner, & Hickman, 2006).

The major theoretical framework supporting the arrest of batterers in response to IPV is deterrence theory. This theory contends that when police impose a meaningful reward or punishment (e.g., arrest) for IPV, batterers will be deterred from perpetration (Pate & Hamilton, 1992; Salazar, Baker, Price, & Carlin, 2003; Williams, 2005). Such deterrence is accomplished in two ways; specific deterrence and general deterrence (Gibbs, 1985; McGuire, 2002; Stafford & Warr, 1993). Specific deterrence refers to “the deterrence of potential offenders who have been legally punished” (Gibbs, 1985, p. 88) or “effects on those who have suffered” (Stafford & Warr, 1993, p. 123), and general deterrence refers to “the deterrence of potential offenders who have not been legally punished” (Gibbs, 1985, p. 88) or “effects on the general public” (Stafford & Warr, 1993, p. 123). Deterrence is believed to occur when a potential offender avoids criminal behavior out of a desire to avoid the legal punishment of the behavior (Gibbs, 1985; Williams, 2005).

While arrest is supposed to affect batterers through deterrent effects, victims are also affected by arrest of the batterer. For instance, arrest may send a strong message to victims that domestic violence is a serious social problem and handled by the police seriously. Positive experiences with the police may lead victims to actively seek assistance from the police and others, which will increase their future safety and decrease revictimization. Another effect of arrest to victims would be the increased number of arrests of female victims along with male perpetrators (dual arrest; Finn, Blackwell, Stalans, Studdard, & Dugan, 2004; Martin, 1997). It is not clear whether the increase resulted from women’s increased perpetration of IPV, or reflects police officers’ interpretations of pro-arrest policies. There may be loopholes in pro-arrest policies that may disadvantage victims rather than protecting them. If the victim were dissatisfied with, or disadvantaged by, the involvement of the police, victims would be less likely to report future IPV incident to the police and seek help from others, which may make victims more vulnerable to revictimization than before the police involvement. In this context, revictimization after arrest would be a good way to estimate the impact of arrest on victims.

It is difficult to find consistent study results to show if arrest is effective. While some argue that more batterers are arrested (Archer et al., 2003), others suggest that the police are still unwilling to arrest the batterer (Dugan, 2003). Some contend that police began to effectively control IPV as shown by reduced recidivism rates (Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan, 2001), but others suggest that arrest has failed in deterring batterers from future violence,

providing victims safety, and reducing incidents of IPV (Danis, 2003). One of the challenges facing social workers who serve a variety of clients affected by IPV—victims and perpetrators—is the lack of consensus on how the criminal justice system should deal with IPV. Social workers often find it hard to decide on the best actions to stop the perpetrator's abusive behaviors, ensure the victim's safety, and provide a better environment for their families (Danis, 2003). The current study attempts to fill this gap by using nationally representative data to examine whether victims would be less revictimized if the perpetrator were arrested, when compared with those whose partners are not arrested.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Effects of Arrest on Batterers

One of the most famous and influential studies on the effect of batterer arrest is the Minneapolis domestic violence experiment conducted from 1981 to 1982, the first randomized and controlled test of the effectiveness of arrest (Sherman & Berk, 1984). A total of 314 cases were randomly assigned to one of three police choices; arresting the batterer and detaining him overnight (43% of 314 cases), separating the couple by having the batterer leave for eight hours (28%), and just providing advice and information (28%). Repeat offenses of each of three options were measured 6 months after the treatment both by official police records and victim interviews. The findings show that arrest was the most effective option as the recidivism rate for arrest cases was 10% based on official police records, compared with 19% for advice cases and 24% of separation cases. Recidivism rates based on victim interviews were somewhat different; 19% of the victims reported revictimization for arrest cases, 37% for advice cases, and 33% for separation cases. These results significantly contributed to the nationwide adoption of active police policies.

Five replication studies of the Minneapolis experiment were conducted between 1985 to 1990. The first study was conducted in Omaha, NE, and overall experiment conditions were similar to the Minneapolis experiment (Dunford, Huizinga, & Elliott, 1991). This study failed to find a statistically significant difference in recidivism rates among the three police choices. In Milwaukee, WI, cases were assigned to somewhat different police choices: arrest for 12 hours, arrest for 4 hours, or simple warning of future arrest (Sherman, Schmidt, Rogan et al., 1992). Recidivism rates for both arrest conditions were lower than a warning at 6 months, with no difference between the two types of arrest. However, there was no difference among three choices in recidivism rates 11 months later. A third study in Charlotte, NC also used somewhat different police options: providing advice or separating the couple, issuing a citation for court appearance, and arresting the batterer at the scene (Hirschel & Hutchison, 1992). In this study, there was no significant deterrent effect of arrest. The fourth study conducted in Colorado Springs, CO utilized a large sample of 1,658 cases assigned to one of four options: emergency protective order only, emergency protective order and crisis counseling, emergency protective order and arrest, and restoring order at the scene (R. A. Berk, Campbell, Klap, & Western, 1992). While official police records showed no difference among the options,

victim interviews found that arrest had deterrent effects. Further, police records showed that arrest had a slightly higher deterrent effect for employed batterers than those unemployed, although this was not confirmed through victim interviews. Finally, a study in Miami, FL involved two stages of police intervention; stage 1 compared arrest with no-arrest, and stage 2 compared a follow-up assignment to specialized service units with no follow-up (Pate & Hamilton, 1992). Significant deterrent effects of arrest were found based on both police official records and victim interviews 6 months after the arrest. Arrested batterers showed a significantly lower recidivism rate (15%) than those not arrested (27%), but also fewer violent episodes than those not arrested. The follow-up services showed no difference in recidivism rates.

Clearly the results of studies on arrest are inconclusive. Methodological limitations may account for some of these results. Maxwell and colleagues (2001) attempted to control for some of these limitations by completing a meta-analysis of these studies. They reported that after pooling these studies and controlling for the differences, overall recidivism rates for arrested batterers were significantly less than those not arrested based on victim interviews, although no difference was found based on the police official record. While the empirical data are inconclusive, the ideological debate is heated. For example, opponents of arrest suggest that the assumption of an active police response to protect victims is largely an untested ideological assertion (Danis, 2003; Ford, 2003; Travis, 1998), and question the effect of arrest on long-term victim safety. Proponents of pro-arrest policies argue that the best way to address IVP is arrest, especially since no other police response is more effective (R. A. Berk, 1993), and the problem lies with lenient law enforcement and sentencing rather than arrest by itself (Baumer et al., 2003; Stark, 1996). Broadly speaking, it might be plausible to think that arrest cannot be studied independently because it is just one part of the broader criminal justice system (Gondolf, 2002).

Effects of Arrest on Victims

Research examining the relationship between arrest of batterers and victims' revictimization rarely includes victim characteristics. This may partly be related to concerns that, rather than establishing a context in which violence occurs, including victim-related variables in a study connotes blaming victims for the violence (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005). Nonetheless, several victim-related variables have been suggested as either predictors of revictimization or moderators of the relationship between arrest and revictimization, including age, race, marital status, educational attainment, and injury.

While age is often included in a list of control variables in studies of IPV, it does not appear to be a consistent predictor of revictimization (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005; Mears, Carlson, Holden, & Harris, 2001). Some insisted that older women are more likely to be revictimized than the younger because they often stay in the abusive relationship due to low self-esteem, dependency, or fear of retaliation (Chaudhuri & Daly, 1992; Ferraro, 1997; Flowers, 1996; Giles-Sims, 1983). Others contended that older women might have more experience with IPV than the younger and more active in utilizing resources and services for victims to avoid revictimization (Klein, 1996).

Race has been a controversial issue in IPV research, although IPV occurs across all races and ethnicities. Some research reported high victimization rates among racial minorities (Carlson, Harris, & Holden, 1999; Mears et al., 2001). On the one hand, it may be because they reported IPV to the police more frequently than the White. The minority groups may have limited access to legal and socio-economic resources, and the police may be the only way for them to deal with IPV (S. L. Miller & Wellford, 1997). On the other hand, it may be because of their experience of oppression. The minority groups may consider the police as "one of them" and be reluctant to report IPV to the police, which may make them vulnerable to IPV (Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004; Sampson & Wilson, 1995). However, one study reviewing sixty-four studies concluded that race and ethnicity were not associated with IPV victimization (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005). Overall, researchers have been cautious of proposing any relationship between race and IPV because it is hard to properly contextualize race within the overall social environment (Mears et al., 2001).

Studies that examine the relationship between the victim's marital status and revictimization are inconclusive. Some suggest that revictimization rates are higher for married victims because they cannot end the abusive relationship due to their lack of independence and personal power, which leads to the higher risk of revictimization (McCloskey, 1996), while others fail to show any relationship (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005). Educational attainment has been identified in many studies as being negatively related to revictimization (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005; Farmer & Tiefertal, 2003; Schumacher et al., 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Higher education attainment will be related to higher independent incomes and more access to economic resources, which will help victims take active coping strategies in dealing with violence (Rusbult & Martz, 1995; Waldrop & Resick, 2004). However, there are also studies showing that revictimization is positively associated with higher educational attainment (Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2002).

Some studies reported no relationship between injury and revictimization (Holt, Kernic, Lumley, Wolf, & Rivara, 2002), but others suggested that revictimization rates were less for victims suffering severe IPV incidents than others (J. L. Miller & Krull, 1997). Victims of severe IPV may develop more active forms of behavioral coping skills (e.g., ending the violent relationship, seeking legal help, and avoiding potentially abusive new partners), which may reduce the risk of revictimization (Waldrop & Resick, 2004). One study reported that revictimization rates decreased when the police arrested batterers seriously assaulting victims, which suggests that an effect of arrest may be greater for severe IPV (Harrel & Smith, 1996).

There are, at least, two studies that utilized the national crime data to examine the relationship between reporting to the police and revictimization. Langan and Innes (1986) using the National Crime Survey (NCS) from 1978 to 1982 found that calling the police reduced subsequent assaults by 62% during a 6-month time period following an IPV incident. Felson, Ackerman, and Gallagher (2005) analyzed the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) from 1992 to 2002. They found that not reporting to the police increased the odds of revictimization by 89%, but the effect of arrest was

statistically non-significant. No victim characteristics such as race, education, poverty or marital status were associated with revictimization.

Previous research did not succeed in yielding consistent results on the effectiveness of arrest, and focused mainly on the effects of arrest on batterers, ignoring effects on victims. Although the major beneficiary of arrest should be victims who are supposed to be safer after their partners could no longer perpetrate violence due to arrest, there are far fewer studies on victims than on perpetrators. Moreover, results from a few studies on victims are inconclusive. This study attempts to fill a gap by examining the effects of arrest on victims after controlling for several victim characteristics. Specifically, this study examines if, according to victim self-report, batterer arrest prevents revictimization after accounting for age, marital status, education and injury. It is expected that victims whose partners are arrested will experience lower rates of revictimization than those whose partners are not arrested.

METHOD

Data

This study used the National Crime Survey (NCS) from 1987 to 1992 combined with the NCVS from 1993 to 2003. The NCS collected crime victimization information since 1973 and was replaced with the redesigned NCVS in 1992. The purpose of the survey's redesign was twofold. First, screening questions were enhanced to improve reporting of crime by stimulating respondents' recall. Second, additional questions were included to capture more about the nature and consequences of victimization (Kindermann, Lynch, & Cantor, 1997). The NCS before 1987 did not collect data on arrest, and therefore was excluded from the analysis.

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the NCS and the NCVS annually on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, gathering detailed crime data from a nationally representative sample of households that consist of about 100,000 individuals living in about 50,000 households. The dataset provides three levels of information; household-level, person-level, and incident-level data. Further, each respondent in the sample is followed for three years, allowing the revictimization of individuals to be detected longitudinally. The NCVS asks respondents if they were criminally victimized during the previous six months. For each victimization incident, respondents are asked detailed questions including perpetrator arrest.

Population and Sampling

The target population of the analysis is women age 18 and over who reported being a victim of intimate partner violence. The sample for the NCVS was selected with a stratified, multi-stage, cluster design, and respondents are selected using a rotating panel sample design (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004). Households are randomly selected and all age-eligible individuals become part of the panel. Once in the sample, respondents are interviewed every six months for a total of seven interviews over a three year period. The first and fifth interviews are face-to-face; the rest are by telephone. After the seventh

interview the household leaves the panel, and a new household is rotated into the sample. The NCS and NCVS have consistently obtained a response rate of about 95%. Since this study was to examine if victims whose partners were arrested were revictimized less frequently than those whose partners were not arrested, the study sample consisted of respondents who reported being a victim in one interview and had been followed up for a year. The one year follow up was selected for two reasons. First, most of the previous experimental research examined recidivism rates 6 months to one year after the intervention (i.e., arrest). Using one-year follow-up rates would be most comparable to those studies. Second, a preliminary analysis of the original NCVS data before selecting the study sample showed that most revictimization (94%) occurred within the first year following an IPV incident. Relatively few cases were missed, therefore, when limiting the follow-up period to one year thus maximizing sample size.

Variables

IPV is defined in the NCVS as a violent crime against women, including rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault, committed by a current or former male spouse or boyfriend (Catalano, 2008). As a result, this study includes only violence against women by men, excluding same sex couples, as there appear to be differences from heterosexual relationships that could influence arrest (Griffin, 2001; Island & Letellier, 1991; A. J. Miller, Bobner, & Zarski, 2000). Also, psychological and emotional violence are also excluded, for they are not usually considered by the police as criminal conduct, and the severity and degree of physical assaults and injuries are associated with judgment regarding arrest (Nicholls & Dutton, 2001).

The study utilizes one dependent variable (revictimization), one independent variable (arrest), and six control variables (age, race, educational attainment, marital status, injury, and survey time). This study did not include other perpetrator-related information from the NCVS, such as offenders' age, race, alcohol or drug use, and use of a weapon, because the main interest of the study was in victims' characteristics.

Revictimization is defined as a woman being victimized a second time within one year following an IPV incident (this may include multiple partners), and is measured through self-report (1 = a victim was revictimized, 0 = a victim was not revictimized). Arrest is defined as the police taking a batterer into custody, and is also assessed according to the victim (1 = the police arrested the batterer, 0 = the police did not arrest the batterer). The first control variable, age, is entered as a continuous variable. Race is a categorical variable with three categories; white as the omitted category, black, and others. Educational attainment is a categorical variable with three categories; less than high school diploma, high school diploma, and at least some post-secondary education as the omitted category. Marital status is a categorical variable that has five categories; married, widowed, divorced, separated, and never married as the omitted category. Injury is a categorical variable with three categories; minor injury (bruises, black eye, cuts, scratches, swelling, chipped teeth, and other injuries suffered), severe injury (gunshot wounds, knife wounds, internal injuries, broken bones, and knocked unconscious), and no injury as the omitted category. Finally, the instrument itself went through a redesign in changing from the NCS to the NCVS. In an effort to control for potential differences due

to instrumentation, survey time was included in the analysis as a dichotomous variable (0 = those who were first interviewed by the NCS, 1 = those who were first interviewed by the NCVS).

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

A total of 3,495 cases were included in the analysis; 1,162 from the NCS data (1987 to 1992) and the remaining 2,333 cases from the NCVS (1992 to 2003). A brief summary of sample characteristics is shown in Table 1. More than half of victims were widowed, divorced, or separated (51%) and almost one third were never married (32%). The majority of victims were white (84%), followed by Black (14%), and had a high school education or more (81%). More than two thirds of victims were injured from an IPV incident (70%). While the majority of injuries was minor, 8% of the victims reported severe injury. About one of five batterers (22%) was arrested, while 18% of victims reported being revictimized. Finally, the mean age of victims was 31.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Arrest		Revictimization	
Yes	774 (22%)	Yes	620 (18%)
No	2,721 (78%)	No	2,875 (82%)
Marital Status		Educational Attainment	
Married	603 (17%)	Under high school	669 (19%)
Widowed	42 (1%)	High school	1,415 (41%)
Divorced	871 (25%)	Over high school	1,411 (40%)
Separated	870 (25%)	Race	
Never Married	1,109 (32%)	White	2,919 (84%)
Injury		Black	488 (14%)
		Others	88 (2%)
		Age: Mean = 30.87 SD = 9.49	
Minor	2,167 (62%)		
Severe	298 (8%)		
No Injury	1,030 (30%)		

Logistic Regression Analysis Results

The forced entry method was adopted for the logistic regression analyses as many researchers have recommended this method for theory testing (Studenmund, 2000, as cited in Field, 2000). Results of the logistic regression analysis are reported in Table 2. Arrest, age, marital status, and survey time were shown to have a significant impact on

the odds of revictimization, while race, injury and educational attainment were non-significant.

As expected, arrest was shown to have a significant effect in preventing revictimization. The odds of revictimization for victims whose partners had been arrested were 43.2% less than those whose partners had not been arrested, after controlling for age, race, marital status, educational attainment, injury, and survey redesign ($\exp(\beta) = .568$). Age had a small preventive effect on revictimization ($\exp(\beta) = .984$). For each additional year, the odds of revictimization declined by 1.6%. Revictimization rates varied depending upon marital status. Divorced or separated women were more likely to be revictimized than those never married ($\exp(\beta) = 1.511$ and 1.525 , respectively). The odds of revictimization for separated women were 47.5% higher than unmarried women, and divorced women were 48.9% more likely than unmarried women to be revictimized. Finally, redesign of the survey from the NCS to the NCVS had an impact on revictimization reports. Victims who were interviewed using the NCVS showed odds of revictimization 45.8% greater than those interviewed with the NCS ($\exp(\beta) = 1.458$).

Table 2: Logistic Regression Analysis Summary

	β	S.E.	Wald	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value	$\exp(\beta)$
Arrest	-.566	.104	29.815	1	.000	.568
Age	-.016	.005	10.965	1	.001	.984
Race ¹⁾			2.583	2	.275	
Black	.269	.363	.548	1	.459	1.308
Others	.023	.391	.003	1	.953	1.023
Marital Status ²⁾			14.387	4	.006	
Married	.228	.129	3.120	1	.077	1.256
Widowed	.171	.409	.175	1	.676	1.186
Divorced	.413	.166	6.182	1	.013	1.511
Separated	.422	.114	13.704	1	.000	1.525
Injury ³⁾			.319	2	.853	
Minor	-.044	.079	.312	1	.577	.957
Severe	-.015	.163	.008	1	.929	.986
Educational Attainment ⁴⁾			2.574	2	.276	
Under high school	-.120	.125	.908	1	.341	.887
High school	.078	.097	.653	1	.419	1.081
Survey Time ⁵⁾	.377	.176	4.599	1	.032	1.458

* Omitted category: 1) White, 2) Never married, 3) No Injury, 4) Over high school, 5) NCS

A look at the cross-tabulation of arrest and revictimization may help to intuitively understanding the effect of arrest on revictimization (Table 3). Although the majority of victims were not revictimized regardless of arrest, 19.2% of victims whose partners had not been arrested were revictimized, compared to 12.7% of victims whose partners had been arrested.

Table 3: Cross-Tabulation of Arrest and Revictimization

		Was she revictimized?		Total
		Yes	No	
Was he arrested?	Yes	98 (12.7%)	676 (87.3%)	774 (100%)
	No	522 (19.2%)	2,199 (80.8%)	2,721 (100%)
Total		620	2,875	3,495

DISCUSSION

The logistic regression analysis of the effect of arrest on victims' chance of revictimization showed that arrest reduced the odds of revictimization by 43.2%, after controlling for age, race, marital status, educational attainment, and injury. This result is consistent with results of some experimental studies (R. A. Berk et al., 1992; Pate & Hamilton, 1992; Sherman & Berk, 1984; Sherman, Schmidt, Rogan et al., 1992), and particularly with Maxwell et. al.'s (2001) meta-analysis of five replication studies on effects of arrest. The meta-analysis found that although official records showed no significant effect of arrest, victim interviews revealed that if batterers were arrested, recidivism rates were reduced by 25%. Note that in the current study, the reduction of revictimization related to arrest was 39.6%. Although direct comparisons of results between this study and Maxwell et al.'s might be inappropriate because of methodological differences (e.g., national survey sample versus local experimental samples), a conjectural comparison can be made for future research.

The difference in the size of arrest effect between 25% for Maxwell et al., and 39.6% for this study might result from the difference in the time frame when the two sets of data were collected. The five replication studies used in the Maxwell et al., study were conducted between 1985 to 1990, while this study used the NCVS data from 1987 to 2003. Deterrence theory suggests that arrested batterers would be deterred by the punishment (specific deterrence), but potential batterers who have not been punished would not be affected much by an arrest unless they become aware of legal punishment for IPV (Gibbs, 1985) and avoid committing the offense (R. A. Berk & Newton, 1985). Therefore, there would be a time lag before such a general deterrent effect could be realized. The arrest of batterers has steadily increased since the mid 1980s (Archer et al., 2003; Baumer et al., 2003), which in turn could suggest that through a general deterrent effect, there would be a time-lagged increase in size of arrest effect. While the specific deterrent effect of arrest is clearly shown by the study results, the general deterrent effect

is less clear. One previous study attempted to measure the general deterrent effect by examining the temporal relationship between IPV incidence rates and arrest rates over time, and found the former decreased as the latter increased (Cho, 2007).

Table 4: Change in Arrest Effect Before and After 1990

	β	S.E.	Wald	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Exp(β)
Until 1990 (N = 798)	-.142	.321	.196	1	.658	.868
After 1990 (N = 2,697)	-.627	.160	15.334	1	.000	.534

To explore the possibility of general deterrence, two separate logistic regression analyses were run using NCVS data through 1990 and after 1990, respectively (Table 4). From 1987 through 1990, arrest had no significant effect in preventing revictimization. After 1990, however, the odds of revictimization following arrest were 46.6% less than compared to those whose partners had not been arrested, when controlling for age, race, marital status, educational attainment, and injury ($\exp(\beta) = .534$, $p < .001$). These results may suggest that the effect of arrest has increased over time, particularly since 1990, which may help to explain the difference in size of arrest effect between this study and Maxwell et al.'s meta-analysis. However, it must not be overlooked that the positive changes in IPV after 1990s may be the results of a variety of efforts to address IPV, including improvements both in services for IPV victims (e.g., shelters, children's program, and counseling programs) and in women's socio-economic status, the increased provisions of legal services for victims, and numerous state and federal laws enacted to address IPV, as well as the active police intervention (Cho & Wilke, 2005; Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 2003).

Another difference between this study and Maxwell et al.'s is a focus on revictimization versus recidivism rates. The current study examined arrest effect by revictimization rates and found these rates to be 12.7% for arrest cases and 19.2% for unarrested cases. However, Maxwell et al. used recidivism rates and found them to be 36% for arrest cases and 48% for unarrested cases, which were at least two times higher than our study. This difference might result partly from a variation in measurement. Recidivism in the Maxwell et al. study included reoffense committed only by the same batterer, while revictimization in the current study included reoffense by another batterer as well as the same one. It is not certain which one would show higher rates. Revictimization rates may be less than recidivism rates because the victim might have left the batterer after the violent episode so that reoffense by the previous partner would not have occurred. In other words, victimization might have been transferred to another victim without being revealed. On the other hand, revictimization rates may be higher than recidivism rates because the former includes victimization from a new violent partner as well as the previous one. This possibility could not be tested with the NCVS because it did not distinguish the new partner from the previous one. Finally, the difference in revictimization rates between the two studies could also have resulted partly from different definitions of IPV which was defined more broadly in the Maxwell et al.

study than it was in this study. While they included verbal threats of physical or property damage in addition to physical violence, this study included only physical violence. Consequently, revictimization rates in the current study should be less than recidivism in the Maxwell et al. study. Again, this possibility could not be further tested with the NCVS as it did not include verbal threat of property damage in the survey.

It is worth noting that the deterrent effect of arrest shown in this study was not found in a previous study that used a research method similar to this one. Felson et al. (2005) used the NCVS from 1992 to 2002 and found that reporting to the police, which was not included in this study, significantly reduced the odds of revictimization but arresting the batterer did not. For the purpose of comparison, reporting to the police was added as an independent variable to the analysis (data not shown). Similar to Felson et al. (2005), arrest did not have a significant effect on revictimization, but reporting to the police did. This indicates that reporting to the police and arrest have mostly overlapping impacts on revictimization, and arrest effects may be a subset of reporting effects. Future research is needed to further examine how reporting to the police interacts with arrest to lead to reducing revictimization.

In addition to finding that arrest has had an effect in reducing revictimization and that effect has increased over time, this study revealed other important aspects of an arrest effect; that is, the chance of revictimization varies according to characteristics of victims. Specifically, the victim's age and marital status were shown to have effects on revictimization, while race, educational attainment, and injury were not. The study found a negative relationship between age and odds of revictimization indicating that not only is lower age a significant predictor of victimization, but it predicts revictimization as well.

Regarding marital status, separated women showed the highest odds of revictimization, followed by divorced women, while married or widowed women were not different from the unmarried. These results did not support previous data which found higher revictimization rates for married women than unmarried women (McCloskey, 1996), or no relationship between a marital or cohabitation status and revictimization (Felson et al., 2005). One reason for the higher risk of revictimization for separated or divorced women may be their vulnerability to being contacted by their violent partners after separation. However, this possibility could not be tested as the NCVS data did not allow an examination of whether victims were separated or divorced after victimization, or whether they were revictimized by the same partner. While separated or divorced women have a higher risk of revictimization, requiring targeted prevention efforts for them, marital status alone may not be a good predictor of revictimization. For the quality and context of the relationship may play a greater role in IPV dynamics than the type of relationship between the batterer and victim (e.g., legal marital status, cohabitation, and dating; Cattaneo & Goodman, 2005; Cole, Logan, & Shannon, 2008). Given the mixed evidence with regard to the relationship between batterer and victim, future research may need to pay more attention to contextual factors of the interpersonal relationship than the status of relationship itself.

The NCS was replaced with the redesigned NCVS in 1992 to collect more accurate and detailed information of criminal victimization. In order to develop an adjustment

factor that would be used to make two surveys comparable, half of the data were collected with the NCVS, and half were collected with the NCS for an 18-month period from 1992 to 1993. The NCVS has produced higher violent crime rates than the NCS after the adjustment was made (e.g., 50% increase from 32 to 48 per 1,000 persons in 1992; Rand & Catalano, 2007). The current study found 45.8% higher odds of revictimization for the victims interviewed using the NCVS compared to those interviewed with the NCS. Given that there is no known study to suggest a large increase in criminal revictimization after 1992, this study's result is likely a reflection of the higher crime rates produced by the redesigned survey.

CONCLUSION

This study found that arrest of batterers had an effect in reducing revictimization, which was different for different victims, providing support for the deterrent effect of arrest. The specific deterrent effect was realized when the chance of revictimization decreased after the batterer had been arrested by the police. Further, there may be some evidence to suggest a general deterrence effect as well, as there was an increase in the effect of arrest effect after 1992. However, these conclusions should be viewed within the context of the study's limitations. First, the overall effect of arrest will most likely be different according to the subsequent actions of the criminal justice system after arrest. However, this study did not examine those differences, but only considered characteristics of victims and IPV incidents. Some researchers have suggested that a particular intervention such as arrest cannot be isolated from other factors and truly be studied independently. Arrest is just one part of the broader criminal justice response that also includes prosecution, adjudication, probation, victims service, and other coordinated community services (Gondolf, 2002). To comprehensively understand the effect of arrest, future research needs to examine IPV victims from incident to arrest through prosecution to determine the effect of criminal sanction on a victim's long term safety.

This study examined the effect of arrest, controlling for victims' age, race, marital status, educational attainment, and injury, but did not control for other important victim-related factors including income and employment. Consequently, differential effects of arrest according to different victims' characteristics could not be further examined. With all major victim-related factors included, future research can comprehensively examine in what conditions, and with whom, police intervention in IPV is most effective.

In addition, it should be noted that policies on IPV and police officers' implementation of them vary across police jurisdictions as well as states. However, this study could not control for those issues as the public-use NCVS does not provide any geographical information of respondents.

Finally, the data in the NCVS de-contextualizes a violent episode in that the level of fear or on-going intimidation in a relationship are not assessed, something that Johnson and Ferraro (2000) in their typology of IPV referred to as intimate terrorism. The Johnson and Ferraro typology also includes a classification referred to as common couple violence which is more minor in nature and can be perpetrated by either partner in a relationship. It may be that the low arrest and revictimization rates found in this study are related to

the perpetration of common couple violence. However, that concern is somewhat moderated by the fact that 70% of respondents in this study indicated they were injured during the violent episode indicating a degree of severity.

Overall, this study demonstrated important relationships between arrest and revictimization. First, arresting batterers significantly reduced revictimization regardless of different victims' characteristics, and this effect has grown stronger over time. Pro-arrest policies have been questioned by some researchers on the grounds that arrest has no effect on repeat, unemployed batterers and therefore even increased the risk of revictimization for some victims (Hirschel & Hutchison, 1992; Maxwell et al., 2001; Sherman, Schmidt, & Rogan, 1992). The study results provide clear support for pro-arrest policies, although perpetrator characteristics were not examined.

Age has a negative relationship with revictimization, in that older victims have lower odds of being revictimized than younger victims. Also, considering separated or divorced women showed the highest risk of revictimization, strict enforcement of protective orders may be an important strategy for protection. Further, the lack of relationship between injury and revictimization indicates that police need to consider all available information in responding to a domestic violence call, and not over-emphasize one factor, such as injury.

The police have actively intervened in IPV since the 1980s. Many research results, including this study, support that police intervention helps in reducing revictimization of IPV. Along with other societal responses, police intervention may have contributed to a 52% decline in IPV between 1993 and 2003 (Cho & Wilke, 2005). Also, it might have contributed to the increase in IPV incidents reported to the police from 48% in 1993 to 60% in 2005 (Catalano, 2008).

While a great deal of work needs to be done to reduce IPV, the positive effect of police intervention, demonstrated by this study, is encouraging and provides several implications for social work research, practice, and policy. This study found that arrest effects varied, depending on the sociodemographic characteristics of the victims and, potentially, of the perpetrators. Future research needs to include information on both victims and perpetrators in examining the effects of perpetrator arrest on victims' future safety, and to identify factors that influence those effects. Social work practitioners will benefit from the research through an increased ability to make informed decisions that will better serve clients affected by IPV; client characteristics should be taken into consideration to judge whether those clients would be helped by certain types of criminal justice interventions. In this context, coordinated community intervention is particularly relevant to social work policy. This intervention model was developed in the 1980s, to better meet the needs of clients affected by IPV. It facilitates communication, and the sharing of resources and information among a variety of agencies in the community: the criminal justice system, social workers, and providers of health care and other human services (Pence & McMahon, 1997; Pennington-Zoellner, 2010; Worden, 2001). Given that social workers have utilized a variety of collaboration models over the years—including group work and community organization—social workers can play, and indeed have played, a critical role in community coordination (Saleebey, 2004). The current

study results can be used to improve current procedures for coordinated community interventions and to develop new policies that can, in turn, address IPV more effectively.

References

- Archer, C., DuPree, C., Miller, N., Spence, D., & Uekert, B. (2003). *National evaluation of the grants to encourage arrest policies program. Revised final report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Baumer, E. P., Felson, R. B., & Messner, S. F. (2003). Changes in police notification for rape, 1973-2000. *Criminology*, 41(3), 841-872.
- Berk, R., Berk, S., Loseke, D., & Rauma, D. (1983). Mutual combat and other family violence myths. In D. Finkelhor, R. J. Gelles, G. T. Hotaling & M. A. Straus (Eds.), *The dark side of families: Current family violence research* (pp. 197-212). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Berk, R. A. (1993). What the scientific evidence shows: On average, we can do no better than arrest. In R. J. Gelles & D. R. Loseke (Eds.), *Current controversies on family violence* (pp. 323-336). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Berk, R. A., Campbell, A., Klap, R., & Western, B. (1992). A Bayesian analysis of the Colorado Springs spouse abuse experiment. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 83, 170-200.
- Berk, R. A., & Newton, P. J. (1985). Does arrest deter wife battery? An effort to replicate the findings of the Minneapolis spouse abuse experiment. *American Sociological Review*, 50, 253-262.
- Browne, A. (1995). Fear and the perception of alternatives: Asking "why battered women don't leave" is the wrong question. In B. Price & N. Sokoloff (Eds.), *The criminal justice system and women* (pp. 228-245). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Carlson, M. J., Harris, S. D., & Holden, G. W. (1999). Protective orders and domestic violence: Risk factors for re-abuse. *Journal of Family Violence*, 4, 205-226.
- Catalano, S. (2008). *Intimate partner violence in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Cattaneo, L. B., & Goodman, L. A. (2005). Risk factors for reabuse in intimate partner violence: A cross-disciplinary critical review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 6(2), 141-175.
- Chaudhuri, M., & Daly, K. (1992). Do restraining orders help? Battered women's experience with male violence and legal process. In E. S. Buzawa & C. G. Buzawa (Eds.), *Domestic violence: The changing criminal justice response* (pp. 227-252). Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- Cho, H. (2007, January). *Effects of arrest of batterers on reducing domestic violence incidence*. Poster session presented at the 11th annual meeting of Society for Social Work and Research, San Francisco.

- Cho, H., & Wilke, D. J. (2005). How has the Violence Against Women Act affected the response of the criminal justice system to domestic violence? *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 32(4), 125-139.
- Cole, J., Logan, T., & Shannon, L. (2008). Women's risk for revictimization by a new abusive partner: For what should we be looking? *Violence and Victims*, 23(3), 315-330.
- Danis, F. S. (2003). The criminalization of domestic violence: What social workers need to know. *Social Work*, 48(2), 237-246.
- Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. P. (1979). *Violence against wives*. New York: The Free Press.
- Dugan, L. (2003). Domestic violence legislation: Exploring its impact on the likelihood of domestic violence, police involvement, and arrest. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 2(2), 283 - 312.
- Dunford, F. W., Huizinga, D., & Elliott, D. (1991). The role of arrest in domestic violence assault: The Omaha experiment. *Criminology*, 28, 183-206.
- Farmer, A., & Tiefenthaler, J. (2003). Explaining the recent decline in domestic violence. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 21(2), 158-172.
- Felson, R. B., Ackerman, J. M., & Gallagher, C. (2005). *Police intervention and the repeat of domestic assault*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Ferraro, K. J. (1997). Battered women: Strategies for survival. In A. P. Cardarelli (Ed.), *Violence between intimate partners: Patterns, causes, and effects* (pp. 124-143). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Field, A. (2000). *Discovering statistics: Using SPSS for Windows*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Finn, M. A., Blackwell, B. S., Stalans, L. J., Studdard, S., & Dugan, L. (2004). Dual arrest decisions in domestic violence cases: The influence of departmental policies. *Crime & Delinquency*, 50(4), 565-589.
- Flowers, R. B. (1996). The problem of domestic violence is widespread. In K. L. Swisher (Ed.), *Domestic violence* (pp. 10-21). San Diego, CA: Greenhaven.
- Ford, D. A. (2003). Coercing victim participation in domestic violence prosecutions. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18(6), 669-684.
- Fox, J. A. (2006). *Homicide trends in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Gibbs, J. P. (1985). Deterrence theory and research. In G. B. Melton (Ed.), *The law as a behavioral instrument: Nebraska Symposium on Motivation 1985* (pp. 87-130). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Giles-Sims, J. (1983). *Wife battering: A systems theory approach*. New York: Guilford.

- Gondolf, E. W. (2002). *Batterer intervention systems: Issues, outcomes, and recommendations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Goodman, L. A., Koss, A. P., & Russo, N. F. (1993a). Violence against women: Mental health effects. Part II. Conceptualizations of posttraumatic stress. *Applied and Preventive Psychology*, 2, 123-130.
- Goodman, L. A., Koss, A. P., & Russo, N. F. (1993b). Violence against women: Physical and mental health effects. Part I. Research findings. *Applied and Preventive Psychology*, 2, 79-89.
- Griffin, R. M. (2001, May 25). Breaking the silence: Sociologist studies woman-to-woman sexual violence. Retrieved from <http://www.gayhealth.com/templates/1117829363937302884179/common/feature.html?record=58>
- Harrel, A., & Smith, B. (1996). Effects of restraining orders on domestic violence victims. In E. S. Buzawa & C. G. Buzawa (Eds.), *Do arrests and restraining orders work?* (pp. 214-242). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hirschel, J. D., & Hutchison, I. W. (1992). Female spouse abuse and the police response: The Charlotte, North Carolina Experiment. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 83, 73-119.
- Holt, V. L., Kernic, M. A., Lumley, T., Wolf, M. E., & Rivara, F. P. (2002). Do protection orders affect the likelihood of future partner violence and injury? *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 24(1), 16-21.
- Island, D., & Letellier, P. (1991). *Men who beat the men who love them: Battered gay men and domestic violence*. New York: Haworth Press.
- Johnson, M. P., & Ferraro, K. J. (2000). Research on domestic violence in the 1990s: Making distinctions. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62, 948-963.
- Kindermann, C., Lynch, J., & Cantor, D. (1997). *Effects of the redesign on victimization estimates* (No. NCJ-164381). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Kingsnorth, R. F., & Macintosh, R. C. (2004). Domestic violence: Predictors of victim support for official action. *Justice Quarterly*, 21(2), 301-328.
- Klein, A. (1996). Re-abuse in a population of court-restrained male batterers: Why restraining orders don't work? In E. S. Buzawa & C. G. Buzawa (Eds.), *Do arrests and restraining orders work?* (pp. 192-213). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- LaFree, G. (1981). Official reactions to social problems: Police decisions in sexual assault cases. *Social Problems*, 28, 582-594.
- Langan, P. A., & Innes, C. A. (1986). *Preventing domestic violence against women* (No. NCJ-102037). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Martin, M. (1997). Double your trouble: Dual arrest in family violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 12, 139-157.

- Maxwell, C., Garner, J., & Fagan, J. (2001). *The effects of arrest on intimate partner violence: New evidence from the Spouse Assault Replication Program. Research in brief*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- McCloskey, L. A. (1996). Socioeconomic and coercive power within the family. *Gender and Society, 10*, 449-463.
- McGuire, J. (2002). Criminal sanctions versus psychologically-based interventions with offenders: A comparative empirical analysis. *Psychology, Crime, and Law, 8*, 183-208.
- Mears, D. P., Carlson, M. J., Holden, G. W., & Harris, S. D. (2001). Reducing domestic violence revictimization: The effects of individual and contextual factors and type of legal intervention. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 16*(12), 1260-1283.
- Miller, A. J., Bobner, R. F., & Zarski, J. J. (2000). Sexual identity development: A base for work with same-sex couple partner abuse. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 22*(2), 189-200.
- Miller, J. L., & Krull, A. C. (1997). Controlling domestic violence: Victim resources and police intervention. In G. K. Kantor & J. L. Jasinski (Eds.), *Out of the darkness: Contemporary perspectives on family violence* (pp. 235-254). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, S. L., & Wellford, C. F. (1997). Patterns and correlates of interpersonal violence. In A. P. Cardarelli (Ed.), *Violence between intimate partners: Patterns, causes, and effects* (pp. 16-28). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Monahan, K., & O'Leary, K. D. (1999). Head injury and battered women: An initial inquiry. *Health and Social Work, 24*, 269-278.
- Nicholls, T. L., & Dutton, D. G. (2001). Abuse committed by women against male intimates. *Journal of Couples Therapy, 10*(1), 41-57.
- Pate, A. M., & Hamilton, E. E. (1992). Formal and informal deterrents to domestic violence: The Dade County spouse assault experiment. *American Sociological Review, 57*(5), 691-697.
- Pence, E., & McMahon, M. (1997). *A coordinated community response to domestic violence*. Duluth, MN: Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project.
- Pennington-Zoellner, K. (2010). Expanding 'community' in the community response to intimate partner violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 24*(8), 539-545.
- Roberts, A. R., & Kurst-Swanger, K. (2002). Police responses to battered women: Past, present, and future. In A. R. Roberts (Ed.), *Handbook of domestic violence intervention strategies: Policies, programs, and legal remedies* (pp. 101-126). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rusbult, C. E., & Martz, J. M. (1995). Remaining in an abusive relationship: An investment model analysis of nonvoluntary dependence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21*, 558-571.

- Salazar, L. F., Baker, C. K., Price, A. W., & Carlin, K. (2003). Moving beyond the individual: Examining the effects of domestic violence policies on social norms. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 32(3/4), 253-264.
- Saleebey, D. (2004). 'The power of place': Another look at the environment. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 85(1), 7-16.
- Sampson, R. J., & Wilson, W. J. (1995). Toward a theory of race, crime, and urban inequality. In J. Hagan & R. D. Peterson (Eds.), *Crime and inequality* (pp. 37-54). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Schumacher, J. A., Feldbau-Kohn, S., Slep, A. M. S., & Heyman, R. E. (2001). Risk factors for male-to-female partner physical abuse. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 6, 281-352.
- Sherman, L. W., & Berk, R. A. (1984). The specific deterrent effects of arrest for domestic assault. *American Sociological Review*, 49, 261-272.
- Sherman, L. W., Schmidt, J. D., & Rogan, D. P. (1992). *Policing domestic violence: Experiments and dilemmas*. New York: Free Press.
- Sherman, L. W., Schmidt, J. D., Rogan, D. P., Smith, D. A., Gartin, P. R., Cohn, E. G., et al. (1992). The variable effects of arrest on criminal careers: The Milwaukee domestic violence experiment. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 83, 137-169.
- Simpson, S. S., Bouffard, L. A., Garner, J., & Hickman, L. (2006). The influence of legal reform on the probability of arrest in domestic violence cases. *Justice Quarterly*, 23(3), 297-316.
- Stafford, M. C., & Warr, M. (1993). A reconceptualization of general and specific deterrence. *Journal of Research on Crime and Delinquency*, 30, 123-135.
- Stark, E. (1996). Mandatory arrest of batterers: A reply to its critics. In E. S. Buzawa & C. G. Buzawa (Eds.), *Do arrests and restraining orders work?* (pp. 115-149). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Studenmund, A. H. (2000). *Using econometrics: A practical guide* (4th ed.). Boston: Addison Wesley.
- Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). *Extent, nature, and consequences of intimate partner violence: Research report*. Washington DC: National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Travis, J. (1998). *Civil protection orders: Victims' views on effectiveness. Research Preview*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2004). *NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY, 1992-2002 [Computer file]*. Conducted by U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor].

- Waldrop, A. E., & Resick, P. A. (2004). Coping among adult female victims of domestic violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 19*(5), 291-302.
- Williams, K. R. (2005). Arrest and intimate partner violence: Toward a more complete application of deterrence theory. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 10*(6), 660-679.
- Wooldredge, J., & Thistlethwaite, A. (2002). Reconsidering domestic violence recidivism: Conditioned effects of legal controls by individual and aggregate levels of stake in conformity. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 18*(1), 45-70.
- Worden, A. (2001). *Models of community coordination in partner violence cases: A multi-site comparative analysis*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.

Author's Note:

Address correspondence to: Hyunkag Cho, Ph.D., MSW, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Michigan State University, 254 Baker Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.
Email: chohyu12@msu.edu