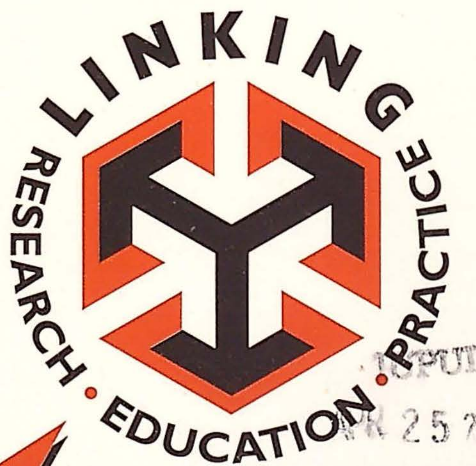
Advances in Social Work



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Indiana University
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Advances in Social Work
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CONTENTS

Editorial i

Indiana University School of Social Work: 90 Years of Professional Education
Monique Busch, Gerald T. Powers, David Metzger, Cyrus S. Behroozi, Sheldon Siegel, and Barry R. Cournoyer 83

The 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: Issues and Opportunities for BSW Education
Irene Queiro-Tajalli, Katharine Byers, and Edward Fitzgerald 104

The 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: Implications for MSW Programs
Marion Wagner, Paul Newcomb, and Robert Weiler 113

The 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: The Value of Research Revisited
Barry R. Cournoyer and Margaret E. Adamek 119

Assessment of Student Learning in Social Work Education: The Indiana Model
Barry R. Cournoyer 128

Developing and Teaching an MSW Capstone Course Using Case Methods of Instruction
Terry A. Wolfer, Miriam L. Freeman, and Rita Rhodes 156

Editorial

Barry R. Cournoyer

The Editorial Board began to plan this issue about one year ago. We hoped to use it as a context to celebrate the 90th anniversary of social work education at Indiana University. As one of the oldest schools in the country and the only one to have a full continuum of education from the associate to doctoral degrees, we have a long and distinguished history.

We thought it would be helpful to social work educators, researchers, and practitioners to consider the nature and implications of the new Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) that the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) was developing. We anticipated that they would be considered, reviewed, revised, and probably approved sometime during the summer of 2001. Indeed, they were approved in June 2001 and will be effective as of July 1, 2002. (The text of the new EPAS may be found at www.cswe.org).

However, we had not expected the events of September 11, 2001. Familiar as we social workers are with the beaten faces and bodies of abused women and children, we were nonetheless unprepared for the full impact of the suicide attacks upon buildings in New York City and Washington, D.C. and the subsequent bacterial exposures. The events remain profoundly disturbing.

In preparing this editorial, I am challenged by context and perspective. Certainly, the 90th Anniversary of Indiana University School of Social Work deserves recognition. I would dearly love to shout *Happy 90th* on behalf of our thousands of alumni and others who have contributed so much to our school. Context and perspective, however, tempers my enthusiasm. I mourn the thousands who were killed on September 11th. I grieve their families' losses as well as those who lost love ones through exposure to bacterial agents. I wonder about the impact upon our children, our relations with others, and indeed our future. I also recognize more clearly than before what it may be like to be an Israeli who is constantly alert to the possibility and reality of a car bomb, or a Palestinian uncertain about almost everything. I wonder about the murdered, mutilated, and missing in so many parts of our world—usually so far away from our everyday experiences with McDonald's and Starbuck's—but suddenly so profoundly near.

In such a context, how significant is the 90th anniversary of a school of social work? Given the perspective generated by September 11th and its aftermath, how much does it matter that social workers have new educational policies and accreditation standards for their educational programs?

As I ponder these questions, my initial reaction is, *not much*. On reflection, however, I think that *could be* might be a more accurate response. Might the 90th anniversary of a school of social and a new set of educational standards for social work be significant? Yes, I think *could be* is about right.

Here in the United States, the Indiana University School of Social Work is almost as old as the profession itself. Social Work has entered its second century

and nearly has our school. In celebration of this milestone, we invited Monique Busch, Gerald T. Powers, David Metzger, Cyrus S. Behroozi, Sheldon Siegel, and Barry R. Cournoyer to prepare a brief historical review of social work education at Indiana University. A daunting task, the authors crafted an article that will interest social workers everywhere.

In light of the recently approved Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), we invited leaders in the School's BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. programs to prepare brief reaction papers. Irene Queiro-Tajalli, Katharine Byers, and Edward Fitzgerald prepared a BSW response; Marion Wagner, Paul Newcomb, and Robert Weiler wrote an MSW reaction paper; and Barry R. Cournoyer and Margaret Adamek prepared a Ph.D. response. These papers serve to help us reflect upon the implications of educational standards in general and the new EPAS in particular. Policies and standards may be viewed as a burden or as an opportunity to reconsider and reinvigorate our profession by energizing the nature and perhaps the manner through which we educate our future social workers. Perhaps these papers may help us adopt the new EPAS as an opportunity to improve the overall quality of the profession's education, research, and practice.

As a natural complement to the new EPAS, which require programs to evaluate the effectiveness of their educational activities, we invited Barry R. Cournoyer to address the topic of student learning assessment. He describes the Indiana Model—a system that incorporates both direct and indirect methods for the assessment of learning outcomes—that may be useful to social workers in settings of all kinds.

We also accepted a refereed article that complements the themes of innovation and assessment in social work education. Terry A. Wolfer, Miriam L. Freeman, and Rita Rhodes of the University of South Carolina discuss the development and implementation of an MSW-level capstone course that adopted a case method form of instruction.

The Editorial Board and I are pleased to present this issue of *Advances in Social Work* to the social work community. We publish it in celebration of the 90th Anniversary of social work education at Indiana University and dedicate it to the thousands of students, alumni, faculty, field instructors, social workers, community leaders, and university colleagues who have contributed so much during these nine decades.

Indiana University School of Social Work: 90 Years of Professional Education

Monique Busch
Gerald T. Powers
David Metzger
Cyrus S. Behroozi
Sheldon Siegel
Barry R. Cournoyer

Abstract: *In this invited article, the authors review the history and development of the Indiana University School of Social Work from its origin in 1911 as a small department to its current status as a large organization offering educational programs to nearly 900 students on five campuses. One of the nation's oldest, it is the only school to offer the full continuum of social work education from the associate through the doctoral levels. In many respects, the evolution of the School mirrors the experiences of other schools and departments of social work. As such, the article may be enlightening to those interested in the history of social work education in this country.*

Keywords: History, Indiana University, social work, education

Schools of social work mirror the social, political, economic, and academic contexts within which they evolve. As Levy (1968) suggests, "What is true of the history of man in general is true of the history of social work education, the past and present are manifest in each other" (p. 5). The Indiana University School of Social Work is no exception.

Founded in 1911 as the Social Service Department, the School has operated continuously for 90 years (Rogers, 1983). On the occasion of this 90th anniversary (1911-2001) celebration, it seems fitting that we reflect upon the School's history and the events that shaped, and at times, been shaped by its existence.

Social workers well know that attempts to capture history require difficult choices. We have to decide what and how much detail to include, what perspectives to adopt, and which themes to recognize or emphasize. Writing history invariably involves construction as well as recollection of knowledge. This brief review of the 90-year history of the School reflects both choices and constructions. We could not

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Monique Busch, M.S.W. is a doctoral student; Gerald T. Powers, Ph.D. is Professor; David Metzger, M.A. is Associate Professor Emeritus; Cyrus S. Behroozi, Ph.D. is Profesor Emeritus and former Associate Dean; Sheldon Siegel, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus and former Dean; and Barry R. Cournoyer, D.S.W., L.C.S.W. is Professor, Indiana University of Social Work, Indianapolis.

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Indiana University School of Social Work.

possibly discuss the accomplishments of each one of the hundreds of faculty members and staff, the thousands of students, or the seemingly infinite number of academic and practice leaders and constituents who have contributed to the School and community for nearly a century. Nor could we catalog each of the significant events in its distinguished history. Rather, we attempt to capture a general sense of the origin and development of the School from three major perspectives. First, we present an historical overview of the development of the school from a small department to a large, multi-campus organization offering a full continuum of social work education, including programs leading to the Associate of Science in Human Services (ASHS), the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), the Master of Social Work (MSW), and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees. Second, we consider the external forces and contextual factors that have influenced and shaped the School's educational and service missions in recent years. Finally, we provide a brief overview of the School today and present a vision for its future. We hope this history serves as a kind of "case study" that readers may find reflective of the evolution of social work education within the United States.

Historical Review

In establishing the Social Service Department in 1911, Indiana University declared, "There are new obligations upon the universities. They justly are called upon to help the people in all of the problems of their daily life. . . . Whatever knowledge is needed, whatever can aid . . . must be provided to those who can use it on their problems—and problems are many" (Indiana University, 1915). Perhaps reflecting its origins as a seminary and then a small liberal arts college, Indiana University has reflected a strong service commitment throughout its history. Indeed, the University began to offer courses in social services at the turn of the 20th century, well before the formation of the Department (Indiana University, 1920).

During the first decade of the 1900s, the Chairman of the Economics and Social Sciences Department, located in Bloomington, sought to create a laboratory context for its students—especially those who were interested in the emerging field of social work. Simultaneously, a recently appointed, highly progressive dean of the School of Medicine believed that social services could help patients recover more quickly and completely, and could aid families with psychosocial issues associated with patients' illnesses or injuries. The Dean also thought that medical students could benefit from training in social services by learning how to treat each patient in a holistic manner—as a unique person, and as a valuable member of a family and community. The mutual interests of these two academic leaders led to the formation of the Indiana University Social Service Department. For administrative purposes, the department was part of the Department of Economics and Social Sciences on the Bloomington campus. Functionally and physically, however, it was housed within the School of Medicine in Indianapolis (Indiana University, 1915; Rogers, 1983).

In establishing the department, Indiana University became the first public institution of higher learning to form an academic unit for social work education and the first in the United States to offer an advanced degree in the field (Indiana University, 1919).

The founding director of the Indiana University Social Service Department was Dr. Edna G. Henry. The program's primary functional association was with the Medical School, which referred patients and families in need of social service to Dr. Henry, her colleagues, and students of the Department. During these early years, much of the learning was experiential in nature. Students were assigned cases and learned by providing actual social services to people in need.

The faculty of the new Social Service Department developed a coherent curriculum and taught courses such as medical social work and social medicine. They also managed a laboratory for sociology students interested in social work. In addition, they administered hospital social services and supervised community volunteers who provided aid to patients and their families.

By 1915, the Department offered a series of classroom-based courses for five general types of students. These included sociology students, medical social work students, nursing students, students interested in learning about "social conditions or social work activities; and graduate students seeking advanced work in sociological research or practical social work" (Rogers, 1983, pp. 16-17). Although students with other interests were included, medical social work constituted the primary educational focus. Students learned about the personal and social needs and problems of patients and their families, and provided services while learning through an apprenticeship model. Students addressed the common problems of the day including "alcoholism, drug addiction, epilepsy, foreigness (sic), illegitimacy, broken homes, and sex problems" (Rogers, 1983, p. 20).

Those early years engendered a sense of intellectual excitement and social meaning. Although the supply was low, the need for "trained" social workers was extremely high. The demand for educated social workers was heightened by a commonly held faith in the capacity of the academy to discover and coordinate facts that could help to ameliorate human misery and suffering. Although social work of all kinds grew rapidly throughout many sectors of society, medical social work expanded the fastest. The Social Service Department also reflected this trend through its focus on medical social work.

Following the end of World War I, tensions between the Medical School and the Department of Economics and Sociology (the name had changed in 1915), which shared overall organizational responsibility for the Social Service Department, surfaced. This was certainly understandable. They had different goals and needs. The tensions were apparently resolved in 1921 when the Department of Economics and Sociology of the College of Arts and Sciences assumed exclusive administrative responsibility for the social service program. Now known as the "Indiana University Combined Course for the Training of Social Workers," the program augmented students' liberal arts studies with professional social work training and service experience. Under this arrangement, students could complete the social work training program and earn a baccalaureate degree. Students in the program undertook the first three years of coursework on the main Indiana University campus in Bloomington, and the final (professional) year in Indianapolis, where they could undertake their field practicum courses (Indiana University, 1920). One year of graduate education in social work could also be completed in Indianapolis. In addition, social service faculty continued to teach medical and nursing students,

administered volunteer social service activities, and guided sociology students in research and service activities.

Despite the shift in administrative authority to the Department of Economics and Sociology, the primary focus of the social service program remained medical social work, although several other courses were offered in social problems (e.g., juvenile delinquency) and social welfare policy and services (e.g., child welfare). In 1923, the program became a member of the American Association of Training Schools of Social Work. Since then, the program has continued its membership in the professional organizations that succeeded the Association, including the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which ultimately assumed responsibility for accreditation of programs in social work education.

By 1924, several courses were routinely offered in the social work training program at Indianapolis. These included: Theory of Social Work, Theory of Social Case Work, Field Work, Field of Social Work, Clinical Psychology, Social Psychiatry, Industrial Welfare Problems, Techniques of Social Case Work, the Family and the Community, and Research. These and related medical social work courses were offered at the School of Medicine. Over time, however, most social work courses were relocated to the Indianapolis Teaching Center in downtown Indianapolis.

By 1927, the organizational title "Social Service Department" became identified with the social services unit of University Hospitals, while the academic rubric, "The Combined Training Course in Social Work," referred to the academic program. Confusion about which department was responsible for which activities continued for decades. Although ties to the medical school were clearly loosening, many nursing students continued to enroll in social casework courses and most social work students completed their field placements through the Social Service Department of University Hospitals. However, social work faculty sought to expand the number of field placements outside the hospital setting and arranged for placements in numerous community organizations, including the Indianapolis Orphans Asylum, the Indianapolis Family Welfare Society, and Christamore House–a community service center.

In compliance with the educational standards of the American Association of Training Schools of Social Work, by 1929, the Indiana University Combined Training Course required undergraduate coursework in "sociology, economics, and psychology" (Rogers, 1983, p. 37) for admission to the program. When admitted, students were expected to complete foundation studies followed by one of five specializations: "medical social work, family social work, child welfare, visiting teaching, and public social work" (Rogers, 1983, p. 37). Students also completed field practicum experiences in agencies that supported one or more of these specializations. In addition, each student undertook a research study related to the populations served in the agency in which they were placed.

By 1930, the University had established a Bureau of Social Research at Indianapolis in association with the social work program. The Bureau conducted several research studies related to topics such as unemployment, distribution of felonies, mortality rates, and juvenile court statistics. These studies complemented students' educational and professional experiences.

In 1931-32, the Combined Training Course for Social Work was reorganized as a two-year graduate program in Indianapolis. Interested in promoting social work as a profession, faculty promoted graduate social work education. Leading to the master's degree, the program provided coursework for three specializations, including social casework, public welfare administration, and social statistics (Indiana University, 1936-37). Students completed a research thesis and oral examination in addition to classroom and field practicum experiences.

In 1935, during the Great Depression, the Combined Training Course for Social Work became a division within the Department of Sociology. The new Division shifted its curriculum focus to the preparation of social workers for service to the vast number of unemployed persons who had found their way into the rapidly growing public welfare programs.

World War II introduced a whole new set of challenges for the Division as the need for professionally trained social workers increased dramatically. The Division introduced a three-semester year in order to train graduate-level social workers more quickly. Perhaps related to wartime needs and activities, interest in baccalaureate social work education grew nationally and locally. In 1942, a baccalaureate program with a major in social service was inaugurated on the Bloomington campus. In 1944, the Indiana University Board of Trustees established the Division of Social Services as a unit within the College of Arts and Sciences, separate from the Department of Sociology. Physically, the Division remained in Indianapolis and provided professional education leading to the degree of Master of Arts in Social Service and continued to collaborate with the College in offering an undergraduate major in social service on the Bloomington campus (Indiana University, 1945-46). Requiring 45 credit hours, the new master's curriculum offered four distinct concentrations: casework, community organization, administration, and group work (Indiana University, 1944-45).

In 1945, Dr. Grace Browning, a nationally regarded social work educator from the University of Chicago School of Social Service and author of several books on public and family welfare, joined Indiana University to head up the Division. She directed both the graduate program in Indianapolis and the undergraduate courses in Bloomington. By this time, accredited social work programs were required to address eight basic curriculum areas and, in addition, provide more advanced classes and field work in an area of specialization. The eight basic areas included "social work administration, social casework, social group work, community organization, social research, medical information, public welfare information, and psychiatric information" (Rogers, 1983, p. 57).

By 1946, five faculty members were located on the Indianapolis campus and two at Bloomington. There were 20 full-time and 30 part-time students in the graduate program. Field placements expanded considerably to include "the Family Welfare Association, the Indianapolis Children's Bureau, the Catholic Charities Bureau, the Social Service Department of the Indianapolis Public Schools, the Indianapolis Public Health Center, the Jewish Family Service Association, Flanner House, and the Morgan Department of Public Welfare" (Rogers, 1983, p. 62). By 1948, 79 full-time students were enrolled in the Indianapolis graduate program.

During the late 1940s, the Division's graduate curriculum expanded to a minimum of 60 credit hours in professional coursework. These included courses in human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy and organizations, research, social work practice, and field practicum. That curriculum emphasized social casework. However, in 1950-51, the Division added social group work as a second concentration. In addition, a course in community organization was required.

Upon Dr. Browning's death in 1951, Professor Mary Houk was appointed Director of the Division. During the 15 years that she served in that position, she transformed the small division into a nationally and internationally renowned professional school. She was remarkably successful in securing educational grants from local, state, and federal sources and in attracting highly qualified faculty and students. Primarily because of her success in enhancing the program's reputation, in 1966, the Board of Trustees upgraded the status of the Division by creating the Graduate School of Social Service. Director Houk was appointed Dean of the School and students earned the Master of Social Work degree.

Following Dean Houk's retirement in 1966, Professor Walter Johnson became Acting Dean of the School, while a national search for a new Dean took place. During his short tenure, Acting Dean Johnson was able to obtain a commitment from university officials to move the School from its long time location to a building planned for construction on the new campus of Indiana University—Indianapolis.

In 1967, Dr. Richard Lawrence became the second Dean of the School. Approximately 115 full-time and 18 part-time students were enrolled in the graduate program at that time. Dr. Lawrence served as Dean for nine-years—overseeing the School during the turbulent years of the 1960s and early '70s.

During this period, the MSW curriculum was reorganized. As a participant in a national curriculum project, the School attempted to cross-integrate its coursework content by organizing plenary sessions and discussion groups instead of traditional classes. By 1969-70, block field practicum placements were introduced for the first time and a community organization concentration complemented those in social casework and social group work.

In 1969, the School reorganized its undergraduate social work curriculum. Building upon the programs that had been offered on the Bloomington campus for many decades, undergraduate social work education returned to Indianapolis as well. During the early 1970s, the professionalization of baccalaureate social work was a major topic within social work academic and professional circles. Faculty of the School embarked on a significant process of curriculum review that led to the conceptualization of a continuum for social work education (Indiana University School of Social Service, 1974a). The envisioned continuum included four levels of education for social work, including programs leading to the associate, baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees. Each level would reflect its own educational cohesion and integrity, would be more complex than the previous level, and would be progressively linked to the next level in an ascending order of complexity.

In 1971-72, the School moved from its long-time home in the Indianapolis Teaching Center to the fifth floor of Cavanaugh Hall on the growing Indianapolis campus of Indiana University. Subsequently, this modern, urban campus emerged as Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), as programs from the two universities were physically merged. Two years later, the School of Social Service was renamed the Indiana University School of Social Work to emphasize its full identification with the social work profession.

During the 1970s, Indiana University expanded its campuses throughout the state. The School, with programs on both the Indianapolis and Bloomington campuses, was encouraged to promote social work education—especially at the graduate level—on the emerging "regional" campuses. Faculty members committed to extending access to social work education engaged in numerous efforts to offer courses and develop programs. One faculty member was assigned to develop graduate courses on the Indiana University Northwest (Gary) campus. Courses were also developed for television delivery to the Ft. Wayne and South Bend campuses. In addition, block field placements were developed in communities outside of the Indianapolis area so that students could complete their internships in closer proximity to their homes. Class schedules were redesigned to accommodate students who resided outside the Indianapolis area (Rogers, 1983, p. 103).

In 1972, the School proposed new curricular designs for the School's new Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and the Associate of Science in Human Services (ASHS) programs. In 1973, the proposal was approved by Indiana University and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE). In order to accommodate the two new undergraduate programs, "Graduate" was dropped from the School's name to encompass the expanding continuum of social work education at Indiana University.

The School's two-year ASHS program enabled students, especially nontraditional students, to develop basic competencies for the provision of human services either as part of a service team or as an independent practitioner when intervention at a more complex level was not required (Indiana University School of Social Service, 1974c). In 1975, the ASHS program was inaugurated on the Indiana University East (Richmond) campus. Subsequently, a full BSW program was implemented, enabling undergraduate students from the central-eastern portion of the state to enroll in associate or baccalaureate programs.

The School's new BSW curriculum was designed to prepare students for beginning professional social work practice with a focus on the problem-solving process. Over several years, this curriculum was also fully implemented on the Indianapolis, Richmond, and Bloomington campuses, replacing the undergraduate social service program that had been offered for so many decades in cooperation with the College of Arts and Sciences in Bloomington.

The BSW curriculum required students to complete general education and supportive courses from the arts, physical sciences, and the social and behavioral sciences in addition to social work courses. The social work course areas included: human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy and services, research, social work practice, and field practicum. The BSW program was initially accredited by CSWE in 1976 and has been continuously accredited ever since.

The professionalization of baccalaureate education significantly affected the master's program. During 1973-1976, the School substantially revised its MSW curriculum. Two central concepts, generalist practice and social systems, significantly influenced the first (foundation) year of the curriculum. Within the advanced year, the long-valued casework and group-work tracks were integrated into an "Interpersonal Practice" concentration intended to prepare students for "direct clinical practice with the individual, the family, and the small group" (Rogers, 1983, p. 100).

The Planning and Management (P&M) concentration curriculum evolved during the late 1970s. Both concentrations allowed for secondary emphases in selected fields of service—family and child welfare, corrections, mental and physical health, and school social work—fields that reflected the prevailing interests of faculty and students.

Furthermore, the concentrations incorporated new and invigorating courses on topics such as Race, Poverty, Probation, and Corrections (Rogers, 1983). An affirmative action policy was written and adopted by the faculty in the spring of 1973. Special efforts were made to recruit African-American faculty and students, leading to greater diversity within the school.

Widespread interest in social work education continued to heighten during the 1970s. Responding to requests from agencies, legislators, prospective students, and other constituents, the Indiana University President appointed a committee to examine the statewide needs for graduate social work education. The University's Administrative Committee and Board of Trustees endorsed the Committee's recommendation that the School of Social Service extend graduate social work education throughout the state. Graduate courses continued on the Indiana University Northwest (Gary) and Indiana University South Bend campuses. New courses were offered at Indiana University East (Richmond) as well as on the Columbus, Ft. Wayne, and New Albany campuses. In the mid-1970s, the School in cooperation with the University of Evansville, designed and offered a program of part-time graduate coursework. Over a period of four semesters, students could earn as many as 45 semester credit hours in Evansville. Students were then expected to complete 12 months of full-time study in Indianapolis to qualify for the MSW degree (Rogers, 1983, pp. 106-107).

Interest in developing a doctoral program at Indiana University School of Social Work originated during Dean Lawrence's administration. Even as preparations were being completed for the initial accreditation of the BSW program in 1974, the faculty were discussing a larger vision for the School that would eventually encompass the full range of educational programs, including degrees at the associate, baccalaureate, masters, and eventually doctoral levels. By 1970, Indiana was the only state in Federal Region V (including Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin) that did not have at least one doctoral program. Consequently, Hoosiers who wished to pursue a doctoral degree had to leave the state to do so. As the only school of social work in the State of Indiana approved by the Commission on Higher Education to provide graduate education, it was apparent to faculty that if doctoral education was ever to flourish within the state, Indiana University was the obvious venue for it to take root.

In 1977, Dr. Lawrence stepped down as Dean to return to teaching and research. Dr. Leonard Schneiderman was named Dean and Dr. Cyrus Behroozi was appointed first Associate Dean of the School. During the five years Dr. Schneiderman served as Dean, the academic credentials of the faculty began to shift from one predominantly comprised of highly experienced masters' level practitioners to one that required doctoral-level education as a condition of tenure track appointment. Dean Schneiderman employed several additional faculty—most of whom had earned or were about to complete their doctoral degrees. He also dramatically increased the amount of external funding.

Dean Schneiderman identified the creation of a doctoral program as one of the school's highest priorities. Schneiderman was convinced that the realization of the school's aspirations for national prominence would inevitably require the development of a research infrastructure that could lead to the creation of new knowledge. It was apparent that the schools of social work that had attained this rarified status were schools that had gained reputations for being on the cutting edge of knowledge development. While they varied with respect to their affiliation with public or private universities, all of them had well-established doctoral programs with many having also developed related research centers. If the School was to join this elite group, Schneiderman believed it would have to expand its mission to include not only the dissemination of existing knowledge, but also the creation of new knowledge.

During 1978-82, the School refined the practice focus of its BSW curriculum as generalist social work. Furthermore, the School revised its MSW curriculum to emphasize generalist content within the first semester and began the MSW concentration coursework in the second semester of the first year curriculum.

The School's statewide mission was reinforced in 1979 and 1980 with the submission of a Program Improvement Proposal to the Indiana Commission on Higher Education to extend graduate social work education to campuses in Gary, South Bend, Ft. Wayne, and Evansville. The Commission authorized the School to award the MSW degree at these campuses. However, funding did not accompany the approval and efforts to develop "off-campus" programs were impeded due to the enormous resource requirements (Rogers, 1983, pp. 122-123).

In 1979, a faculty-planning group was formed at the School to consider feasibility issues and prepare a formal proposal for a doctoral program that it hoped eventually would be approved by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. It also struggled with the question of whether the program should be developed primarily with a practice focus and a DSW degree awarded through the School of Social Work, or whether it should emphasize research and be offered as a Ph.D. awarded through the Graduate School. This issue was ultimately resolved at the University level when it was determined that the School did not yet possess the requisite research infrastructure necessary to support the kinds of research required of a Ph.D. program.

Despite unanimous approval and enthusiastic support at all levels of the University, including the Board of Trustees, the ICHE tabled the proposal in 1980 pending "a report on the progress of the expansion of the MSW program" to three

additional Indiana University campuses and the University of Southern Indiana (ICHE, 1990). One year later, the Commission voted by the narrowest of margins (seven to six) against approval.

In 1981, the School relocated from Cavanaugh Hall to the fourth floor of the brand new Education-Social Work Building. A year later, Dr. Schneiderman resigned his position as Dean. Dr. Beulah Compton, a graduate of Indiana University School of Social Service and co-author of a leading social work textbook, served as Acting Dean for a year followed by Dr. Gerald Powers, who served as Acting Dean until 1984, when Dr. Sheldon Siegel was appointed Dean of the School.

Initiated by Dr. Schneiderman and sustained by Dr. Siegel, the School made a concerted effort to increase the diversity of both its faculty and student body. Dr. Schneiderman was responsible for developing the School's affiliation with the Council on International Programs (CIP), an international initiative that has, during the intervening years, been instrumental in bringing literally hundreds of human service professionals from more than 80 countries around the world to the IUPUI campus. This international and interdisciplinary initiative was sustained by Dr. Siegel under the direct leadership of Professor David Metzger.

In a further effort to enhance statewide access to graduate social work education, the School initiated a part-time Weekend Work-Study Program on the Indianapolis campus. Initially, the program was limited to applicants currently employed in social service positions living outside the Indianapolis area. Students completed the master's foundation curriculum in 15 months by taking classroom courses on Saturdays and completing the first field practicum in their place of employment. Work-study placements could be arranged in the student's workplace provided the practicum experience was distinctly different from their regular work responsibilities and a different supervisor could be provided. This program proved to be extremely popular and precipitated large numbers of admission applications.

Despite the absence of additional funding, through the work-study program, the School found a means to enhance access to graduate social work education to students throughout the state. The program was a resounding success and led to the establishment of part-time evening, part-time day, and part-time Saturday programs. The long-established Advanced-Standing Program also enabled qualified BSW graduates to complete the MSW program at an accelerated pace.

In the late 1980s, Dean Siegel reconvened a group of faculty to consider the feasibility of submitting a new proposal for a doctoral degree program. In the years that intervened since submission of the original proposal, the makeup of the faculty had changed significantly, both in terms of its academic credentials and its racial diversity. All new faculty appointments were required to have attained a doctoral degree with an identified research agenda. It was evident by this point that the scholarly productivity and research potential of the faculty had increased dramatically. Attributable in part to these changes, in 1991 the faculty reaffirmed its commitment to the development of a doctoral program and decided that this time the School should submit a proposal for a Ph.D. program with a strong research

emphasis. Again, the proposal enjoyed unanimous support at all levels of the University review process. It was submitted to the ICHE for review in the fall of 1992 and was finally approved by the Commission in June, 1993. The School was approved to accept its first class of doctoral students following formal accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in 1994. The first cohort of six students entered the program the following fall and four years later the School graduated its first doctoral candidate.

The format for the doctoral program was built around a flexible interdisciplinary model that included an intentionally integrated series of didactic and experiential learning opportunities. While grounded in the historical and ideological commitments of the social work profession, the program was designed to take full advantage of the relevant human service professions and related academic disciplines available throughout the University. As such, it was designed to enable students to tie their research interests to related areas, such as education, public and environmental affairs, sociology, psychology, women's studies, philanthropy, or law. Given its strong multi-disciplinary thrust, the program was built around a "committee approach" to advising that would intentionally draw upon the professional expertise of scholars throughout the University whose intellectual and research interests paralleled those of the students who were to be enrolled in the program.

During the early 1990s, despite the success of the part-time MSW programs on the Indianapolis campus, interest in graduate social work education once again arose on several other Indiana University campuses. Given the historical context, the School could not expect to receive funding to establish MSW programs on the regional campuses. However, the School emphasized to university and campus leaders its desire to help those campuses mount MSW programs provided they generated the funding to house the program, employ necessary faculty and staff, and deliver the educational services.

Since there was only one School of Social Work at Indiana University (headquartered in Indianapolis), programs on other campuses would (according to CSWE policies) be considered branches. The School, based on its accredited status, provided the curriculum, faculty development, and academic supervision while the campuses provided the funding and earned the income associated with student enrollment. Under these arrangements and based on fairly complicated memoranda of understanding, full MSW programs were initiated on the Indiana University South Bend and the Indiana University Northwest (Gary) campuses during 1992-1995. These programs were modeled after the part-time programs that had become such a success in Indianapolis.

As these programs became increasingly recognized and an MSW program received CSWE accreditation at the University of Southern Indiana, the demand for the Weekend Work-Study Program became more manageable. Prospective students could now enroll in MSW programs closer to their homes and workplaces. In light of these developments and the existence of more than a dozen accredited BSW programs throughout the state, the School was in a position to conclude that it finally realized its long-held goal of providing professional social work education throughout the State of Indiana.

In 1994, Dr. Roberta Greene became the School's fifth Dean. One of her first actions was to create two new positions at the School. Dr. Barry R. Cournoyer was appointed Associate Dean for Quality Improvement and Dr. Irene Queiro-Tajalli became the School's Associate Dean for Systems.

During her five-year tenure, Dr. Greene built upon her predecessors' efforts to develop a variety of community-based field units headed by teacher/practitioners (i.e., non-tenure-track faculty members physically located in agency-based field settings). Tied to a range of critical service delivery areas (e.g., mental health, housing, child welfare, youth development, school social work, and neighborhood centers), these field units not only provided dynamic *in vivo* settings for collaborative student learning, but also viable laboratories for a wide range of practice-sensitive research. Dean Greene also secured major funding that dramatically enhanced the computer and technological resources of the School, and contributed to a growing interest in and capacity for research among social work faculty and students.

External Forces Shaping the School's Mission: 1960-2000

The election of John F. Kennedy as President of the United States generated great optimism that the 1960s might be a decade when major social problems from child welfare to crime and poverty would be addressed and ultimately resolved. Indeed, the civil rights, students', women's, and, of course, the anti-war movements challenged the status quo. Interestingly, much of the social work community—from students and faculty to the professional associations—were noticeably passive during this major social revolution. It would be some time before substantial numbers of social workers would become socially active—often in the form of advocacy for the rights of women and people of color.

During the 1970s, federal legislation, including shifts in public assistance to dependent children of unmarried, abandoned, or divorced women, offered new opportunities as well as challenges for social policy and social work practice. Title XX of the Social Security Act provided funds directly to the states for social welfare service. In 1979, the Indiana General Assembly adopted a new Juvenile Code that provided training for child welfare workers. These initiatives in federal and state policy, while applauded, would later be seen as reflecting the initial indications of a more conservative political approach. The reliance on local and state authority, and the private market for implementation, plus the notion of cost and service accountability, were clarion calls for what was to come in the 1980s. The optimism driving change during the '70s would not be sustained for long.

Throughout its history, the School had provided substantial amounts of service to the larger civic and professional communities of the state. During the 1970s, faculty and students became even more active and provided consultation, direct and indirect services, research, and leadership support to numerous constituencies and agencies. In several instances, these efforts contributed to the development of organizations and programs that later became core agencies providing services to children, families, and communities statewide (see Children's Bureau, 2000).

As the decade of the '80s began, the renewed conservatism and the politics of the New Federalism led to further retrenchment in the role of government and shifts in the auspice of social services. During the presidency of Ronald Reagan, many

social workers struggled to challenge or adjust to changes in the nature, organization, and funding of social services. The Reagan domestic policy focused on three basic objectives: transfer responsibility and authority from the federal government to state and local communities; rely upon the private sector to provide for social services; and reduce federal programs and spending for social welfare initiatives (Segal & Brzuzy, 1998). Each of these initiatives provided fodder for debate and retrenchment in Indiana's already conservative and residual approach to social welfare.

Early in 1980, Dean Schneiderman encouraged faculty and students to further increase the school's involvement with the professional and general communities of the state. The creation of the Indiana Coalition for Human Services (ICHS) became one of those initiatives (ICHS, 1981). Members of the Indiana University School of Social Work community and other professionals convened to consider the implications of legislative policies emanating from the new Reagan administration in terms of their impact on the delivery of social services in Indiana.

The state had little recent history in the design and implementation of social services at the local level. In Indiana, public welfare was administered by 92 different county departments and some 1,000 township trustees. Social service managers were accustomed to reacting and appealing directly for programs and funding from a cafeteria of categorical federal programs administered by various agencies in Washington, D.C. State government was not organized in a way that fostered or maintained communication or leadership among public social services providers.

The Indiana Coalition for Human Services was formed during the summer of 1982. There were 24 founding member organizations from throughout the state, and the Dean of the School of Social Work was elected its first President (ICHS, 1982). The purpose of the ICHS was twofold: (1) educate and prepare state and local leadership for the transformation from federal categorical allocations for social services to block-grant provisions and authority at the state and local level, and (2) coordinate statewide advocacy efforts for social welfare policy at the legislative level. A graduate of the School, employed by this new coalition as a professional lobbyist, gradually gained the respect and trust of legislators and state officials as an authority on social policy and social services.

During the 1980s the proportion of initiatives introduced into the Indiana General Assembly focusing on social services and social work increased from fewer than 20% to more than one-half. Faculty served on the ICHS board and its committees, while students pursued related field placements and learned to practice in the legislative and policy analysis arena.

Opportunities for collaboration with professional colleagues and service providers throughout the state became commonplace, and professors and students' efforts yielded noticeable results. For example, as a direct result of the scholarly and advocacy work of two of the School's professors, a State Commission on Abused and Neglected Children and Their Families was established. Chaired and staffed by the School of Social Work, the Commission's work resulted in legislation that greatly improved the child welfare system in Indiana. Another of the School's professors' scholarly and service work led directly to the establishment of an office

of Community Services in the Indianapolis Department of Public Housing. Second-year students in the planning and management concentration of the graduate program found creative field placements in areas of social policy analysis, information systems analysis, funding and resource development, and social service program design. The visibility and respect for the profession of social work and social work education in Indiana made significant strides during this period.

Social Work Licensing

For many years the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and its Indiana Chapter fought valiantly to secure legal regulation for the social work profession. Two of the School's professors chaired the Indiana NASW Committee on Legal Regulation and were tireless in their pursuit of social work certification. During the 1987, 1988, and 1989 legislative sessions of the Indiana General Assembly, bills providing for social work certification were introduced and passed in one house; only to be denied passage in the other. The ICHS and many of its member agencies provided funds to employ a full-time lobbyist during the 1989, 1990, and 1991 legislative sessions. Passage finally came late during the 1991 legislative session, but not without substantial compromise.

Social workers across the state were overjoyed to learn of the passage of this hard fought legislative victory. For several years Indiana had remained the only state in the nation without some form of social work regulation. However, the celebration was short-lived. Two days following adjournment of the General Assembly, the Director of the Indiana Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and a professor from the School of Social Work were summoned by the Governor's administrative assistant and advised that Governor Evan Bayh had vetoed the legislation.

Rushed to meet the constitutional deadline for submitting signed legislation to the Secretary of State's Office, the Governor had vetoed the bill believing it provided only for the certification of *Marriage and Family Counselors* and excluded social workers. Unaware of last-minute negotiations that led to the inclusion of *Social Workers* in the bill, the Governor acted on earlier advice not to support the legal certification of this group. Following a morning of meetings with the governor and his staff, an unusual agreement was forged whereby the Governor would support a legislative resolution to override his own veto at the annual one-day legislative session in the autumn. Although formal celebration of the legislative victory was delayed another six months, the decade-long aspiration to secure social work certification had finally been realized.

An International Perspective

In an effort to increase awareness and respect for racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity and global understanding, Indiana University School of Social Work began to develop field practicum outside the United States during the mid-1970s. In 1976, the Dean negotiated placements for students in London. Over the next 10 years, similar practicums were developed in Puerto Rico, Montreal, the Bahamas, Germany, and Brazil. By 1982, communications with the Fachhochschule (faculties of social work) in Hamburg, Germany resulted in an agreement to offer graduate-level courses and a field practicum to German students (Indiana University

School of Social Work and Fachhochschule Esslingen-Hochschule fur Sozialwesen, 1996). Support for this international study program came from the German Education and Cultural Foundation. Each year, some six-to-nine German social work students completed MSW courses on the Indianapolis campus and undertook community-based field practicums alongside their Indiana University colleagues.

Efforts to broaden the range of opportunities for cross-cultural and international experiences for faculty and students led to the School's admission to the Council of International Programs (CIP). The CIP was one of the cultural and educational programs of the United States Department of State created in 1955 as part of the Fulbright educational exchange programs. The Indiana University School of Social Work became a CIP university affiliate in the summer of 1978. For 19 years the school participated in this cultural exchange program referred to locally as the IU-CIP (Metzger, 1997).

Three core objectives shaped the program: (1) host family living, (2) an internship in practice settings that paralleled participants' prior education and experience, and (3) cross-cultural seminars and workshops covering social work education and practice, and family life traditions and institutions. Professor David Metzger was appointed to direct the program. A 15-member advisory council comprised of social work faculty, social service agency representatives, and public officials was appointed to assist in gaining financial resources, recruiting host families, and supporting the program. Eleven participants from 10 nations came to the school in April of 1979 to begin the first program.

Nineteen years later, 284 individuals representing 79 nations had participated in this educational and cultural exchange program, and are now identified as IU-CIP alumni. The program enhanced the School's global perspective and enriched the personal and professional lives of everyone involved. During these 19 years, social workers, health specialists, physicians, lawyers, teachers, and elected officials from every part of the globe joined with the school's students and faculty in classes, workshops, field trips, and social gatherings. Many collaborated with faculty from the School of Social Work and other university departments, and with community professionals on research projects and overseas study opportunities.

The participants reflected an incredible range of cultural diversity and their professional credentials were exceptional. For example, among the IU-CIP participants were a psychiatrist who happened to be the daughter of the President of Hungary; an elected member of the Parliament of Rumania; a principal of the School of Social Work in Lahore, Pakistan; a Sister of the Order of Providence teaching in a rural area in the Southern Philippines; and a non-conventional Probation Officer from Austria. More than 200 families shared their lives with these professional colleagues in ways only possible through host living. Hundreds of social workers, lawyers, teachers, and health care professionals examined practice, policy, ethical, social, political, economic, and philosophical issues with these international colleagues through unique learning experiences. Needless to say, the nature and depth of these learning experiences were extraordinary, intellectually exhilarating, and often transcendent. These 19 years provided opportunities for learning and experience never expected or even imagined. Profoundly touched by the

experience, faculty, students, hosts, and colleagues throughout the state were forever changed, yet hard-put to tell others how or why.

The impact of the IU-CIP program on Indiana University School of Social Work, its faculty and students, and the university's global educational mission is difficult to overstate. Although the School hosted its last cohort of CIP participants in 1997, the program's legacy continues to resonate in many activities. For example, in 1996, 21 students and three faculty members of the School were invited to a two-week long series of workshops and seminars in German-American Social Policy and Social Work Practice at the Fachhochschule at Esslingen University in Southern Germany (Indiana University School of Social Work and Fachhochschule Esslingen-Hochschule fur Sozialwesen, 1996). This was the school's first experience in facilitating a large cohort of students and faculty on such a mission. This event opened doors of opportunity for education, practice, and research still to be developed. Similarly, an MSW graduate of Indiana University School of Social Work currently serves as the Director of the International Center of Indianapolis and continues to coordinate special projects that bring professionals from throughout the world to the city and the university for cultural and educational enrichment experiences. Such international activities maintain the rich and enriching legacy of the IU-CIP program.

The School of Social Work: A Contemporary Overview and Vision for the Future

Currently, Indiana University School of Social Work offers a full continuum of social work education from the associate to doctoral levels. Nearly 900 students study social work on several Indiana University campuses. The two-year, Associate of Science in Human Services program is offered on the Richmond campus. The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program is a 51-credit hour program of study designed to prepare students for beginning generalist social work practice. Full BSW programs are offered on the Indianapolis, Bloomington, and Richmond campuses. The Master of Social Work (MSW) program is a 60-credit hour program designed to prepare students for advanced professional practice in one of two concentrations: Interpersonal Social Work Practice or Macro Social Work Practice. Interpersonal practice refers to direct work with individuals, families, and small groups in need of social services. Macro practice refers to macro system service through policy analysis, advocacy, community organization, planning, or administration. Complete MSW programs are offered on the Indianapolis, Gary, and South Bend campuses. The social work doctoral program (Ph.D.) is a 90-credit hour research-oriented program designed to prepare graduates for leadership positions within the profession.

The kinds of intellectual and methodological skills developed as part of a research-focused doctoral program are critical to the profession's continuing efforts to extend and improve the overall quality of its knowledge base, including its ability to effectively address individual and societal problems, to serve as active participants in shaping public policy, and to meaningfully engage in the process of preventing and ameliorating social and economic injustice. In order to complement and extend this vision, two additional knowledge-building initiatives were introduced. In 1999, the School sponsored the creation of its own scholarly journal *Advances in Social Work: Linking Research, Education, and Practice*. In 2001, the

Office of Research Services was established. Both of these initiatives were designed to strengthen the research infrastructure of the School, the former by providing a vehicle for the dissemination of new knowledge, and the latter by serving as a catalyst in developing a research culture that is supportive, encouraging, and collaborative in nature. It is believed that the synergistic effect generated by a viable doctoral program, a professional journal, and an office for the coordination of research services will contribute substantially to the overall intellectual climate of the School. By increasing opportunities for faculty and students to engage in collaborative practice-sensitive and applied research, the School has positioned itself to foster interdisciplinary knowledge-building projects with colleagues of like mind both within and outside the University.

In 2000, Dr. Michael Patchner became the 6th Dean of Indiana University School of Social Work. He aspires to build upon the foundations laid by his predecessors to improve the quality of the School's educational, service, and research activities. Dean Patchner hopes to continue efforts to provide high quality educational programs with curricula that are current and relevant, recruit students who seek to serve and yearn for challenging educational experiences, and to provide an educational environment that is diverse and representative of its state, national, and international constituencies. Dr. Patchner anticipates the development of joint-academic programs, especially at the masters' level (Patchner, 2000).

Research and scholarship will have a higher priority to better complement the School's historical emphasis upon teaching and service. The School aims to become a national leader in the assessment of educational processes and outcomes. Drawing upon the most recent Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (Council on Social Work Education, 2001) as a catalyst for change, the School has committed to curricular innovation that will identify it nationally as a leader in learner-focused, outcome-based education (Patchner, 2000).

In conclusion, the history of social work education is much more than the history of an academic discipline. As such, "it is a significant part of the historical development of American society . . . marked by economic and societal changes—leading to resolution of some social problems and creation of new problems" (Austin, 1986, p. 46). We believe that this brief depiction of the evolution of the Indiana University School of Social Work mirrors in many respects the experiences of other schools and departments of social work, and as such may be enlightening to those interested in the history of social work education.

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The 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: Issues and Opportunities for BSW Education

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Abstract: *The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) combines social work educational policies and accreditation standards within a single document. The EPAS establishes guidelines for baccalaureate and masters' level social work education throughout the United States. In this article, the authors discuss the implications of the EPAS for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programs. They focus especially upon those aspects of the EPAS that relate to foundation-level program objectives and curriculum content.*

Keywords: BSW education, social work, EPAS, educational policies, accreditation standards

The 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) integrates in a single document curriculum policies and accreditation standards and combines the mandates for social work education at the BSW and MSW levels. It is too early to say how well this document will serve social work educators and students. We can say, however, that the EPAS document is a reflection of efficiency—one of the elements of a McDonaldized society (Ritzer, 2000).

This article discusses the educational opportunities and concerns related to EPAS. In considering the implications of EPAS for BSW programs, we focus primarily upon the foundation program objectives and foundation curriculum content sections under the Educational Policy section. We also discuss selected passages in the Accreditation Standards section.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The Educational Policy sets the basis for the accreditation standards by defining the purposes of the social work profession and education, the structure of social work education, program objectives, and the foundation curriculum content.

The Educational Policy mandates baccalaureate social work programs to achieve 12 foundation program objectives. These objectives reflect the common

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Indiana University School of Social Work.

body of the profession's knowledge, values, and skills. A close look at both the 1992 and 2001 program objectives indicates that practically no differences exist between these two sets of objectives. While there are some differences in language, the intent of the objectives appears the same. Perhaps, the difference will be in the way programs link these objectives to their assessment plans to demonstrate objective achievement as required under the content area "Program Assessment and Continuous Improvement." The foundation curriculum, reflected in eight curriculum content areas and in conjunction with a liberal arts perspective, mandates coverage of professional knowledge, values, and skills to meet the foundation objectives. In the following pages we focus on selected aspects of the foundation curriculum.

Values and Ethics

Social work is a value-based profession (Gordon, 1965) that is subject to change (Congress, 1999). As a result, the curriculum in this area needs to be sufficiently open to accommodate to societal changes (e.g., advances in medicine and technology). This content area expects social work programs to "integrate content about values and ethical decision making as presented in the *National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics*" (CSWE, 2001, p. 9) in their foundation curriculum and prepare students to "understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, and practice accordingly" (p. 8). These expectations seem to establish the *NASW Code of Ethics* (NASW, 1999) as the primary guide for ethical decision-making. This raises issues and opportunities of various kinds. The *NASW Code of Ethics* is, without question, the predominant social work ethical code in the United States. However, there are other codes that have merit (e.g., National Association of Black Social Workers, International Social Workers, Canadian Association of Social Workers, Federation of Clinical Social Workers, Code of Radical Social Workers). We believe that these other codes may contribute to students' education and enable them to recognize the value of different professional perspectives. Nonetheless, the implicit endorsement of the *NASW Code* establishes a clear and specific expectation for all social work students educated in accredited programs in the United States.

Diversity

Emerging societal changes will impact the way we conceive and shape social work practice in the next decade (2004-2014). We expect that in the years ahead, the process of devolution will continue on a global scale with repercussion at the individual and community levels. There are clear predictors of significant demographic changes in the USA based on the nature of work (Gurnstein, 1996), multiculturalism (Kivisto & Rundblad, 2000), religion/spirituality (Porter, 2000), and the aging of the population (Greene, 2000). Advances in technology will bring greater connectivity among people and social agencies (Schoech, Cavalier & Hoover, 1993; Queiro-Tajalli & Campbell, 1999) as well as widening the gap between the "technology rich" and the "technology poor" (Tapscott, 1998). Clearly, these changes will expand the nature of diversity in previously unimagined ways.

Several foundation program objectives refer to the abilities social workers require in serving diverse populations. We believe that the phrase "integrate con-

tent," as used in the passage "integrate content that promotes understanding, affirmation, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds," (CSWE, 2001, p. 9), suggests that BSW programs are expected to thoroughly address diversity content throughout the foundation curriculum. Similarly, the term "affirmation" is used in the new policy. We posit that "affirmation extends well beyond tolerance" to suggest an active, engaged search for the value and meaning of diversity among individuals, groups, and communities. This implies a commitment to practice that truly reflects competence in diversity even if it requires opposing mainstream professional practices.

If BSW programs design curriculums and implement learning experiences suggested by the diversity-related foundation objectives and content, we anticipate that graduates will be ethnically- and culturally-sensitive practitioners capable of enhancing human well-being in partnership with diverse clients.

Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice

Whereas diversity content helps students learn to acknowledge, celebrate, promote, and affirm diversity in BSW practice, the Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice content encourages students to learn and think critically about deeply ingrained mechanisms of oppression that adversely impact the lives of individuals, groups, and communities.

EPAS does not specifically identify which at-risk-groups should be addressed within the foundation curriculum. However, two foundation program objectives indicate that graduates must demonstrate the abilities to "practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation"(CSWE, 2001, p. 8), and to "understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice" (CSWE, 2001, p. 8). Among the purposes of the profession are to ". . . alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice" (p. 5) and ". . . pursue policies, services, and resources through advocacy and social or political actions that promote social and economic justice" (p. 5). Social work education is charged with the responsibility to prepare social workers who are able to engage in activities intended to achieve such professional purposes.

In generalist practice, we cannot target our focus of intervention on the individual without addressing those societal constraints that place diverse groups at risk. By the same token, we cannot address societal oppression without intervening to mitigate its impact at the interpersonal level.

The EPAS enables BSW programs to build upon lessons learned from earlier attempts to develop and deliver content in this area. Certainly, given the intricate interaction between economic and societal factors, greater emphasis on "economic justice" is needed. Indeed, the 2001 EPAS requires coverage of "distributive justice, human and civil rights, and the global interconnection of oppression" and "…prepare students to advocate for non-discriminatory social and economic systems" (CSWE, 2001, p. 10). In addition, the EPAS suggests that BSW programs include Human Behavior and the Social Environment content about "...empiri-

cally based theories and knowledge that focus on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems" (p. 10).

We recognize a clear need to educate students about economic systems as entities that can deter or enhance individual and community growth. As educators, we look forward to helping students learn to assess the sources and ramifications of oppression within the interconnection of global systems and demonstrate competency in efforts to achieve distributive justice and human and civil rights, and to develop nondiscriminatory social and economic systems within a global perspective.

As we complete this manuscript, the horrendous attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent retaliation by the United States, combined with fears of biological warfare are extremely painful reminders of the negative side of global interconnections in the 21st century. At the same time, we experience the compassionate face of global interconnections in the form of solidarity, unity, and relief efforts. The unspeakable acts of violence and the expressions of compassion have revealed the worst and best of globalization. As Queiro-Tajalli and Campbell (2002) state, "These horrendous attacks will not abate, but may intensify given the apparent intolerance toward diversity and a seemingly ever-increasing lack of respect for human rights on a global scale." Perhaps, for the first time in our lives as educators, students, and practitioners, we must grapple with so many unanswered questions related to national and international social and economic justice. We hope to seize the opportunity of a new educational policy statement to transform our curriculums to encourage the preparation of competent practitioners in a world of contradictions, where forces of destruction are so closely interrelated with those of construction, goodwill, and resilience. We support Asamoah, Healy, and Mayadas (1997) in their call to abandon "…the conceptual separation of domestic and international content and move toward a curriculum with a truly global perspective" (p. 389) in order to prepare students for the realities of this millennium.

Social Welfare Policy and Services

EPAS highlights the integral relationship between policy and practice. The document emphasizes policy analysis from local to international levels as well as the explicit linkage of policy to social work practice. It makes clear that BSW programs must help students develop "policy practice skills" needed to participate actively in the policy development process in both organizational and political contexts.

This emphasis on policy practice and advocacy skills places policy squarely in the midst of the practice of social work, not as a separate foundation content in the curriculum. The challenge for BSW educators is how to make this linkage explicit for students.

Social Work Practice

The 2001 EPAS continues to emphasize generalist practice. Each BSW graduate is expected to demonstrate the ability to "apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes" (p. 8). Furthermore, content about social work practice should focus on "strengths, capacities, and resources of client systems in relation to their broader environments" (p. 10), help students learn to

develop, analyze, advocate, and provide "leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice" (CSWE, 2001, p. 10).

The educational policy appears to suggest that policy and practice content be more integrated, and that policy-related work is indeed part of social work practice. "Policy practice skills" seem fundamental to generalist social work practice. We anticipate that the integration of policy and practice will serve graduates well. It will equip practitioners with the knowledge and skills to provide leadership in developing policies and programs that are research-based, tailored to the circumstances of state and local contexts, and derived from their experience serving clients affected by social policies.

This content area also calls for a curriculum that includes empirically-based interventions to achieve client goals. We believe that this mandate will reinforce the orientation of best practices in social work. There is no doubt that empirically-based practice is of paramount importance in the 21st century, yet, we are cognizant that as a profession we are continually challenged to agree as to what is an effective intervention and for whom it is effective.

The inclusion of the application of empirical and technological advances to practice is another important aspect of the foundation practice content. The context of contemporary social work practice is changing dramatically and will continue to do so in light of emerging knowledge and advances in technology. BSW students need to know about the risks and opportunities associated with technological innovations as well as legal and ethical factors associated with its application in practice. Access to services through agency-sponsored "chats" or "e-mail support groups" increase accessibility, particularly to clients who have typically been underserved, those in remote or rural areas, and those whose mobility challenges limit their ability to physically access agencies for services. Online counseling or teleconferencing expands the possibilities for reaching those who have been isolated. BSW social workers prepared for generalist practice also need to learn about the potential for "electronic community organizing" and the use of technology for advocacy purposes (FitzGerald & McNutt, 1999; McNutt & Boland, 1999; Queiro-Tajalli & Campbell, 2002).

As we promote the promising aspects of technology in social work practice, we need to educate students in the ethical use of technology (Cwikel & Cnaan, 1991) and in the obligation social workers have to advocate for access to technology for all people. Numerous writers (Pippa, 2001; Slater, 2000; Tapscott, 1998; Vernon & Lynch, 1999) have warned us about the dangers of a "digital divide" in the information society, creating a gap that separates those with access to the Internet and those without (Slater, 2000). In the industrial economy we talked about an unequal distribution of resources creating a division between the "haves" and "the have-nots." In the information society we have to be vigilant not to allow society to become fragmented between "the knowers and know-nots" and the "doers and do-nots" based on access to technology and education.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Educational accreditation standards establish a minimal level of expectation without either establishing or guaranteeing excellence. Some authors have point-

ed out that at times, accreditation standards may impede curricular innovation (Markward & Drolen, 1999), may not assure program effectiveness (Wellman, 2000), and may contribute to conflict and controversy among the social work professional and academic communities (Gibbs, 1995).

Despite its occasional disadvantages, accreditation is the vehicle social work education and educators have chosen to help define the profession, refine curriculum, and develop generations of practitioners. The question that must be addressed is what impact the EPAS will have on social work education in teaching, training, and socializing future practitioners.

Budgetary Authority

EPAS mandates the presence of "sufficient" resources in the area of support staff, other personnel, library resources, office and classroom space, and technology necessary to "achieve program goals and objectives" (p. 14). BSW programs will be challenged to document what is "sufficient" in order to achieve their mission. This is also related to the question of who owns the budget? While the 1994 Evaluative Standard clearly stated that "the program must have its own budget, as well as responsibility for budget development and administration" (CSWE, 1994, p. 82), the 2001 Accreditation Standard 3 is silent on this issue. The closest statement is Accreditation Standard 3.1.2, which reads, "The program has sufficient and stable financial supports that permit program planning and achievement of program goals and objectives. These include a budgetary allocation and procedures for budget development and administration" (CSWE, 2001, p. 14). It appears that budget planning and implementation need not be the prerogative of the social work faculty and administrators. We wonder about the implications of potentially reduced budgetary authority within BSW programs in an educational context of competing programs and diminishing resources.

Non-discrimination and Human Diversity

EPAS requires BSW programs to make "specific and continuous efforts to provide a learning context in which respect for all persons and understanding of diversity (including age, class, color, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation) are practiced" (CSWE, 2001, p. 16). This standard appears to make clear that programs must adopt policies and practices that respect diversity and prohibit discrimination.

Although the legal rationale for less affirmative language may be understandable, many social work educators wonder about the nature of professional social work education in college and university contexts that do not support protection for vulnerable groups. The positions of certain religions on topics such as sexual orientation and status of women may make it difficult for some BSW programs to provide learning contexts that meet accreditation standards related to nondiscrimination and human diversity. We wonder how BSW programs of all kinds will respond to this mandate. Similarly, we wonder how accreditation site visitors and commissioners will evaluate programs on this standard. We anticipate considerable controversy in the years ahead.

Program Assessment and Continuous Improvement

Program assessment is at the core of the accreditation process. Through assessment, programs demonstrate that they are accomplishing their mission and goals. As suggested by Palomba and Banta (1999a), assessment involves more than the purposeful collection of data. Assessment also includes the use of information to improve educational programs. The "ultimate emphasis of assessment is on programs rather than on individual students" (p. 5).

Program assessment has been difficult for many social work programs to implement. According to Baskind, Shank, and Ferraro (1999), "96% (*N*=70) of all programs that were reviewed for reaffirmation for the period February 1998 through October 1999 were required to submit an interim report for this standard" (p. 103). Clearly, regular assessment is essential for the development and maintenance of quality social work education. EPAS requires programs to demonstrate that they have a conceptual plan for assessment, that they implement the plan, and that based on the analysis of the assessment data, that they make the necessary adjustments to the educational program. Indeed, this standard requires that programs "evaluate the outcome of each program objective… " (p. 17). Such a requirement represents an opportunity for faculty to collaborate on assessment processes that relate specifically to each program's unique goals and objectives. As suggested by Banta, Lambert, and Black (2001), it is unlikely that a single assessment tool will meet all the needs of all programs. Certainly, some instruments (e.g., the BEAP) will be useful across-the-board but programs will undoubtedly need to develop additional processes (e.g., portfolios, capstone products, comprehensive exams).

We hope that program assessment will be used to enhance students' learning and strengthen the quality of social work programs. We recognize that some programs may engage in assessment primarily to "satisfy" accreditation expectations. We also fear that program assessment results may be used for purposes other than quality improvement (e.g., personnel evaluation, funding decisions, or program elimination). If programs anticipate that negative findings constitute major risks to their survival or accreditation status, the processes of assessment may become superficial or irrelevant.

Program Renewal

Program renewal is closely related to assessment in the inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the process. Programs are required to have "ongoing exchanges with external constituencies that may include social work practitioners, social service recipients, advocacy groups, social service agencies, professional association, regulatory agencies, the academic community, and the community at large" (CSWE, 2001, p. 16). While each stakeholder may have different roles in assessment and program renewal, each is a precious resource to improve the quality of social work education.

Integral to the emphasis on program assessment and renewal is the encouragement for programmatic innovation and change. The 2001 EPAS permits "programs to use time-tested and new models of program design, implementation, and evaluation" and encourages "programs to respond to changing human, professional, and institutional needs" (p. 3). We welcome this opportunity to meet

accreditation standards while changing and revising curriculums and learning experiences in our efforts to improve educational quality.

CONCLUSIONS

Social work is a diverse profession as reflected in its many practice modalities, varied ideologies, and wide range of fields of practice. Nonetheless, throughout the history of social work accreditation, educators have captured the essential elements of the profession and have integrated them into curriculum policy statements, including the recently approved EPAS. Based on the many faces of the profession, the demands on BSW education are many. However, this has been the case since 1974 when the Council on Social Work Education began to accredit undergraduate social work programs. Certainly, the new EPAS calls for more emphasis in certain areas, including technology, affirmation of diversity, empirically-based research and interventions, and attention to global systems. In the final analysis, the EPAS has retained the intent of the 1992 Curriculum Policy Statement program objectives. Nonetheless, we should not feel complacent about current curriculum designs and content but take the opportunity afforded by EPAS to bring changes in the curriculum that truly reflect our commitment to assist vulnerable populations and promote social and economic justice. Furthermore, through our assessment processes, we should determine the validity of what we teach and the praxis of how we teach.

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The 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: Implications for MSW Programs

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Abstract: *The 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) establish guidelines for baccalaureate and masters' level social work education throughout the United States. In this article, the authors discuss implications of the EPAS for masters' level social work educational programs. They focus especially upon the opportunities afforded programs to introduce innovative educational experiences.*

Keywords: MSW education, social work, EPAS, educational policies, accreditation standards

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) (CSWE, 2001) offer challenges, opportunities, and increased flexibility to MSW Programs. As with all accreditation documents, implementation will bring clarification and a "legislative" history, providing further resources for MSW programs working to stay in compliance while adapting curricula and program design to the needs of a new century. To be implemented in July 2002, EPAS offers social work programs an opportunity to deliver social work education in a more flexible manner than in the recent past.

According to the CSWE bylaws, the statements on educational policy and the accompanying accreditation standards are subject to review every seven years. In past iterations, the policy statement and standards have been developed sequentially, with the policy statement developed by the Commission on Educational Policy and the standards written by the Commission on Accreditation. EPAS was a joint product of the commissions working in tandem with one another. The commissions hoped to reduce the size of the documents, streamline the accreditation process, and encourage educational innovation. EPAS represents amended views of the purpose of social work education, program structure, and the eight (formerly nine) essential curricula areas: values and ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk and social and economic justice, human behavior and the social environment (HBSE), social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field education. Although the general content areas remain the same, social work pro-

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grams may use the new policies and standards to present these curricular areas in innovative and creative combinations.

PURPOSE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The purpose statement in the EPAS pushes students towards leadership in the profession. It reads as follows: "The purposes of social work education are to prepare competent and effective professionals, to develop social work knowledge, and to provide leadership in the development of service delivery systems" (CSWE, 2001, p. 5). Contrast that with the previous purpose statement, which read: "The purpose of professional social work education is to enable students to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession into competent practice" (CSWE, 1992, p. 3). The EPAS statement may reflect a growing recognition of requirements for social workers to participate in the building of the professional knowledge base and to take leadership roles in policy-making arenas. A message for MSW programs includes encouragement to expand beyond interpersonal direct practice foci. Programs will need to highlight the integral connection of research, policy, and practice in their curricula.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION: FOUNDATION AND CONCENTRATION

With the new EPAS, MSW programs have an opportunity to develop foundation and concentration curriculum in a more integrated manner than was previously assumed. The eight curricular areas are to be presented in the foundation content and further developed in the concentration content. MSW programs are thus encouraged to consider combining curricular areas, providing for potentially seamless transitions through the curricular structure. MSW programs have heretofore presented HBSE, practice, policy, research, and field curricula in discrete blocks. While practice courses refer to HBSE content, policy classes discuss the need for and impact of research, and field content includes reference to the other areas, actual content has continued to be presented separately. In particular, HBSE courses are generally presented only as foundation content. Although faculty understand the connections and use foundation content as building blocks, students may not always see the connection between theories learned in the foundation content and content addressed in concentrations.

The clarity of the new EPAS in describing foundation and concentration content opens doors for programs to develop new concepts for combining area content in innovative ways. One innovative way is that courses may be developed that combine two or more content areas in the foundation, to better prepare students for the need to combine knowledge and skills in their practice. For example, a course could be developed for foundation students wherein they study basic theories, practice methods, policy development, and research methodologies essential for work with communities. The course could be delivered concurrently with a student's field placement in a community development agency. Integration of such content would reduce redundancy between and among courses and would free-up credit hours for specialized concentration content. Introducing creative combinations of course content in the concentration curricula would further enhance students' appreciation for the need to consider all content areas in their practice. Course content on values and ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk, and social justice is already

generally integrated throughout the curriculum and would continue to serve as core subject matter in both foundation and concentration courses.

Creating a smoother curricular flow from foundation to concentration content and infusing the eight areas throughout the curriculum may also encourage programs to strengthen concentration content. Many MSW programs spend half the student credit hours presenting the foundation. With the new EPAS, a majority of credit hours may be spent presenting concentration content, with continuing integration of the eight areas.

DIVERSITY, POPULATIONS-AT-RISK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The new EPAS further advances the social work professional commitment to celebrate diversity and concern for populations-at-risk and social justice. The new policy is more specific about the need for cultural competence, which should encourage programs to focus even more on expanding content. The recently approved National Association of Social Workers (NASW) standards for cultural competence will assist programs in improving content on diversity (NASW, 2001).

Several challenges are included for social work educators who are committed to social justice for all populations-at-risk. For example, EPAS requires all programs to prepare their graduates to “Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge and skills related to clients’ age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation” (CSWE, 2001, p. 8). However, discussions of the foundation content addressed within the areas of diversity and populations-at-risk and social justice do not specifically list populations or categories of discrimination or oppression. The Curriculum Policy Statement (CPS) of 1992, replaced by the current EPAS, was more specific. For example, under the populations-at-risk category was the statement, “The curriculum must provide content about people of color, women, and gay and lesbian persons. Such content must emphasize the impact of discrimination, economic deprivation, and oppression upon these groups” (CSWE, 1992, p. 8). By including these groups in only the longer list, the new EPAS may inadvertently diminish the requirement for schools of social work to particularly support social and economic justice for these three categories and include specific content on each. Legal advice led CSWE to reduce examination of programs’ commitment to social justice, especially for lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT) people, as civil rights protections for LGBT people are not currently federally mandated (Parr & Jones, 1996). As a result, social work educators in academic environments who do not share social work’s mission and philosophy of human rights have less accreditation policy support for non-discriminatory practices in their programs. Unfortunately, this may decrease opportunities for social work educators to model good practice for students in the area of diversity. The combination of this reduction and the deletion of specific population groups from the curricular areas may lead to less focused content on populations-at-risk and diversity. Programs may well defend the omission of one group by the inclusion of the others. Social work educators committed to the *NASW Code of Ethics* will need to be vigilant in maintaining quality content on all populations in the curriculum. In preparing graduates to practice “without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients’ . . . family structure, gender, marital sta-

tus. . . sex, and sexual orientation" (CSWE, 2001, p. 8) may encourage programs in all university contexts to expand social policy content by focusing on the need to secure federal civil rights for LGBT people.

RESOURCE NEEDS

What resources do MSW programs need to take advantage of potential opportunities inherent in the new EPAS? Programs with a core of faculty expertise in curriculum development and design may be better positioned to create innovative programs that improve educational quality. Programs need faculty and administrators who are sufficiently creative to think "outside of the box." Faculty, deans, and directors who actively participated in the formulation of the new standards should be important resources as should CSWE site visitors trained under the new standards. As this process is laborious, faculty motivation and the availability of time become important additional resources in relation to these tasks. In order for these resources to be appropriately harnessed, however, strong and innovative leadership is required at both the administrative level and the program level. Deans and MSW program directors need to work together in a cooperative manner, a goal which is easier to accomplish if they share a similar vision of the new curriculum models emerging from faculty discussions and processes.

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

What challenges and potential obstacles face MSW programs in creating innovative curriculum designs? For at least four reasons, some faculty may resist new curriculum models. First, in terms of effort, it is simply easier to continue business as usual than to design and implement new ideas, regardless of how attractive they might seem. Second, faculty may be required to retool and develop new areas of expertise corresponding to emerging trends in practice and societal needs. Curriculum change provides an opportunity to make our teaching relevant for our students but requires us to stay abreast of such developments. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many faculty members are quite removed from practice. The rapidly changing context of social work practice underscores this problem. Third, it is difficult to reach a consensus on innovative curriculum change, especially among larger MSW programs. The degree and extent of support for change is likely to vary greatly among faculty. Some faculty may vigorously oppose innovation, making implementation difficult, if not impossible. Fourth, some innovative teaching modalities (e.g., distance or on-line learning models) may be opposed by faculty on pedagogical grounds or because they require faculty to develop new skills and familiarity with technological advances in teaching and learning.

In the past, the Council on Social Work Education seemed to make it difficult for MSW programs to implement innovative curriculums that deviated from "the letter of the law" (i.e., accreditation policies and standards). Many programs were afraid to make significant changes that might place them at risk for losing accreditation. The historic difficulty that several programs had in implementing part-time programs is a case-in-point. As a consequence of the perceived risk, MSW programs may be reluctant to take full advantage of the new flexibility afforded by the new EPAS. Thus far, no programs have gone up for accreditation under the new standards. It is likely to take several years of experience with these processes before

social work educators feel confident enough to move forward in curriculum innovation. Such curriculum changes also have a significant impact on schools of social work in relation to the practice community. It will be essential to involve practice community leaders and consumers of social services in this process, as their input is needed to develop relevant curriculum models for the 21st century. Their participation is vital in both the curriculum development and implementation phases.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

MSW social work programs are entering an exciting period of growth potential unprecedented in the history of social work education. While continuing to focus on content areas that remain relatively unchanged from the previous accreditation standards, schools of social work are now, under the new EPAS standards, capable of being more creative and innovative in developing their curricula. Programs will be in the best position to take advantage of the new standards if they remain open to new possibilities and if they encourage the imaginative process to unfold. They will be able to recreate and redefine themselves with a greater degree of latitude than perhaps they have enjoyed in the past.

The degree of flexibility that the new EPAS affords to MSW programs brings many challenges and opportunities. No substantial change in the life of an educational institution—whether positive or negative—comes without a shift in priorities, focus, and energy. As in many areas of human life, change does not always come easy. However, with the adequate resources outlined in this paper, what might be perceived as obstacles to growth can be reframed as positive challenges.

The eight areas of curricular content can now be more fully integrated throughout foundation and concentration coursework. This provides programs with opportunities to provide a more seamless and connected approach to content delivery. Content on research, policy, and practice, as well as values and ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk, and social justice, and the notion of cultural competence, is also integrated throughout the curriculum. MSW programs will need to ensure that categories of persons affected by discrimination or oppression continue to be identified and specified; that the MSW curriculum supports social and economic justice for these populations and includes specific, high-quality content regarding all at-risk-persons; and that social policy content expands to address the civil rights of these populations.

The 2001 EPAS permits program administrators, deans, and directors to encourage and support faculty in developing and implementing new educational approaches. Interestingly, under the new policies and standards, MSW programs that maintain the educational status quo may be at greater risk than those that engage in regular program assessment and make innovative changes based upon findings. The EPAS implicitly encourages programs and faculty to engage in the invigorating process of professional development, explore new arenas of academic interest and expertise while keeping abreast of emerging trends in social work practice. Faculty and staff alike can utilize their brainstorming, negotiation, and compromise skills while reaching consensus on comprehensive, innovative program change.

MSW programs can step forward with new confidence and optimism, taking advantage of the flexibility of the new EPAS in regenerating their curricula without

fear of jeopardizing their accreditation. They can, with a greater degree of freedom, aspire to achieve their mission and reach their goals in ways and means that best match community and societal needs and their own contexts and resources. Under the new standards, excellence in social work education becomes a genuine possibility.

The good counsel of the social work practice community, consumers, and stakeholders can and should be sought throughout the process of curricula revision and implementation. Their participation ensures that curricula models are relevant for clients today and in the future.

The modified statement of the purpose of social work education, an integral component of the EPAS, steers the profession and our MSW graduates beyond a narrowly-focused approach to social work practice into the development of relevant and effective service delivery systems, the discovery of knowledge, and the formulation of social policy. We stand at a turning point in graduate social work education. We must prepare for—and we can ascend to—the challenge of becoming what our students, clients, and stakeholders need us to be. We believe that the 2001 EPAS provides just such an opportunity.

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The 2001 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: The Value of Research Revisited

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Abstract: *Although doctoral programs in social work are not accredited by the Council on Social Work Education nor subject to the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS, 2001), DSW and Ph.D. programs are affected by the nature and quality of baccalaureate and masters' social work education. In this article, the authors discuss the implications of the 2001 EPAS as they relate to BSW and MSW graduates' motivation and preparation for doctoral education.*

Keywords: Doctoral education, social work, EPAS, educational policies, accreditation standards

Doctoral programs in social work are not accredited by the Council on Social Work Education nor subject to the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (CSWE, 2001a). Nonetheless, DSW and Ph.D. programs are affected by the nature of baccalaureate and masters' social work education, and thus, by the policies and standards that guide the preparation of students for professional practice. We offer our views about the implications of the 2001 EPAS as they relate to BSW and MSW graduates' motivation and preparation for doctoral education.

Doctoral education in social work is of relatively recent origin. For most of the 20th century, the masters' degree in social work was the terminal degree and, at least implicitly, the most significant graduate level of preparation. The profession's growth in size and popularity, and the increasing importance of social work education within institutions of higher learning, led to a heightened demand for social workers with doctoral degrees. Indeed, the number of social work educational programs has expanded exponentially over the course of the last several decades. However, social work education still does not produce enough social workers to keep up with demand (Austin, 1992, 1997, 1999). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2001), the number of employed social workers educated at the BSW, MSW, or doctoral levels will rise from 604,000 in 1998 to approximately 822,000 by 2008. The number of employed social workers is projected to increase 36.1% during the 10-year period (1998-2008) and the number of social work job openings over that time period is expected to be 296,000 (Braddock, 1999, p. 58).

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Indiana University School of Social Work.

The more than 610 accredited BSW or MSW educational programs in the United States produced approximately 28,000 BSW and MSW graduates during 1999 (CSWE, 2001b; 2001c). Despite the large number of graduates, the demand for social workers will continue to exceed supply—especially in rural areas.

Social workers qualified to fill university faculty positions are among the greatest in demand. Doctoral level social workers are also highly sought for their roles in social and behavioral science research centers and institutes. In an effort to meet these needs, the number of programs offering social work doctoral degrees has grown dramatically during the last several decades. There are now approximately 66 colleges or universities in the United States, six in Canada, and one in Israel offering DSW or Ph.D. degrees in social work. At least five more are in the process of developing programs (Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education [GADE], 2001). However, the annual number of professionals graduating with a social work doctorate remains in the range of 250 to 300—as it has for the past several years. Furthermore, approximately one-third to one-half of those doctoral graduates tend to choose positions outside academia (Khinduka, 2001). As a result, the current supply of doctoral graduates in social work remains woefully short of current and projected demands in research and education.

WHY SO FEW?

As faculty members in a large school of social work, we recognize the advantages and rewards associated with our social work doctoral degrees. Certainly, the life of a professor in contemporary academic settings is challenging and stressful. Nonetheless, social work professors with doctorates are highly sought and usually quite well paid—at least when compared to their colleagues in the liberal arts. Unlike social work, several disciplines have a surplus of Ph.D. graduates, resulting in fierce competition for academic and research positions.

We consider ourselves fortunate indeed to be able to serve as professors and researchers in the challenging and evolving world of social work. As a result, we question why relatively few graduates pursue doctoral education and aspire to careers in research or higher education. The demand for social work educators and researchers is so great that something must serve to lessen the attraction of doctoral study for BSW and MSW professionals. Indeed, we wonder whether social work accreditation standards and policies, and the nature of baccalaureate and masters' level social work educational programs, may inadvertently discourage graduates from pursuing doctoral studies.

As professors of the "baby boom" generation retire in substantial numbers, we anticipate a difficult situation in which the need for doctoral-level social work educators and researchers grows extremely quickly, further increasing the gap between supply and demand. We certainly cannot overstate the value of experienced MSW-level faculty who are able to contribute their practice wisdom to students. However, in many university settings, programs need doctoral-level faculty to compete successfully with the increasing number of alternate educational programs (e.g., baccalaureate and masters' programs in human services, mental

health counseling, marriage and family therapy, counseling psychology, substance abuse treatment). Social work programs without a substantial number of doctoral-level faculty who have an active research agenda that yields external funding and contributes to a national reputation, are simply less valued on many university campuses.

ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND STANDARDS

We view several passages in the 2001 EPAS with favor and hope that their implementation improves the quality of BSW and MSW social work education; increases students' familiarity with, interest in, and use of service-related research; and enhances the effectiveness of graduates' service to clients (Gambrill, 2001a). In general, however, the document does not seem to acknowledge the need to encourage and adequately prepare BSW and MSW students to pursue social work doctorates for careers in research or higher education.

Favorable Signs

The Preamble of the EPAS includes a passage that reads:

> Social work education combines scientific inquiry with the teaching of professional skills to provide effective and ethical social work services. Social work educators reflect their identification with the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education, from baccalaureate to doctoral levels, employs educational, practice, scholarly, inter-professional, and service delivery models to orient and shape the profession's future in the context of expanding knowledge, changing technologies, and complex human and social concerns. (CSWE, 2001a, p. 3)

The clear recognition that social work education includes "scientific inquiry" is encouraging. We interpret this passage to suggest that social work professors are expected to engage in scientific research activities as a natural part of their roles and functions. The Preamble also suggests that BSW and MSW programs may "use time-tested and new models of program design, implementation, and evaluation. It does so by balancing requirements that promote comparability across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to respond to changing human, professional, and institutional needs" (CSWE, 2001a, p. 3). This passage appears to encourage, at least implicitly, change toward more contemporary and perhaps more effective approaches to teaching and learning. The emphasis upon assessment of the "results of a program's development and its continuous improvement" (p. 3), and the expectation that programs must revitalize and renew their curriculums and educational processes by "pursuing exchanges with the practice community and program stakeholders and by developing and assessing new knowledge and technology" (p. 7), encourage those who value the conduct, use, and dissemination of research as a fundamental aspect of effective service delivery—including the delivery of professional social work education (Cournoyer & Powers, 2002). These passages suggest that BSW and MSW programs must conduct program evaluation and other forms of outcomes-related research related to student learning as a natural and ongoing dimension of their activities and processes. Despite the obstacles inherent in their implementation, we believe that such activities, if undertaken as forms of "scientific inquiry," contribute to an educational

culture in which research and scholarship are normalized and perhaps even valued. We also believe that the overall quality of the educational experience can improve if findings from assessment activities are used to guide changes in curriculum design and in teaching and learning processes. We would be especially pleased if evaluation included assessment of graduates' effectiveness in service to clients (Buchan, 1991: Gambrill, 2001a, 2001b).

The EPAS also states that among the purposes of the social work profession is to "develop and use research, knowledge, and skills that advance social work practice" (CSWE, 2001a, p. 5) and among the purposes of social work education is "to develop social work knowledge" (p. 5). Programs pursue these educational purposes by "developing knowledge" (p. 6) and "preparing social workers to evaluate the processes and effectiveness of practice" (p. 6). In addition, through the foundation curriculum, all BSW and MSW graduates are expected to demonstrate the abilities to "apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice," to "use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities," and to "evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions" (p. 8).

These passages and others suggest that social workers should be able to understand, analyze, apply, evaluate, and perhaps synthesize research-based evidence in and for their service to others. If these expectations are implemented and students indeed accomplish the associated learning goals and objectives, we anticipate both improved quality of service to clients and heightened interest in and readiness for doctoral study and perhaps even engagement in service-related research.

The suggested flexibility in the 2001 EPAS may lead some MSW programs to develop "research concentrations" to encourage and enable some students to develop advanced proficiency in research methods. Others may design and offer doctoral "fast-track" curriculums that enable students to proceed efficiently from the baccalaureate to the doctoral degree. We hope it is indeed possible to implement curriculum innovations and concentrations that motivate and prepare social work students for doctoral study.

Concerns

Although we recognize the value of several changes suggested by the new EPAS, we have some concerns. We fail to understand why it does not emphasize preparation of students for advanced levels of higher education. Although we notice the expectation that programs promote "continual professional development of students, faculty, and practitioners" (CSWE, 2001a, p. 6), we would prefer an emphasis upon students' development of knowledge, attitudes, and skills associated with lifelong learning and continuous professional development *while they are enrolled in social work programs*. As suggested by numerous surveys over the years, most social work graduates do not regularly read research articles related to practice innovations or effectiveness (Gambrill, 1999; Holosko & Leslie, 1998). We assert that unless students learn to engage actively in self-directed learning during their

formal educational programs, they are not likely to do so as practicing social workers following graduation.

We certainly value the breadth of knowledge, values, and skills suggested by the foundation program objectives and the descriptions associated with the eight required content areas. However, we find it difficult to imagine how any BSW or MSW program could actually meet all the required expectations. We wonder whether the suggested flexibility and innovation is truly feasible given the nature and extent of the foundation requirements.

In order to illustrate the incredible breadth of learning required by the EPAS, consider the curriculum implications of the foundation program objectives. Although 12 objectives are identified, most subsume additional expectations as well. We have selected one of the 12 to illustrate the enormity of the challenges associated with delivery of the foundation curriculum.

According to the EPAS, graduates should be able to: "Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation" (CSWE, 2001a, p. 8). There appear to be dozens of subordinate expectations within this single objective. Fourteen client categories are identified (each of which could be classified by at least two and some by several dimensions) and although "practice" is not specifically described, we presume that the definition is broad and expansive in order to be consistent with a generalist perspective. At least four explicit aspects of practice must be demonstrated in relation to clients within each of the 14 categories: a) practice without discrimination, b) practice with respect, c) practice with knowledge, and d) practice with skills. Presumably, BSW and MSW graduates would not only practice without discrimination and with respect but also with knowledge and skills in service to clients of all ages (e.g., infants, toddlers, children, adolescents, young adults, adults of middle-age, old-age, and old-old age), with clients of all cultures (consider the range within this dimension), with clients of all abilities or disabilities, and with the diverse range of clients with each of the remaining categories.

Given a generalist perspective, we should include the dimensions of system size (e.g., individuals, dyads, families, groups, organizations, communities, societies) which further expands the array of expectations. Although the nature of "knowledge" is not defined, we presume there would be many aspects (e.g., biological, psychological, sociological, economic, legal, spiritual, cultural, as well as knowledge of change processes and practice effectiveness). "Skills" would similarly be multidimensional (e.g., skills in engagement, assessment, contracting, intervention, prevention, evaluation, ending, and follow-up). Imagine the potential number of learning expectations within this single foundation program objective. There are 13 other foundation objectives, eight prescribed content areas, and the expectation that MSW programs also offer advanced practice concentrations. We wonder if depth of knowledge, critical thinking abilities, and research knowledge and skills suffer due to the breadth required in the foundation.

We will spare you from further application of this exercise to the remaining foundation program objectives, or within the expectations contained within the eight

required content areas. We do wonder if, in the absence of clear and precise definitions of terms and a limited, focused array of high priority learning goals, achievement of the foundation program expectations appears impossibly ambitious. A common foundation for all social workers certainly makes sense. However, when the expectations are as extensive and prescriptive as those contained in the EPAS, we ask where we would find curriculum room for advanced concentrations or leeway for genuine innovation?

CONCLUSIONS

We applaud the efforts of the individuals and groups who worked long and hard to update and attempt to streamline the policies and standards that guide social work education in the United States. We recognize their attempt to enhance students' educational experience, advance the profession, and most importantly, improve the quality and effectiveness of services to clients and other persons in need. We believe, however, that four major aspects of the EPAS need additional work. First, the foundation curriculum must become less prescriptive and expansive in order to enable social work programs generally to become more responsive to students' learning needs in a rapidly and continuously changing world. Second, preparation for doctoral level study should be specifically recognized as one of the major purposes of social work education at the BSW and MSW levels. Third, learning to learn, engaging in lifelong learning and assessment of one's own learning are essential abilities in the contemporary information society (Cournoyer & Powers, 2002; Cournoyer & Stanley, 2002). Might we substitute these for one or perhaps a few of the 14 foundation program objectives? Finally, BSW and MSW students should undertake some form of service-related research and prepare a scholarly report (e.g., paper, presentation, or thesis) about the nature and outcomes of their studies. In the absence of a genuine research experience, graduates are unlikely to conduct studies of their own, evaluate the impact of their own practice, or use findings from scientific studies that might improve the quality of their service to clients.

We posit that these steps would help address a truly dire problem facing the profession of social work; that is, the extraordinarily small number of social workers educated at the doctoral level. The profession desperately needs DSW and Ph.D. graduates to teach the expanding number of BSW and MSW students and to conduct practice-related research. We especially need research regarding the effectiveness of services to our most vulnerable population groups and those services that address our most challenging social problems. Psychiatry, psychology, and nursing do a much better job of preparing their professional students for the possibility of additional study at the doctoral level, and, not coincidentally, conducting research related to the effectiveness of psychiatric, psychological, and nursing services for medical and psychiatric problems.

Doctoral level social workers are desperately needed to research the effectiveness of services directed toward the resolution of social problems under-addressed or even ignored by our more medically-oriented sister professions. Research regarding the effectiveness of programs and service models designed to help people overcome poverty and oppression, alleviate domestic violence, prevent child abuse, promote effective parental involvement, or learn interpersonal and self-

advocacy skills would be examples of the kinds of studies that social workers might pursue that psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses might not.

We propose that social work educators must, as a matter of course, prepare and encourage talented BSW and MSW students to pursue doctoral study. We suggest that BSW and MSW programs incorporate—formally or informally—educational policies, standards, and objectives that reflect the goals of:

1. Encouraging substantial numbers of BSW and MSW students to pursue additional social work education at the doctoral level;
2. Preparing substantial numbers of BSW and MSW students for the rigorous academic requirements of doctoral level education and research, and;
3. Promoting increased practice-effectiveness research undertaken by social workers.

We suggest that these measures might well yield an increase in the number of social workers prepared at the doctoral level and thereby meet an urgent need within the profession for additional educators and researchers. Furthermore, emphasis upon these competencies might well enhance students' educational experience, advance the profession, and, most importantly, improve the quality and effectiveness of services to clients and other persons in need.

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Assessment of Student Learning in Social Work Education: The Indiana Model

Barry R. Cournoyer

Abstract: *In this paper, the author discusses assessment of student learning in light of evolving accreditation standards. The author describes the Indiana Model—a comprehensive approach that includes: (a) a Course-Learning Objectives (CLO) classification system to organize and analyze the total array of course learning objectives addressed in a curriculum, (b) a direct Assessment of Student Learning system to demonstrate student learning outcomes, and (c) an indirect Assessment of Student Learning system to provide for the perspectives of consumers and other stakeholders. When integrated, the three systems may be used for curriculum analysis and development, assessment of student learning, and program evaluation—particularly in terms of student learning outcomes. The proposed integrated approach to student learning assessment addresses both university and professional accreditation standards.*

Keywords: Assessment, student learning, curriculum analysis, social work education, accreditation

Many schools and departments of social work struggle with issues related to curriculum analysis, program evaluation, and assessment of student learning. Accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) require programs to "specify the outcome measures and measurement procedures that are to be used systematically in evaluating the program, and that will enable it to determine its success in achieving the desired objectives" (Commission on Accreditation [COA], 1994). The recently adopted Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) suggest that academic programs become even more active in assessment and evaluation. Consider Accreditation Standard 8: Program Assessment and Continuous Improvement :

- The program has an assessment plan and procedures for evaluating the outcome of each program objective. The plan specifies the measurement procedures and methods used to evaluate the outcome of each program objective.
- The program implements its plan to evaluate the outcome of each program objective and shows evidence that the analysis is used continuously to affirm and improve the educational program (CSWE, 2001).

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National and regional university accreditation associations have also become more rigorous in their requirements for the assessment of student learning outcomes. All university regional accreditation bodies emphasize the assessment of student learning and the incorporation of quality improvement principles in educational and program evaluation.

Many social work programs throughout the country have begun to consider the means to assess student learning. Indeed, most programs are sincerely motivated to develop and implement processes by which to evaluate progress toward accomplishment of their mission and goals, including those that refer to student learning, and then to use the results to improve outcomes. The issues may be captured in the question: “How do we assess students’ learning in an efficient manner that coincides with accreditation standards, helps us improve the quality of our curriculum and instruction, and enables us to document optimal student learning outcomes?”

In this paper, the author addresses this question by describing:

- The elements of a Course-Learning Objectives (CLO) classification system that facilitates organization and analysis of the total array of course learning objectives addressed throughout a social work curriculum.
- A direct Assessment of Student Learning system to document student-learning outcomes.
- An indirect Assessment of Student Learning system to gather consumer and stakeholder generated information.
- The means by which the Course-Learning Objectives (CLO) classification, and the direct and indirect Assessment of Student Learning systems may be integrated to contribute to the evaluation of academic programs, assessment of outcomes, and as part of the means by which to address CSWE and university accreditation standards.
- The implications of the comprehensive and integrated approach for social work programs.

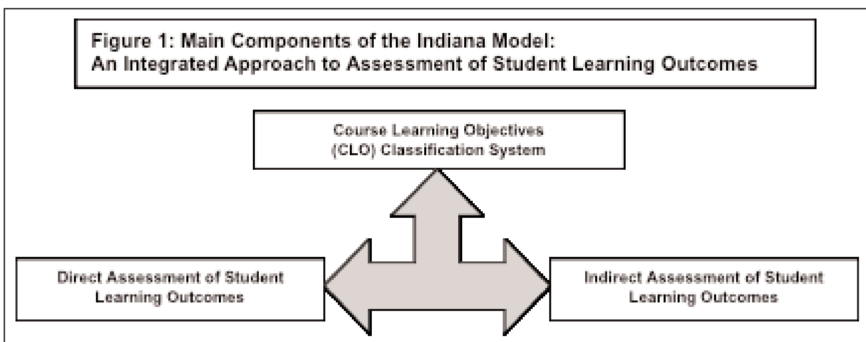

Figure 1. Illustrates the main components of the Indiana Model—an integrated approach to the assessment of student learning outcomes[1].

COURSE-LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLO) CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM: CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

All social work schools and departments have goals and objectives. Whether explicit or implicit, their missions, visions, values, and goals become manifest by the words and the actions of the faculty and staff. Some goals are highly abstract (e.g., statements of mission and vision) and others are quite descriptive and operational (e.g., course learning objectives). The goals of BSW, MSW, or doctoral programs (i.e., program objectives) tend to fall approximately in the middle—not as abstract as a school or university mission but not as descriptive or operational as individual course learning objectives.

Ideally, all goals and objectives should reflect conceptual congruence and logical interrelationships. A review of a curriculum, for example, should readily reveal connections from the most abstract to the most descriptive goals and objectives, and vice-versa—from the most concrete to the most general. Optimally, a reviewer should be able to link all individual course-learning objectives to at least one program objective, at least one school or departmental goal, and at least one dimension of the organizational mission. Conversely, several lower level goals and objectives (sub-goals) for each highly abstract goal should be apparent. This is, of course, a daunting challenge. However, it is worth undertaking because the major indication of an organization's success or failure centers upon the degree to which it achieves its goals and objectives. Optimally, when students achieve a course-learning objective, their learning should simultaneously contribute to the achievement of one or more program objectives and some aspect of the school or departmental mission. To support this claim, however, each course-learning objective must clearly link to and support higher-level goals and objectives.

A course-learning objectives (CLO) classification system represents a means by which social work programs may analyze their curriculum in light of higher-level goals. For example, suppose a school of social work offered educational programs leading to the BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. degrees. Each program offers several classroom or practicum courses, or other educational experiences that address several learning objectives. A school that offers a full continuum might offer 50 or 60 distinct courses or seminars, each of which might have seven to 12 learning objectives. Collectively, the school might have as many as 500 or 600 discrete course-learning objectives.

Ideally, all professors, students, and relevant stakeholders should carefully read and reflect upon the meaning and implication of each learning objective offered in all courses and seminars. A simple "eyeballing" process can be extraordinarily revealing! However, a formal classification system facilitates organization and systematic analysis. A small group of faculty and stakeholders could classify each discrete learning objective according to higher-level program objectives, school goals, and other relevant factors. Computer software programs (e.g., database, spreadsheet, or some statistical packages) may facilitate the classification process and, of course, contribute to subsequent data analysis.

In light of emerging accreditation standards and growing expectations for greater accountability, a program might classify each course-learning objective in terms of the following dimensions:

- School or Department Mission-Related Goals
- Program Objectives (BSW, MSW [foundation & concentration], Ph.D.)
- CSWE Content Areas (EPAS)
- CSWE Foundation Objectives (EPAS)
- ASWB Examination Content Domains
- Principles of Cultural Competence
- Levels of Bloom's Taxonomy

Mission Related Goals

Schools and departments of social work typically create and publish formal statements of mission. A mission statement is a declaration of an organization's *raison d'être*. A good mission statement answers key questions such as "What is our primary purpose?" "What is our reason for being?" What are our primary activities?" Written in the present tense, the mission statement describes what is and serves as a general guide for action and decision-making.

The primary reason that most schools and departments of social work exist is to promote learning, especially by students, but also by faculty, that enables graduates to provide high quality social services. The vision statement addresses the same questions albeit in the future tense. The vision describes what the organization wants to become in the future—typically five or so years hence. Some organizations also establish a set of values or principles that serve as moral and ethical guideposts for operational activities. Together, the mission and vision statements lead to school or departmental goals. Derived from the mission and vision statements, organizational goals are anticipated outcomes or accomplishments rather than activities or processes. Although described in outcome fashion, organizational goals remain fairly general.

These abstract statements and goals help clarify the major purposes and functions of the organization as well as its direction for the future. Typically, statements of mission, vision, values, and goals relate to aspects of the well-known trinity of academic life: teaching, service, and research or scholarship. In schools and departments of social work, student learning usually receives a great deal of prominence within the teaching dimension.

A mission statement might include reference to an aspect of student learning such as, "We educate students for competent, ethical, and effective social work service in the 21st century." A vision statement might refer to student learning in this manner: "We aspire to offer educational experiences that prepare students to adapt to emerging knowledge and changing circumstances through continuous processes of learning, unlearning, and learning anew." An organizational goal might include reference to both mission and vision statements by indicating that graduating students demonstrate the abilities to:

- Think critically and analyze contemporary research studies for application in practice.
- Engage in self-assessment of their learning needs, develop personal learning plans, and implement those plans in an active, self-directed manner.

The school or departmental goals link directly to and support the mission and vision. In social work education, university, and campus expectations, the policies and standards of CSWE, professional principles and values, student and faculty aspirations, and the nature of community needs also inform the identification of organizational goals—which become a fundamental component of the Course Learning Objectives classification system.

Program Objectives

Each academic program (e.g., BSW, MSW, Ph.D.) develops program objectives that guide curriculum planning, development, and implementation. They link directly to one or more mission-related organizational goals. The specific standards and policies of CSWE (COA, 1994; CSWE, 1992, 2001) serve to guide, but not necessarily constrain, the development of BSW and MSW program objectives. Although not required, some social work doctoral programs refer to CSWE policies as part of the process of identifying higher-level program objectives.

Academic program objectives tend to be less abstract and more descriptive than organizational goals, but not nearly as specific as course learning objectives. They, too, appear as outcomes or accomplishments rather than as activities or processes. Faculty in a baccalaureate program might, for example, identify the following as a program objective: "Graduates of the program are able to provide competent, ethical, effective, and ethnically-sensitive generalist social work services to a diverse range of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities."

CSWE Content Areas

The CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement (1992) and the Standards for Accreditation (1994) require social work programs to address certain content areas. The newly adopted EPAS[2] include the following:

1. Social Work Values and Ethics
2. Diversity
3. Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice
4. Human Behavior and the Social Environment
5. Social Welfare Policy and Services
6. Social Work Practice
7. Research
8. Field Education. (CSWE, 2001)

Although many social work educational programs organize their curriculums into sequences that address required content areas (e.g., the policy sequence, the practice sequence, the research sequence), many do not. Some programs integrate knowledge, values, and skills from several content areas within each course, seminar, practicum, or other learning experience. Indeed, even within highly structured, formally sequenced curriculums, many course-learning objectives contribute to students' learning in several CSWE-required content areas. Virtually all social work practice courses include information about human behavior and the social environment, and many incorporate research content and skills as well.

Most courses consider at-risk populations, social and economic justice, and some aspects of diversity. Furthermore, knowledge about values, ethics, laws, and the skills of critical thinking and ethical decision-making are integral to courses throughout the social work curriculum.

Classifying course-learning objectives by CSWE content area may be particularly useful as programs experiment with innovative teaching and learning approaches. Integrative orientation, field practicum, and capstone experiences frequently enable students to learn throughout many and sometimes all of the eight content areas. Programs that clearly and precisely identify the curriculum location of expected learning within these domains may easily demonstrate coverage of CSWE-required foundation content.

CSWE Foundation Objectives

The EPAS (CSWE, 2001) require BSW and MSW social work programs to address certain foundation program objectives:

> The professional foundation, which is essential to the practice of any social worker, includes, but is not limited to, the following program objectives. Graduates demonstrate the ability to:
>
> 1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
> 2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.
> 3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
> 4. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.
> 5. Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.
> 6. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice (or, for MSW graduates, "a generalist social work perspective") with systems of all sizes.
> 7. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities.
> 8. Analyze, formulate, and influence social policies.
> 9. Evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.
> 10. Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities.

11. Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice.
12. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change. (CSWE, 2001)

These program objectives constitute the required foundation learning objectives for both BSW and MSW academic programs. Although accredited MSW programs educate students for advanced practice within an area of concentration, they also must help all students master the foundation curriculum. Therefore, classification of course-learning objectives by foundation objectives is useful for both BSW and MSW programs. Social work doctoral programs may find them useful as a stimulus for the development of more advanced program and learning objectives. As do a large number of BSW and MSW programs, many D.S.W. or Ph.D. programs in social work develop sets of objectives, competencies, or abilities that graduating students are expected to demonstrate. These program-specific objectives complement those required by CSWE and contribute to the unique identity and mission of the school or department. For purposes of CLO classification, they may be added to the array of foundation (and MSW concentration) objectives or considered within a separate dimension.

ASWB Examination Content Domains

Almost all states, one territory, and one Canadian province have adopted the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) sponsored social work examinations for the purposes of licensing or certification. Although there are many areas of common interest, the goals of academic programs vary somewhat from those of professional associations and licensing boards. These divergent functions provide healthy tension and often lead to useful conversations among the organizations. Of course, schools and departments of social work should never "teach to the test." Nevertheless, some programs may decide to classify course-learning objectives according to the content domains addressed within the ASWB Basic or Intermediate Examinations in order to provide additional perspective. The publicly disseminated domains reflect the findings from large studies of current practices of professional social workers from throughout the United States (and soon from at least one province of Canada as well). The resulting content outlines, based as they are upon studies of practicing social workers, may complement the policies of CSWE.

The ASWB Basic Examination is typically required of BSW graduates; the Intermediate Examination of MSW graduates. Advanced or Clinical Examinations are required of MSW graduates with supervised post-graduate practice experience.

The current ASWB Basic Examination addresses the content domains (ASWB, 2001)[3] listed in Table 1.

Principles of Cultural Competence in Social Work

The changing demographics, composition, and globalization of society require that all social workers understand, value, and demonstrate cultural competence in their service to others. Because of the extraordinary significance of multi-cultural abilities, many social work programs may decide to emphasize their importance

Table 1: Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Basic Examination Content Domains

Code	Domain	Code	Domain
010	Human development and behavior	045	Intervention techniques
011	Theoretical approaches to understanding individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations	046	Intervention with couples, families, and groups
012	Human growth and development	047	Intervention with communities
013	Human behavior in the social environment	048	Professional use of self
014	Impact of crises and changes	049	Use of collaborative relationships in social work practice
015	Abnormal and addictive behaviors	050	Interpersonal communication
016	Dynamics of abuse and neglect	051	Theories and principles of communication
020	Diversity	052	Techniques of communicating
021	Effects of diversity	060	Professional social worker/client relationship
030	Assessment in social work practice	061	Relationship concepts
031	Social history and collateral data	062	Relationship practice
032	Use of assessment instruments	070	Professional values and ethics
033	Problem identification	071	Responsibility to the client
034	Effects of the environment on client behavior	072	Responsibility to the profession
035	Assessment of client strengths and weaknesses	073	Confidentiality
036	Assessment of mental and behavioral disorders	074	Self-determination
037	Indicators of abuse and neglect	080	Supervision in social work
038	Indicators of danger to self and others	081	Educational functions of supervision
040	Social work practice with individuals, couples, families, groups, and communities	082	Administrative functions of supervision
041	Theoretical approaches and models of practice	090	Practice evaluation and the utilization of research
042	The intervention process	091	Methods of data collection
043	Components of the intervention process	092	Research design and data analysis
044	Matching intervention with client needs	100	Service delivery
		101	Client rights and entitlements
		102	Implementation of organizational policies and procedures
		110	Social work administration
		111	Staffing and human resource management
		112	Social work program management

through the classification of course learning objectives according to certain dimensions of cultural competence. Anderson, Richardson, and Leigh (Leigh, 1998) identified seven principles of the culturally competent social worker. They posit that the culturally competent social worker would agree with the following statements:

1. I accept the fact that I have much to learn about others.
2. I have an appreciation of the regional and geographical factors related to people of color and contrasting cultures, how the individual may vary from the generalizations about their regional and geographical group, and how regional groups vary from the total cultural group.

3. I follow the standard that knowledge is obtained from the person in the situation and add to my learning about the situation from that person before generalizing about the group-specific person.
4. I have the capacity to form relationships with people from contrasting cultures in social, work, and professional relationships.
5. I can engage in a process characterized by mutual respect and conscious effort to reduce power disparities between myself and persons of minority status.
6. I have the ability to obtain culturally relevant information in the professional encounter.
7. I have the ability to enter into a process of mutual exploration, assessment, and treatment with people of contrasting culture and minority status in society. (Leigh, 1998, pp. 173-174)

These seven principles could be converted into characteristics, attitudes, or abilities and incorporated within the course learning objective classification scheme. As a supplement or substitution for Anderson, Richardson, and Leigh's principles, programs may prefer to adopt the recently published *NASW Standards of Cultural Competence in Social Work* (2001) as part of their classification system. NASW organizes their conception of cultural competence into 10 standards that could represent categories for classification:

1. Ethics and Values
2. Self-Awareness
3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge
4. Cross-Cultural Skills
5. Service Delivery
6. Empowerment and Advocacy
7. Diverse Workforce
8. Professional Education
9. Language Diversity
10. Cross-Cultural Leadership

Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Educational Objectives

In addition to organizational, mission-related goals, academic program objectives, CSWE content areas, foundation (and concentration) objectives, along with program specific competencies or abilities, ASWB examination content domains, and principles of cultural competence, each course-learning objective may be classified according to Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Educational Objectives. Several decades ago, Benjamin Bloom and a group of educational psychologists (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956) developed a taxonomy of cognitive learning objectives. The taxonomy remains pertinent today, and may be used for multiple purposes[4]. The six hierarchical levels represent a useful scheme for classification of course learning objectives within a social work curriculum. In ascending order of cognitive complexity, the six levels are:

Level One: **Recollection**. The ability to recall is the basic level of learning and refers simply to the ability to remember material such as facts and basic theoretical terms and concepts.

Level Two: **Comprehension**. The ability to comprehend refers to an understanding of the material. This is often demonstrated by providing an explanation, summary, or interpretation of the material.

Level Three: **Application**. The ability to apply knowledge refers to use of the material in a particular situation. In social work, for example, this ability might be demonstrated through the application of a practice skill in service to a client. Or, a social worker might use a theoretical concept to better understand a particular person-and-situation dynamic. Application refers to the use of rules, methods, and principles outlined in the material.

Level Four: **Analysis**. The ability to analyze involves the careful examination of the various elements of the material. Relationships among and between components are critically considered in terms of organizational structure and internal coherence.

Level Five: **Synthesis**. The ability to synthesize includes pulling together elements in a new way to form an innovative structure. The creation of a new conceptual model could be a form of synthesis.

Level Six: **Evaluation**. The ability to evaluate involves the determination of the relative value of knowledge for a defined purpose. Typically, this would include the creation, adoption or adaptation, and application of evaluative criteria.

COURSE-LEARNING OBJECTIVES CLASSIFICATION (CLO) SYSTEM: APPLICATION

Tables 2 through 4 reveal how an individual course objective may be identified, coded, and categorized within a CLO classification system as described above. Table 5 reflects how the classified course objective appears as a row within a spreadsheet or database. Of course, all course objectives throughout the entire curriculum require classification and entry into the system. Furthermore, programs may add additional categories to meet organizational needs.

Table 6 illustrates a hypothetical distribution of an academic program's Course Learning Objectives as classified in accordance with Bloom's taxonomic levels. The table reveals the potential value of the CLO classification for curriculum analysis and development. The example (see Table 6) suggests that 82.5% of the classified course objectives address the first (recall), second (comprehension), and third (application) levels of Bloom's taxonomy. According to Table 6, the curriculum reflects only modest attention to higher level cognitive abilities (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) that are most associated with critical thinking. If the classification system is reasonably valid and reliable, faculty may decide to add or revise selected course-learning objectives in order to strengthen students' learning at higher levels of cognitive learning.

Assessment of Student Learning

Emerging professional (e.g., CSWE) and regional university accreditation standards (e.g., New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Middle States

Table 2: *Course Learning Objectives (CLO) Classification System Framework—Part One*

Course Learning Objective Statement	**Course Title**	**Course No.**	**Sect. No.**	**Year**	**Term** Fall=1 Spring=2 Summer 1=3 Summer 2=4	**Status** Req'd.=1 Elect.=2	**Program Level** BSW=1 MSW Found=2 MSW Conc=3 MSW Conc=4 MSW Conc=5 MSW Conc=6 MSW Conc=7 Ph.D.=8
01. Understand the fundamental values, ethics, and legal obligations of the profession	Social Work Practice I	501	342	01	1	1	2

Table 3: *Course Learning Objectives (CLO) Classification System Framework—Part Two*

Course Learning Objective Statement	**Syllabus Learning Objective Number**	**Unique CLO Number**	**School Goal**	**Program Objective** 1xx=BSW 2xx=MSW 3xx=Ph.D.
01. Understand the fundamental values, ethics, and legal obligations of the profession.	01	5013420111201	4. Prepare ethical, effective social workers that reflect personal and professional integrity in all aspects of their service to others.	205. Demonstrate commitment to the values and ethics of social work.

Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) require academic programs to evaluate student-learning outcomes. Clearly, student-learning assessment is a major component of accreditation expectations. However, our conceptions of learning and student-learning assessment require elaboration.

Consider the following as working definitions:

> Student learning *is **growth** in knowledge, values, and skills that occurs as the result of learning activities and experiences.*

> Student-learning assessment *includes the tools and processes used, and the findings obtained from intentional efforts to appraise students' growth in*

Table 4: *Course Learning Objectives (CLO) Classification System Framework—Part Three*

Course Learning Objective Statement	**CSWE Content Area**	**CSWE Foundation Objective**	**ASWB Content Domain**	**Principle of Cultural Competence**	**Level of Bloom's Taxonomy**
(01. Understand the fundamental values, ethics, and legal obligations of the profession.	1. Social Work Values and Ethics.	2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.	070. Professional values and ethics.	3. I follow the standard that knowledge is obtained from the person in the situation and add to my learning about the situation from that person before generalizing about the group-specific person.	2. Understand the meaning and relevance of knowledge and information (e.g., comprehend, interpret, explain, and summarize).

Table 5: *Course Learning Objectives (CLO) Data Analysis System—Spreadsheet, Statistical Package, or Database*

Unique CLO Number	**School Goal**	**Program Objective**	**CSWE Content Area**	**CSWE Foundation Objective**	**ASWB Content Domain**	**Principle of Cultural Compe-tence**	**Level of Bloom's Taxonomy**
5013420111201	4	205	1	2	070	3	2

knowledge, values, and skills that occurs as the result of learning activities and experiences.

Students reflect evidence of learning when, for example, they become more proficient in interviewing, assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills as a result of social work educational experiences. Professors engage in a student-learning assessment when they examine students' videotaped interviews and apply a well-designed scoring rubric to evaluate students' performance of clearly identified interviewing skills. Student-learning assessment occurs at the conclusion of their classroom or practicum courses when students complete questionnaires about the extent to which they have gained the knowledge and skill necessary for competent professional service. Feedback from focus groups of graduates' employers represents a form of student-learning assessment. Programs engage in student-learning assessment when, for instance, they analyze the individual and aggregated results of a qualifying examination that all students complete at the conclusion

Table 6: *Hypothetical Example of Number and Percent of a Program's Course Learning Objectives (CLO) Classified by Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning*

	Total Number	Level 1: Recall	Level 2: Compre-hend	Level 3: Apply	Level 4: Analyze	Level 5: Synthesize	Level 6: Evaluate	Total Classi-fied
Objective Number and Percent	200	80 (20%)	150 (37.5%)	100 (25%)	60 (15%)	5 (1.2%)	5 (1.2%)	400* (100%)

of their foundation studies. Student-learning assessment may occur during a capstone seminar, when students and faculty systematically evaluate the quality of social work portfolios submitted as a requirement for graduation.

Schools and departments may view assessment of student learning as a form of program evaluation, educational assessment, quantitative or qualitative research, or an aspect of Continuous Quality Improvement or Total Quality Management. The nature and forms of assessment are wide and surprisingly flexible. Programs may focus on inputs, outputs, or outcomes and may do so through direct and indirect forms of assessment (see Table 7).

Input Assessment tends to focus on the resources or "raw materials" of the school or program (e.g., quality of faculty, incoming students, curriculum design, or programmatic resources). Output Assessment usually addresses the productivity of the organization (e.g., numbers of graduating students and graduates, graduation and retention rates, number of teaching awards, amount of research). Outcome Assessment involves consideration of the effects of organizational activities upon those intended to benefit from them. In the context of social work education, we hope that successful students who complete the coursework and earn degrees benefit in some tangible way from those experiences (e.g., increase their knowledge and skill, secure employment, feel competent in their professional lives, and effectively serve clients).

Most schools and programs are familiar with the collection and analysis of inputs and outputs. Programs regularly report on the average SAT or GRE scores of admitted students, acceptance and retention rates, the numbers of graduates, GPA averages, the amount of external funding, the faculty-to-student ratios, the number and kind of faculty publications, the amount of physical space, the number of library volumes, the amount of secretarial support, and other aspects of inputs and outputs. Assessment of student learning outcomes is less common. However, it is precisely the area that accrediting bodies and other stakeholders increasingly emphasize. Indeed, assessment of student learning outcomes appeals to many social work faculty who regularly teach students to evaluate clients' progress toward goal achievement. Such perspectives are highly compatible with quality improvement initiatives.

Direct Assessment of student-learning outcomes involves examining students' or graduates' knowledge, attitudes, and skills (e.g., depth or breadth and expertise) through observation and evaluation, or through valid and reliable measures. Indirect Assessment also seeks to determine students' or graduates' knowledge

and expertise but does so through the collection of data presumed to be associated with actual understanding and performance (e.g., self-reports, faculty and field instructor evaluations of students, letter grades, focus groups or surveys of employers' views of graduates' performance, evidence of graduates' practice effectiveness in service to clients).

Table 7: *Student Learning Assessment Matrix*

Assessment	Direct	Indirect
Inputs		
Outputs		
Outcomes		

Direct Assessment of Student Learning

Direct assessment of learning usually involves the systematic evaluation of the performance or products of students or graduates. There are many kinds and forms of available evidence. Doctoral, masters', or senior theses; qualifying examinations; standardized tests; scores on licensing examinations; videotapes of actual or simulated interviews; results of single-subject research; and social work portfolios represent forms of evidence that may be used to assess student learning outcomes. Ideally, the products and performances relate to learning goals at one or more organizational levels (e.g., school or departmental goals, program objectives, or course learning objectives).

Three forms of direct assessment that may be especially useful for social work programs are: 1) entry and exit essays, 2) pre- and post-exams, and 3) social work learning portfolios.

Entry and Exit Essays

Many programs require applicants to prepare an essay, perhaps in the form of an autobiographical statement, as part of the admissions process. Such essays may be used by screening committees to consider the readiness of the candidate for the nature and rigor of the academic program. They may also become useful for assessment purposes in that applicants complete them before beginning the program. A similar kind of essay could be expected just before graduation. Comparisons between the two essays might well reveal areas of growth, knowledge, and expertise.

The nature of the essay assignment and the assessment criteria used to assess them should be well constructed to match school goals and program objectives to best serve the function of student-learning assessment. For instance, rather than an autobiographical statement, applicants might be provided a case scenario to analyze. Towards the end of the program, graduating students could be asked to repeat the process with an analogous case situation.

Pre- and Post-Instruments

In addition to or instead of entry and exit essays, pre- and post-instruments might also be adopted (e.g., the Baccalaureate Educational Assessment Package [BEAP]) or developed for use as evidence of growth and learning. The instruments would require careful analysis in order to determine validity, reliability, and relevance to

the program objectives. And, assessment guidelines should match the program's purposes, goals, and focus.

Social Work Portfolios

Portfolios are becoming increasingly popular both within social work and other disciplines as well. Portfolios may be course specific or may apply to an entire program of study (e.g., BSW, MSW, Ph.D.). Program-oriented portfolios reflect tremendous potential for assessment of student learning because they incorporate samples of students' work throughout various stages of the educational process. As a central part of the development of program-oriented portfolios, some schools and departments encourage students to prepare learning contracts, learning goals, and learning plans at the beginning of their studies. The contracts then help students and faculty to guide the selection of courses, and the emphasis that is placed within the classroom and practicum experiences. They also serve as contexts for the assessment of the final portfolios submitted as a requirement for graduation. The portfolios include carefully selected learning products that serve as tangible evidence for the direct assessment of learning. In the aggregate, evaluation of graduating students' portfolios would ideally reveal that most, if not all, demonstrate mastery of program objectives as well as reflect progress toward achievement of their individual learning goals (Cournoyer, 2001; Cournoyer & Stanley, 2002).

Indirect Assessment of Student Learning

Indirect forms of student-learning assessment also have considerable value, especially when used in conjunction with direct evidence. Indirect assessment tends to yield opinions about, rather than demonstration of, knowledge, values, and skills. Nonetheless, the views and experiences of consumers and stakeholders are at least as important and sometimes more important than scores on exams or grades on papers. Most schools and departments of social work have faculty that are well trained to develop surveys, conduct focus groups, and collect and analyze data. These are well-established forms of indirect assessment. The famous, or infamous, end-of-semester "course evaluation" is one that might be adapted for the indirect assessment of student learning. Professors' and instructors' performance tend to be the focus of the items presented in traditional course evaluations. However, they can be easily adapted to assess student learning.

Assessing Student Learning through Course Evaluations

Traditionally, students enrolled in schools and departments of social work have completed end-of-semester questionnaires to evaluate the general quality of courses and their instruction. Although the format varies somewhat from university to university, course evaluations are widely used—both for personnel evaluation purposes (i.e., promotion, tenure, salary increments) and as a measure of student satisfaction. Course evaluations may take many forms. In some programs, professors design their own instruments. In others, professors may select items from a "cafeteria" system provided by the university. Some programs require that professors use a standard or "common" course evaluation, which enables the social work school or department to analyze students' opinions of courses and professors through comparison to average scores.

Common Items. Programs derive many benefits from the use of standard or common items in end-of-semester evaluation instruments. Students in all social work courses respond to these standard items, potentially yielding a rich data set for statistical analysis. Traditionally, most common items within course evaluation questionnaires tend to elicit students' opinions about the characteristics and behaviors of the professor and the nature of the course. Items that refer to the professor's accessibility, preparedness, fairness in grading, and ability to communicate are typical, as are items related to the utility of textbooks, examinations, and assignments. Most course evaluation instruments include few, if any, items about students' learning. Table 8 contains items that are representative of those commonly used in universities throughout North America.

All items in this instrument (Table 8) refer to the course or the instructor. Indeed, they are quite useful if faculty or administration want data for personnel or performance evaluation. The items are consistent with traditional pedagogical approaches to education where the focus is more upon the quality of teaching performance than on the nature or quality of student learning. [See Barr & Tagg (1995) for a comparison of the "teaching" and "learning" paradigms in higher education]. However, programs may easily convert end-of-semester course evaluation forms into an assessment of student learning instruments. Instead of or in addition to asking students what they think about the professor and the course, we could inquire about their learning. Items could reflect a greater emphasis upon student learning. Consistent with research findings about effective teaching and learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) and trends toward active, adult learning, programs might develop end-of-semester student-learning assessment instruments that contain items such as those presented in Table 9.

Programs could also add to these general items those that correspond to the course learning objectives for each social work classroom or practicum course or seminar offered throughout the school or department. In effect, this requires the development of individualized Assessment of Student Learning instruments for each course or seminar. However, it provides students an opportunity to indicate the degree to which they believe they learned what they might reasonably expect to learn—based upon the learning objectives outlined in the course or seminar syllabus.

Table 10 illustrates how learning objectives from a social work course might appear as items within an end-of-semester course evaluation instrument.

Students, of course, respond to these items based on their perceptions of learning. Undoubtedly, various factors (e.g., nature of the course, rigor, grading policies, and the characteristics of the instructor) affect their responses. This approach clearly represents an indirect rather than a direct measure of learning. Nonetheless, when combined with direct evidence of student learning (e.g., standardized testing, student portfolios, qualifying examinations, theses, or scores on licensing exams), they represent a powerful source of assessment information from the consumers' perspective. In a manner consistent with the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), students assess the degree of their own learning.

Table 8: *Typical Items in Traditional "Instructor" Oriented Course Evaluation Instruments*		
1	SA A U D SD	This course is well-described.
2	SA A U D SD	This course has clearly stated goals.
3	SA A U D SD	The course assignments contribute to the quality of the course.
4	SA A U D SD	The course text(s) are well-chosen.
5	SA A U D SD	The course contributes to my professional development.
6	SA A U D SD	The instructor is knowledgeable about course content.
7	SA A U D SD	The instructor is well-prepared for class.
8	SA A U D SD	The instructor is organized.
9	SA A U D SD	The instructor clearly explains the grading system.
10	SA A U D SD	The instructor assigns grades fairly.
11	SA A U D SD	The instructor is excited about the subject.
12	SA A U D SD	The instructor is a good teacher.
13	SA A U D SD	The instructor communicates well.
14	SA A U D SD	The instructor treats students with respect.
15	SA A U D SD	The instructor is accessible for consultation.
16	SA A U D SD	I would recommend this course to others.
17	SA A U D SD	I would recommend this instructor to others.

Statistical analysis of aggregated responses to both common items (CI) and course-learning objective (CLO) items may yield pertinent information about students' perceptions of learning by course, sequence, academic status (i.e., junior, senior, MSW-foundation, MSW-concentration), and other pertinent factors. For example, Table 11 reflects the Common Item Scale (CIS) scores (i.e., aggregated averages) of a hypothetical set of common items (such as those presented in Tables 8 or 9) by course and year. Scores may range from 1 (reflecting strong disagreement) to 5 (reflecting strong agreement). In this example, all items appear in an affirmative fashion so that higher scores consistently reflect stronger agreement. The table illustrates the kind of assessment information that various constituencies may receive. The data indicate that some courses reflect similar ratings over a four-year period, while others vary considerably. Of course, the analysis of findings and the way they are, or are perceived to be, used are central to the success or failure of any assessment process. In general, readers should view "average" ratings with caution. Despite the limitations, descriptive statistics serve a function as "indicators" of courses or curriculum areas that deserve closer attention. For example, in Table 11, the CIS scores associated with Social Work Course #1 reveal a substantial drop in students' evaluation of the course during the 1996 and 1997 years and a fair recovery during 1998. The CIS scores associated with Social Work Course #2 reveal a continuously declining trend from 1995 through 1998, while those connected with Social Work Courses #3 and #5 reflect a more favorable, upward trend during the same period. CIS scores for Social Work Course #4 are consistently positive throughout the entire period.

Table 9: *Typical Items in a "Student Learning" Oriented Evaluation Instrument*		
1	SA A U D SD	Learners held high expectations for one another.
2	SA A U D SD	Learners spent a lot of time and energy undertaking learning experiences and assignments.
3	SA A U D SD	Learners interacted frequently with other learners including the professor.
4	SA A U D SD	Learners engaged in active learning experiences.
5	SA A U D SD	Learners participated in one or more cooperative learning teams.
6	SA A U D SD	Learners gave prompt and constructive feedback to other learners.
7	SA A U D SD	Learners respected diverse talents and ways of learning.
8	SA A U D SD	Learners assumed individual and collective responsibility for learning.
9	SA A U D SD	Learners cooperated and collaborated with one another.
10	SA A U D SD	Learners actively sought out, discovered, and constructed relevant information.
11	SA A U D SD	Learners applied information to understand, assess, analyze, and address real issues.
12	SA A U D SD	I learned a great deal in this course.
13	SA A U D SD	I became more proficient in the social work knowledge base.
14	SA A U D SD	I developed critical thinking abilities.
15	SA A U D SD	I learned much that will help me as a practicing professional social worker.
16	SA A U D SD	I became a more competent social worker.

Course Learning Objective (CLO) Related Items. Because they involve the students' (i.e., consumers') view of their attainment of specific course objectives, ratings of CLO items are especially useful for the assessment of student learning within the context of accreditation standards—if all course objectives clearly link to program objectives, organizational goals, and ultimately, the mission of the school or department. Students' aggregated CLO ratings represent indirect evidence of learning for discrete items, courses, sequences, or programs. Students' responses to all CLO items associated with a particular course may be averaged in the form of a Course Learning Objectives Scale (CLOS) score to provide general indications of the degree of overall learning in a particular course. In many social work programs, professors agree to use identical learning objectives in all sections of the same course. When this occurs, programs may aggregate students' responses from multiple course sections and analyze them by semester or year. The CLOS score reflects an average of students' ratings of the learning objective-related items for each course. Since each item may be rated on a one-to-five basis, the lowest possible CLOS score would be one and the highest five.

Table 12 reflects the CLOS scores (i.e., aggregated averages) of students' responses to a hypothetical set of course-learning objective-related items (such as those presented in Table 7) by course and year. Scores may range from one

Table 10: *CLO-Related Items in an Assessment of Student Learning Instrument*

Please use the enclosed five-point (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) scale to rate the degree to which, as a result of the learning experiences you completed in this course, you learned to:

1	SA A U D SD	Understand the fundamental values, ethics, and legal obligations of the social work profession.
2	SA A U D SD	Apply social work values, ethics, and legal obligations in processes of ethical decision-making.
3	SA A U D SD	Understand the skills associated with each of phase of social work practice (i.e., preparing, beginning, exploring, assessing, contracting, working and evaluating, and ending).
4	SA A U D SD	Apply social work skills in interviews with real or simulated clients.
5	SA A U D SD	Apply knowledge and understanding of self in interactions with and service to others.
6	SA A U D SD	Apply social work knowledge and skills differentially to avoid discrimination and demonstrate respect for persons of diverse backgrounds and characteristics, and populations-at-risk.
7	SA A U D SD	Prepare clear and well organized professional social work case records (e.g., intake and social histories; social work assessments of person-issue-situation, including strengths as well as problems; contracts and plans, including clear specification of intervention goals; progress and evaluation notes; and closing summaries).
8	SA A U D SD	Assess one's strengths, limitations, and learning needs, including evaluation of the quality and appropriateness of social work skill selection and application.

(reflecting strong disagreement) to five (reflecting strong agreement). In this example, all items appear in an affirmative fashion so that higher scores consistently reflect stronger agreement.

Information such as that presented in Table 12 provides useful insight into students' perceptions of learning. Scores in the four-to-five range ("agree" to "strongly agree") suggest that students believe that they learned what their social work instructors hoped they would learn—based upon the course learning objectives. Such a table also reflects changes across semesters as well as students' ambivalence about the extent of their learning in certain courses. As such, program administrators and faculty may attend to certain courses or sequences within the curriculum. For example, in reviewing Table 12, faculty members might well decide to investigate the factors associated with the drop in CLOS scores and the increase in variability as indicated by the standard deviations for the SW9 courses from the 1995 and 1996 levels to the 1997 and 1998 levels.

Integrating the CLO Classification and Assessment of Student Learning Systems

The use of end-of-semester evaluation instruments that emphasize student learning in both general common items (CI) and course learning objective (CLO) related items represent a substantial contribution to the demonstration of progress toward achievement of program goals and the EPAS standard that requires pro-

Table 11: *Common Item Scale (CIS) Scores by Social Work Course and Year*

	1995			1996			1997			1998		
Course	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
SW1	4.68	.42	24	3.88	1.15	99	3.86	.99	149	4.13	.85	125
SW2	4.56	.61	70	4.08	.80	62	3.98	.96	61	3.60	.97	55
SW3	3.65	.91	48	3.94	1.01	72	4.37	.67	67	4.68	.55	76
SW4	4.24	.88	94	4.37	.67	88	4.31	.73	96	4.45	.75	110
SW5	3.67	.99	60	3.83	1.12	100	4.50	.50	109	4.49	.66	11

Table 12: *Course Learning Objective Scale (CLOS) Scores by Social Work Course and Year*

	1995			1996			1997			1998		
Course	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
SW6	4.68	.42	24	4.50	.86	85	4.50	.50	109	4.42	.57	111
SW7	4.46	.72	42	4.35	.78	32	4.60	.49	45	4.52	.66	49
SW8	4.67	.38	36	4.65	.44	42	4.73	.42	36	4.53	.53	43
SW9	4.41	.54	124	4.34	.70	119	3.84	1.09	107	3.78	1.12	92

gram assessment. They are consistent with the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement. When direct assessment indicators are added (e.g., entry and exit essays, pre- and post-instruments, or program oriented student portfolios), an array of data about student learning outcomes become available.

However, maximum benefit occurs when assessment processes are integrated with the Course Learning Objectives Classification system. If each course-learning objective offered throughout a curriculum is classified according to pertinent dimensions—including school or department goals and program objectives, and if direct and indirect forms of assessment are geared toward evaluation of progress toward achievement of those goals and objectives, then programs have the capacity to analyze data according to any or all of the classified categories. For example, suppose a program classifies its course objectives according to CSWE foundation program objectives. The program may then, with the aid of computer software, separate and statistically analyze students' responses to CLO items that pertain to each objective. The program may also develop evaluation rubrics to directly assess learning products (e.g., essays, papers, examinations, portfolios) in relation to those objectives as well. For purposes of both continuous improvement and to address requirements for accreditation, the program could then describe the nature and extent of student learning for each competency, ideally over a period of several years to reveal patterns or trends.

Table 13 presents data from students' ratings of course learning objective related items by competency and year. If they were actual, rather than hypothetical data, the program might be concerned with students' (especially those completing end-of-semester instruments during 1998) perception of learning in regard to their ability to "apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice" (Foundation Program Objective #1). They might be especially

concerned if direct assessment of performances or products also revealed weaknesses in critical thinking abilities among a substantial number of graduating students.

Similarly, there might be concern about students' learning during 1997 in relation to the ability to "apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice (or, for MSW graduates, 'a generalist social work perspective') with systems of all sizes" (Foundation Program Objective #6). Professors might be particularly curious about what may have happened during 1995 in relation to students' perceptions of their ability to "evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions" (Foundation Program Objective #9) and their ability to "use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities" (Foundation Program Objective #10) during 1998. Although far from definitive, these data help programs identify how well their students think they learn within certain areas of a curriculum. Direct assessment of students' performance and learning products may serve to substantiate or refute findings from indirect forms of assessment. Similarly, information gained through indirect means may be supported, or challenged, by evidence generated by direct forms of assessment.

Although Table 13 illustrates data that relates to one classification dimension (i.e., CSWE Foundation Program Objectives), programs may conduct similar analyses based upon other factors. Analyses based upon organizational goals help support a school or department's claim that they accomplish their mission. Analyses based upon Bloom's Taxonomy may indicate that students are learning how to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize professional knowledge, values, and skills. These higher order cognitive skills constitute essential aspects of critical thinking—one of the hallmarks of professionalism.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Social work deans, program directors, and faculty members are likely to confront numerous challenges as they implement processes for assessing student learning and educational effectiveness. Faculty may anticipate dilemmas such as the following:

- At a time when programs are asked to do "more with less," programs may lack sufficient resources to support extensive assessment processes. Personnel are needed to develop and administer instruments, and to collect and analyze data. Higher costs may be expected during developmental phases when the program determines an assessment philosophy and decides what, how, and how much to assess. Administrators may anticipate the need for release time for personnel undertaking these activities. Some programs might benefit from faculty and staff development programs that address the topic and methods of assessment and evaluation. Finally, programs may need to invest in some equipment (e.g., scanners, computers) and computer software programs through which to organize and analyze data.
- Within some university contexts, social work educators may be successful in implementing a sound assessment process but lack authority or resources to use findings for decision-making. For example, a program director may obtain assessment data suggesting that students in Professor "X's" Social Policy class-

Table 13: *Aggregated Average CLO Ratings by CSWE Foundation Program Objective*

	1995			1996			1997			1998		
Objective	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
1	4.04	.55	83	4.01	.68	96	3.99	.57	109	3.73	.86	65
2	4.41	.65	122	4.29	.75	145	4.36	.56	140	4.34	.53	108
3	4.22	.67	115	3.96	.84	126	4.29	.59	160	4.16	.71	112
4	4.20	.60	108	4.27	.56	132	4.28	.57	179	4.29	.65	177
5	4.39	.64	139	4.37	.70	176	4.09	.74	102	4.07	.62	68
6	4.28	.62	94	3.96	1.03	169	3.71	1.00	199	4.36	.79	80
7	4.34	.57	104	4.33	.63	134	4.44	.57	131	4.15	.91	131
8	4.23	.63	97	4.36	.69	97	4.01	.98	131	4.65	.46	104
9	3.07	1.01	105	4.27	.76	113	4.18	.76	119	4.21	.77	103
10	4.19	.68	75	4.56	.45	120	4.27	.47	105	3.63	1.65	90
11	4.75	.32	34	4.67	.47	52	4.61	.48	44	4.51	.94	38
12	4.18	.71	112	4.26	.79	120	4.42	.69	106	4.29	.66	98

es appear to learn a great deal from the course. Both direct and indirect sources of evidence indicate that students achieve most of the course objectives. In Professor "X's" Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) courses, however, the assessment data suggest that students tend to achieve few of the course objectives. Although it might seem reasonable to assign Professor "X" to teach more social policy courses and fewer, if any, HBSE courses, a director may not possess the authority or have sufficient faculty resources to reassign professors based upon evidence of student learning.

- Individuals or committees that implement assessment programs face questions related to the validity, reliability, and relevance of assessment processes and outcomes. Assessment approaches that rely primarily or exclusively upon student (i.e., consumer) feedback may be strongly challenged—especially if the results are used more to evaluate personnel performance than to assess student learning and program quality. At a time when social work students are being confronted with multiple roles (e.g., parent, full-time worker, caregiver of older parents), demanding learning environments may influence the way courses, instructors, and the overall quality of the program are perceived. Nonetheless, when both direct and indirect assessment processes are used and the findings converge, serious challenges to the accuracy and utility of the information are less likely.
- Social work educators should anticipate how various stakeholders might interpret and use assessment findings—especially during the early phases. For instance, some university administrators may be quite uncomfortable with assessment results because they sometimes highlight significant issues and lead to difficult decisions. Some officials may find it easier, safer, or more comfortable to deny, minimize, or ignore findings that call for decisive, unpopular, or costly action.

- Within many academic contexts, programs “compete” with one another for resources (e.g., funding from the university, “faculty lines,” or even students). At times, negative assessment findings place a program at a disadvantage vis-à-vis other programs that engage in little, if any, assessment or evaluation activities. Directors and faculty members should consider how, for example, higher administration might respond to a program that implements a strong assessment system that yields negative findings about student learning. In some contexts, programs may be recognized and credited for conducting assessment, and providing encouragement and resources to make improvements based upon the findings. In other circumstances, unfavorable results may be used to punish the program that conducted the assessment activities. During the early phases of implementation, such punitive responses send a clear message that genuine assessment is unsafe and probably unwanted.

During the next decade or two, social work programs will face many challenges. Certainly, demands for greater accountability will continue to increase. Various stakeholders will expect answers to questions such as the following: Do your students learn what you say you teach? Does your faculty genuinely help students learn? Does your curriculum truly meet CSWE and university accreditation standards? Are your learning expectations and experiences progressively more intellectually, academically, and professionally challenging? In other words, do you expect more of seniors than you do of juniors, and more of juniors than you do of sophomores? Do you require more of MSW students than you do of undergraduates, and more of MSW concentration students than MSW foundation students?

Social work educators will also be asked to produce evidence of their program’s effectiveness in pursuing its mission and accomplishing its goals. In attempting to provide such evidence, they may be challenged from various sources. Higher administration, students, parents, and some organizations (e.g., legislatures and social service agencies) may demand more and better indications of program quality and effectiveness. Some faculty colleagues may also question the purposes, validity, reliability, and relevance of the assessment processes—particularly if the results are used primarily for personnel evaluation decisions (e.g., for promotion and tenure decisions) rather than for enhancing faculty development or improving program quality and educational effectiveness.

We suggest that the Indiana Model—which incorporates both direct and indirect processes, and integrates Course Learning Objectives Classification and Assessment of Student Learning systems—represents a strategy by which to address some of these questions. We fully recognize that data obtained exclusively from direct or from indirect forms of assessment have finite value. As important as the consumer voice might be, and as appealing as a valid and reliable standardized examination might be, feedback from one source alone is simply insufficient. Indeed, we strongly recommend the use of multiple indicators of both an indirect and direct nature in order that findings may be subject to multidimensional consideration.

Endnotes

[1] This approach to student learning assessment originated at Indiana University School of Social Work. Other schools and programs of social work have begun to refer to “The Indiana Model” to capture the general thrust of this form of assessment.

[2] The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) (2001) of the Council on Social Work Education reorganized the content areas by combining (a) populations-at-risk and (b) social and economic justice. These domains were separate in the 1992 CPS and 1994 Standards.

[3] Note: The items have been renumbered to facilitate classification.

[4] Bloom’s Taxonomy is used by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) to organize test items on the standardized social work licensing examinations.

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Developing and Teaching an MSW Capstone Course Using Case Methods of Instruction

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Abstract: *Using an innovative process, the authors and their colleagues developed a case-oriented MSW capstone course. This article outlines the process of developing the course, choosing instructional methods and materials, and preparing instructors to teach the course. It reviews the process of teaching the course, including preparing to teach individual class sessions, identifying and dealing with several instructional challenges that emerged, and designing means to evaluate the course. The authors provide specific recommendations to faculty who wish to provide a similar course. In particular, they show how course development involves substantial, ongoing collaboration by faculty that yield exceptional benefits.*

Keywords: Social work education, case method teaching, course development, capstone course

Recently, several broad trends have profoundly changed the context for social service provision. These include: growing social and economic inequalities, diminished employment security, rollback of affirmative action programs, reduced funding for public education, increasing distrust for government as problem-solver, reduced funding for public education, shift of political power to the suburbs, spread of information technologies, increasing demographic diversity, and population aging (e.g., Reisch & Jarman-Rohde, 2000; Scharlach, Damron-Rodgriguez, Robinson & Feldman, 2000). These trends have engendered remarkable changes in social service provision such as: devolution of federal responsibility, privatization of the nonprofit sector, agency reorganization (e.g., mergers, downsizing, decentralization), time-limited treatment modalities, cost-containment programs, fee-for-service reimbursement, and other funding innovations (Jarman-Rohde, McFall, Kolar & Strom, 1997; Reisch & Jarman-Rohde, 2000; Strom-Gottfried, 1997; Strom & Gingerich, 1993). These changes may necessitate revision of social work education in terms of both the content provided and the processes employed. At minimum, these changes require social work educators to continually reconsider what students need to know and do upon graduation and

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to assess whether they actually know and can do these things. Indeed, as these changes accelerate, there is a growing need for educating social workers who can respond effectively to unanticipated problems and seize unforeseen opportunities (Reisch & Jarman-Rohde, 2000).

IMPETUS FOR THE COURSE

In preparation for re-accreditation, faculty at the University of South Carolina College of Social Work sought curriculum-relevant information from several constituency groups (e.g., alumni, field instructors). One such group included prospective employers of our MSW graduates. Two faculty members conducted interviews with executives of 17 state and private agencies. They found that when hiring beginning practitioners, social service agency executives especially prized research and evaluation skills, critical thinking skills, writing and communication skills, and an attitude of openness and flexibility (Dalton & Wright, 1999).

This and other feedback provided the impetus for several curricular revisions. For example, faculty agreed to increase demands upon students for critical thinking and communication skills. Faculty decided to develop new, required courses in the advanced year to reunite micro and macro students and integrate these two broad content areas. In designing one of these required courses, the curriculum committee came up with the idea for an integrative capstone course. Furthermore, the committee recommended case-oriented teaching methods for this new course, and the dean assigned course development responsibility to a small faculty group.

This paper describes and explains our experience developing and teaching the new case-oriented capstone course. However, it is not simply a question of case method teaching, capstone courses, or new course development. Rather, it is about our highly collaborative problem-solving process for developing and teaching a case-based course as a capstone of our MSW program. We argue that this extensive and unconventional process reflected essential features of the case method itself, promoting both student and faculty development and contributing substantially to our success. We also suggest that case method instruction fits social work education and is particularly well suited for a capstone course.

In this paper, we first outline the process of developing this new course, including choosing instructional methods, developing course materials, and preparing ourselves to teach the course. Second, we review the process of teaching the course, including preparing to teach individual class sessions, identifying and dealing with instructional challenges, and evaluating the course. Based on our experience, we provide recommendations for faculty wishing to provide a similar course. In particular, we show how course development involved substantial, ongoing collaboration by faculty that ultimately yielded exceptional benefits.

DEVELOPING THE COURSE

Faculty envisioned the capstone course as a unique learning opportunity in the final semester of the MSW program. It was intended to provide a context for applying knowledge gained throughout the curriculum and for collaborative work by micro and macro students.

Choosing Instructional Methods

Beginning with information about desired educational outcomes, faculty sought teaching methods most likely to promote these outcomes (Albanese & Mitchell, 1993; Lundeberg, Levin & Harrington, 1999; Pratt & Associates, 1998). We eventually agreed to combine decision case discussion and problem-based learning (PBL) components within the course. Very briefly, decision case discussions emphasize analysis, problem formulation, and decision-making processes, while PBL projects emphasize assessment, information search, and treatment planning processes. In addition to their differing emphases, the two methods structure the learning process differently. Decision case discussions provided a diverse series of shared weekly learning experiences for all students. Problem-based learning projects provided unique, more specialized, semester-long learning experiences for small groups of students. Because both methods were case-based, they potentially reinforced key learning objectives. Nevertheless, they represented differing strengths and weaknesses. Decision cases provided more experience with problem solving across a variety of situations, while PBL cases allowed for more in-depth learning about a particular practice situation. This article focuses on the use of decision cases because that became the primary teaching method, in terms of class time, student effort, and benefits reported by students and faculty.

Since the profession's inception, social work educators have used cases for teaching students about practice realities (Reynolds, 1942; Towle, 1954). Traditionally, however, "cases" have most often been used to illustrate theoretical concepts or to depict practice situations and the appropriate professional responses (Welsh & Wolfer, 2000; also, see, for example, LeCroy, 1992, 1999; McClelland, Austin & Este, 1998; Rivas & Hull, 1996, 2000). In contrast, the case methods selected for the capstone course represent specific innovations that have recently emerged in other professions (Barnes, Christensen & Hansen, 1994; Lundeberg, Levin & Harrington, 1999; Lynn, 1999), and that have sparked renewed interest among social work educators (Cossom, 1991; Welsh & Wolfer, 2000). Most significantly, they rely on open-ended cases that compel decision-making on the part of students, to both define problems and choose courses of action.

Case method teaching is frequently touted as a means for promoting critical thinking skills and better preparing students for professional practice by providing them with opportunities to exercise judgment and engage in decision-making (Barnes, Christensen & Hansen, 1994; Boehrer & Linsky, 1990; Christensen, Garvin & Sweet, 1991; Fisher, 1978; Meyers & Jones, 1993). Rather than provide information, case method teachers rely heavily upon a variation of Socratic questioning to facilitate in-depth discussion of cases (Lynn, 1999; Welty, 1989).

Case method teaching employs open-ended "decision" cases, a particular type of case specifically developed for this teaching approach. Such cases present students with the ambiguities and dilemmas of social work practice and require active decision-making (e.g., Cossom, 1991; Golembiewski & Stevenson, 1998; Lynn, 1999; Rothman, 1998). Sometimes referred to as "teaching" cases, they describe actual situations practitioners have encountered in great detail. Although clearly written and tightly edited, the cases depict situations that are often messy and ambiguous. Typically written from one practitioner's perspective, they some-

times include conflicting statements (by the various participants involved), time constraints, competing ethical values, extraneous details, and incomplete information. Because the cases are open-ended, however, they do not tell what the practitioner ultimately did or how the case turned out. As a result, the cases require that students use their analytic and critical thinking skills, their knowledge of social work theory and research, and their common sense and collective wisdom to identify and analyze problems, to evaluate possible solutions, and to formulate a preferred intervention (Welsh & Wolfer, 2000).

Writing from a business perspective, Barnes, Christensen, and Hansen (1994) argue that case method instruction helps students develop an applied "administrative point of view" (p. 50). They suggest that an administrative or practitioner point of view includes: 1) a focus on understanding the specific context; 2) a sense for appropriate boundaries; 3) sensitivity to interrelationships; 4) examining and understanding any situation from a multidimensional viewpoint; 5) accepting personal responsibility for the solution of an organizational problem; and 6) an action orientation (p. 50-51). Furthermore, an action orientation includes: a) a sense for the possible; b) willingness to make decisions on the basis of imperfect and limited data; c) a sense for the critical; d) the ability to combine discipline and creativity; e) skill in converting targets into accomplishments; and f) an appreciation of the major limits of professional action (p. 51). In short, the concept redirects our attention from what students know to their ability to use their knowledge. We came to refer to this as "thinking like a practitioner."

Developing Course Materials

As suggested above, case method teaching requires a particular type of case, a "decision" or teaching case. Decision cases that focus primarily on the macro level of social work practice are available in the published literature (e.g., Fauri, Wernet & Netting, 2000; Golembiewski & Stevenson, 1998; Golembiewski, Stevenson & White, 1997; Wood, 1996) and on the Internet (e.g., Electronic Hallway; John F. Kennedy School of Government Case Web; Program on Non-Profit Organizations), though some must be drawn from public and non-profit management. However, there are few decision cases that focus primarily on micro practice (see Rothman, 1998, for cases on ethical dilemmas in micro practice). For that reason, the college dean provided support for the first author to write or edit appropriate micro practice cases for use in the new capstone course. Although some cases were designated micro and others macro, there were interwoven micro and macro issues in each one (e.g., legal and policy context for clinical decision-making, interpersonal dynamics in state-level policy development).

The decision cases were researched and written using a process developed by Welsh (1999). A small group of experienced social workers, several of whom were also enrolled in a doctoral program, were assembled as a case writing team led by the first author. The work sessions were intense, concentrated efforts that lasted four to five hours over two days for each case. In these work sessions, a case situation was reported and discussed in depth among a small group of participants. The case writing process consisted of five steps. First, before the work session, each case reporter prepared a brief written account of a problem or decision he or she actually faced in social work practice and, using a round robin format, each

participant was assigned responsibility for writing another's case. Second, during the work session, a case reporter told the case writing team the story behind his or her account. These discussions were tape recorded to collect quotes and detailed descriptions. Third, immediately after the work session, the assigned case writer prepared a longer working draft of the case that included a title, introductory "hook," and story line with details, quotes, and descriptions. Fourth, the working draft was distributed to the case writing team to be read and discussed again at a follow-up work session. Fifth, the case writer used clarifications and further details that emerged from this discussion to prepare the final draft of the case. In addition, analytic information from the last discussion was used to prepare instructor notes for the completed case. This case writing process ensured that a case accurately reflected the practitioner's own experience and understanding of a challenging situation.

Preparing to Teach the Course

The college dean also sent the first author to a week-long conference on case method teaching. Based on this experience and with an education professor, he designed and implemented a workshop for faculty and doctoral students that included a demonstration case discussion. Subsequently, faculty and doctoral students participated in weekly discussions of the nine cases selected for the capstone course. Instructors assigned to teach the capstone course took turns leading these case discussions. Following each case discussion, the group discussed what participants had learned, the discussion leader's teaching objectives and how well the actual discussion fit these objectives, and what questions and techniques had been most/least helpful. These faculty case discussions did two important things. First, they provided an in-depth understanding of each case that was not available by simply reading the case, even repeatedly. Second, and perhaps more importantly, they provided experience with case method teaching in both student and instructor roles. On alternate weeks, instructors assigned to the capstone course continued meeting for another hour to discuss teaching plans and develop course assignments[1].

TEACHING THE COURSE

Beginning in spring 2000, seven instructors taught nine sections of the inaugural capstone course with about 170 students total. Classes met weekly for two and-a-half hours (excluding break times) during the 15-week semester. The first two weeks were spent orienting students to the course objectives and expectations, and to the purposes and processes of case method and problem-based learning instruction. In the third week of the semester we began the weekly decision case discussions, dealing with a new case each week for nine weeks. The last three weeks of the semester included presentations by the students of their problem-based learning cases on which they had collaborated throughout the semester, and a focus on issues involved in making the transition from student to practitioner. Various formative and summative evaluations were conducted during and at the completion of the course, and class time was allocated for these purposes.

During the nine weeks in which we used decision cases, the class period consisted of an instructor-facilitated case discussion lasting approximately an hour

and forty-five minutes. Instructor-led case discussions progressed through three general stages: identifying facts, analyzing the problem, and deciding how to respond. More specifically, these discussions identified facts and assumptions of the case, explored interlocking issues and dilemmas in depth, formulated problem statements, identified possible alternative strategies for resolving the identified problem, identified decision criteria, and finally compared alternatives to recommend the best intervention or course of action (Welsh & Wolfer, 2000; Welty, 1989). Most instructors concluded this case discussion with students briefly reflecting in writing on what they learned from the case and a verbal debriefing of the case discussion process. The remaining 35-45 minutes were devoted to students' work in small groups on their problem-based learning cases. The instructor was available during this time to consult with the groups.

Preparing to Teach Individual Class Sessions

Instructors agreed to meet before the first decision case discussion to create plans for facilitating the discussion and subsequently met each week before decision case discussions. In these weekly sessions, capstone instructors briefly reviewed the previous case discussion, including what had worked and what had not worked. But most importantly, they discussed possible teaching objectives for the upcoming decision case, formulated opening questions to start the class discussion, anticipated the possible course for the class discussion and planned relevant questions, discussed techniques for facilitating discussions and adding variety (e.g., role plays, small group work), and devised strategies for remediating common deficiencies in student problem-solving (e.g., problem definition, identifying alternative solutions). In general, these weekly faculty discussions provided mutual problem solving and support, both of which proved essential for successfully implementing this instructional innovation. Because it was voluntary, the consistent participation of all capstone faculty served as evidence of the perceived value of these weekly meetings.

Several instructional challenges became apparent as we taught this course. Two major themes characterized these challenges including (1) fostering students' application and critical thinking skills so that they are prepared to the greatest extent possible to "think like practitioners" and (2) managing the uncertainty and anxiety resulting from the challenges students and faculty were experiencing in this new course.

Thinking Like a Practitioner

Theoretically, our entire MSW program is designed from beginning to end to prepare students to "think like practitioners" or develop a practitioner's "point of view" (Barnes, Christensen & Hansen, 1994). However, as those of us teaching this course engaged with students in in-depth case discussions, we were surprised and somewhat alarmed that so many students experienced difficulties in translating practice concepts into action. We were particularly surprised about this because in teaching other courses, we had not been as aware of the gap between knowledge and application. As a matter of fact, those of us who had been teaching for a number of years had been fairly well satisfied with the level of knowledge and skills demonstrated by the majority of students in the program to this point. We were

also surprised by the extent to which students found it difficult to think like practitioners because this course came in their last semester before graduation. We were assuming a certain level of ability in applying knowledge that, when using this method of instruction, was not initially apparent to us to the extent we had expected or would like to have seen.

We were rather quickly able to assess "where students were" when we began the process of teaching and learning through decision cases. Through our weekly instructor debriefing and planning sessions, we discovered common concerns about student capabilities. We concluded that the following four areas needed particular emphasis throughout the semester: (1) encouraging systemic thinking; (2) moving from analysis to decision making; (3) defining problems clearly and concisely; and (4) directly linking interventions to problem definitions.

Encouraging Systemic Thinking. Students struggled with thinking systemically. Although our program uses ecosystems as its unifying theoretical perspective, we had to work very hard to help students think about cases in terms of the various systems involved, the relationships between and among systems, and the results of the interactions on varying system levels. Even when they were able to recognize some of the interrelationships among systems, they frequently were locked into dichotomous thinking of micro or macro, depending upon their chosen concentration. While instructors were initially surprised and concerned about students' lack of proficiency in thinking systemically, we were also very excited to see the progress that the students made in this area over the course of the semester. By repeatedly emphasizing the systemic nature of practice situations, the case discussions helped the students to finally understand and internalize the ecosystems perspective they had been encountering in all of their coursework to date.

Moving from Analysis to Decision Making. Instructors also were challenged to nudge students beyond the process of case analysis to actually identifying the problem(s) and deciding on an intervention. As students began to think more systemically, they became quite skilled at identifying all of the pieces of the given puzzle and how they fit together. It appeared that this was where many of them were comfortable staying. We also were aware that this was a comfort zone for most instructors, so in order to challenge students to move beyond analysis to making decisions (i.e., to defining the problem and selecting an intervention), we instructors needed to prod ourselves as well. This meant careful attention to pacing and timing to make sure that we did not attempt to move students prematurely but at the same time did not get mired in endless analysis. Some decision cases were particularly challenging in this regard because, like practice situations, the information they supplied was at points incomplete or uncertain. We were conscious of needing to move them, and us, on to the decision making step of problem solving which then presented yet another challenge.

Defining Problems Clearly and Concisely. Another practice skill that required particular attention was defining the problem. Again, we thought students would be much better able to clearly and concisely develop a problem statement emerging from problem analysis than they were because the teaching of this skill comes early in our program and is woven throughout the curriculum. We spent more time in class focusing on this aspect of practice than we had anticipated. Students

wrote problem statements in the weekly analyses of their cases and received feedback from instructors; we worked on formulating problem statements in class, and as a class, we developed criteria for critiquing problem statements and identifying "good" ones and students critiqued each other's statements in class. Again, it was exciting to see the learning that took place over the course of the semester as students developed their skills in clearly and concisely defining problems within a systems framework of analysis.

Directly Linking Interventions to Problem Statements. Instructors also noticed early in the course that students had the tendency to select favorite or familiar interventions. As a result, their interventions often demonstrated little or no connection with their problem statements. We worked on helping them more fully understand the concept of problem-intervention linkage, emphasizing that an intervention must be directly linked to the problem and should emerge from the problem as it is defined. We had the opportunity to work with them both in our case analyses in class and in giving feedback on their written case analyses. We challenged them to develop a rationale or justification for choosing the particular intervention that they did and to make that rationale explicit. We expected that they would be able to defend their choice of intervention by articulating the ways in which a specific intervention would solve a specific problem and how it was better than other alternatives. Through these various ways, students came to see more clearly the importance of explicitly and accurately linking the problem and the intervention.

Managing Uncertainty and Anxiety

This course represented an innovation within our curriculum in terms of both instructional content and process. Change naturally tends to be stressful in systems and this certainly proved to be true for both students and faculty as we implemented this innovation. As detailed below, in various ways we tried to recognize, acknowledge, and help students cope with stressors associated with this new course. Based on course feedback, these stressors primarily related to: (1) students' perceptions of an inordinate work load for the course and the explicit ways in which they were held accountable for producing the work expected of them; (2) the grading system used in relation to the work they produced; (3) and the challenges associated with learning and practicing new ways of thinking and acting.

Work Load and Accountability. Many students complained throughout the semester of what they considered to be an inordinate workload for this course compared to other courses in our program. In reality, the workload in relation to the nine weeks of decision cases consisted of reading a 4-10 page case each week and writing a 2-3 page case analysis. During the nine weeks spent on decision cases, there were no additional readings since the intent was to introduce no new content in this course but to allow students the opportunity to integrate and apply the content they had learned previously. Many students complained that writing weekly papers was excessive. Instructors believed that the weekly expectations in terms of work were equivalent to the reading expectations for other courses. For this reason we were initially surprised by the students' very evident distress related to work load. As instructors discussed this distress with students and among ourselves, some of us began to wonder whether students had been able to succeed

in their other courses without producing on a weekly basis (i.e., without doing the assigned readings each week) but by only producing for a periodic paper or exam requirement. In this course, students were held accountable by demonstrating weekly that they had done the work for that week through delivering a product in the form of a paper and their informed class participation. Some of the instructors raised this possible interpretation in class and received mixed responses. Some students acknowledged this to be true, while others did not think this to be an accurate interpretation of their experiences. Instructors gathered data from students regarding the amount of time they spent on the course in order to better gauge students' reactions to work load. Early in the semester, many students reported spending much more time than usual writing case analyses and preparing for case discussions but with experience they became more efficient. Overall, the time required seemed to faculty well within the amount of preparation time expected for a graduate level course. As a result, this experience raised questions about the adequacy of accountability in other courses that rely on a minimal number of exams and major written assignments.

Grading. Many students expressed much distress, and for some, anger related to grading in this course. Grading of the weekly case analyses presented a particular challenge for faculty as well. During our planning for the course we struggled with the issue of grading and ultimately decided that each of us would use our own method and criteria for grading. Some instructors used a case analysis matrix that provided descriptors for evaluating five dimensions of written case analyses: problem identification, analysis of issues, recommended plan, creative insight, and writing style (Morris, 1996). Other instructors used a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading system for each weekly analysis, with specific criteria regarding what constituted each category. For example, one instructor defined "satisfactory" as "a thoughtful, informed, comprehensive, concise, and well-written analysis (limited to two pages) which clearly indicates that the student has read the case and is very familiar with its details and which addresses all six of the required components of the analysis."

Across all sections of this course, many students did not receive the kinds of grades on their case summaries they initially thought their work merited. Each week they were given specific feedback to help them improve for the following week. For many students, it was several weeks before they began to show improvement in their written work, but over the course of nine weeks, instructors noticed significant improvement in most students' work. Some students remained angry and anxious about the grades they received throughout the semester. Instructors anticipated that students might be upset about the differing approaches to grading across sections of the course, i.e., some instructors grading systems being seen as unfair compared to others, but this did not seem to be the source of the concern. Rather, when students did not do as well on their work as they expected, they thought instructors were grading too strictly and had unrealistic and unreasonably high expectations, regardless of the grading system and criteria being used. This dynamic, of course, tends to be present in academia (and elsewhere) but instructors were surprised and puzzled about the intensity of reaction in this course. As a bonus assignment, one instructor offered students the opportunity to rewrite their

initial case analysis at semester end, along with a comparison of the two analyses (Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994). Several of the students who did so expressed embarrassment upon reviewing their initial case analyses, and most were surprised and pleased by the substantial improvement in their ability to analyze cases.

Learning and Practicing New Ways of Thinking. In this course, students were clearly asked to learn and practice new ways of thinking as we attempted to help them move from the role of student to practitioner. We were also asking them to integrate and apply all of what they had learned in their MSW program. Certainly in other courses there had been attention to applying knowledge specific to each discrete course or content area, apparently to varying degrees, but integration and application were the central themes and purposes of this course. In this sense, we seemed to be asking students to "go where they had not gone before." As we engaged them in this process and as they got feedback on their work, students reported that they were beginning to question their readiness, confidence, and competence for practice.

In fact, case discussions deliberately undermine certainty by promoting more flexible and complex thinking, "including changing from dichotomous ways of thinking to the appreciation of more conditional ways of thinking" (Lundeberg & Fawver, 1994). Research on conceptual change may help explain learning from case discussions:

> Unless individuals become dissatisfied with existing beliefs and consider the utility of alternative or new beliefs, there may be no change in thinking. However, case discussions may provide the opportunity for participants to confront previously held beliefs and come to understand plausible alternative ideas, which might in turn be the catalyst for a shift in beliefs and understanding about particular issues in cases. (Levin, 1999, p. 146)

We think it possible that this dynamic, coupled with the timing of this course in the last semester of the program and coinciding with the job search process, resulted in a high level of anxiety among students.

We attempted to help students keep this in perspective by drawing on knowledge of the change process and of the dynamics involved in innovation. For example, Virginia Satir's model of change (Satir, Banmen, Gerber & Gomori, 1991) helped us to understand and manage this process. Change involves the interruption of the status quo by a foreign element (this course and the instructor) resulting in chaos. As the system attempts to cope with the chaos, new learnings result, which allows for movement to the practice and integration phase. In this phase of change, the system's chaos lessens as it practices and integrates these learnings. Moving through this phase of practice and integration leads the system to a new status quo, in this instance, emerging practitioners better equipped to begin MSW-level practice. This model proved very helpful in understanding and managing this innovation as we definitely saw all phases of the process in teaching this course.

We used the students' responses to this innovation to teach about change in systems. It was particularly interesting that one of the decision cases dealt with an innovation in an agency system, resulting in very similar dynamics to the ones we were experiencing in the course. This allowed for a rich discussion of the parallels

between the case and our experiences and for the opportunity to normalize feelings of anxiety associated with change.

Teaching this course was an innovation for instructors as well, so we experienced our own forms of anxiety, which resulted in new learnings for all of us to practice and integrate into our teaching. Particularly helpful in dealing with our own anxiety and stress relating to this innovation were our weekly instructors' meetings. We met each week to debrief the previous class with a particular focus on what worked and did not work in that week's case analysis. We developed teaching objectives for the upcoming decision case, wrote opening questions to start the case discussion, anticipated the possible course of the discussion, planned teaching techniques for adding variety (e.g., role plays, small group work), and designed strategies to address students' limitations and enhance their strengths.

These weekly meetings served as a much-needed source of support for those of us teaching the course. In addition to being a valuable stress management tool, these meetings allowed us the opportunity to experience firsthand many benefits of case method learning. Because cases cut across content areas, we relied on each other for content knowledge. Because we all had limited experience in case method teaching (and most of us had none), our weekly debriefing and planning meetings contributed to our learning about teaching, facilitated mutual problem-solving, supported experimentation, and increased collaboration and camaraderie.

Evaluating the Course and Student Learning

At risk of over-evaluating this new course, instructors sought both formative and summative evaluation data at multiple points during the semester. Given the orientation to active learning, several of these methods challenged students to reflect on their own and others' learning. In fact, as explained below, several instruments were selected or designed to promote changes in student thinking and understanding. As a result, these instruments served both as teaching aids and outcome measures.

Perhaps most significantly, students' written analyses and class discussion of decision cases provided surprising, even distressing feedback about their lack of readiness for professional practice. For example, early in the semester, capstone faculty realized that, at best, students had great difficulty formulating workable problems for the decision cases. Most students tended to formulate problems in superficial ways despite repeated exposure to problem-solving models throughout the curriculum. Few exhibited a systemic understanding of problems despite the fact that the master's curriculum is organized by an ecological systems perspective. In response to these apparent deficits, capstone faculty provided information about formulating problems and incorporating multiple system levels in these formulations. This information included reminders about previous readings, handouts on defining problems, written and oral feedback regarding written case analyses, and in-class problem-setting exercises.

In addition to evaluating individual student performance on each weekly case analysis, instructors used several additional methods for gauging student learn-

ing and soliciting feedback concerning the course. Because the data are reported in detail elsewhere (Wolfer & Miller-Cribbs, in preparation), the methods will only be summarized here. At the end of most case discussions, instructors asked students to write down what they had learned from the case discussion, an adaptation of the minute paper (Angelo & Cross, 1993). Several instructors collected these student "learnings," compiled an anonymous aggregate set of learnings, and e-mailed complete copies to members of the class section from which they came. Structuring this brief period for personal reflection encouraged students to actively identify and consolidate their own learning. Having students write down what they had learned also reinforced what might otherwise be ambiguous and potentially frustrating for some students. Sharing student learnings via e-mail further reinforced learning and broadened students' understanding of how differently people responded to a shared discussion. Students were often fascinated and sometimes surprised by what their peers reported learning.

At mid-semester and again at semester end, instructors administered a newly constructed learning outcomes instrument. Based on the case method and PBL literature, the instrument was designed to solicit student perceptions of correspondence between expected learning benefits of case method and PBL instruction and what they were learning. Except for a section on applying content knowledge from others courses, this instrument focused on developing "procedural" knowledge (e.g., "think across system levels," "explain and support my decisions"). In addition to gauging their own learning, the instrument was intended to remind students of what the course was meant to promote. In this way, it provided a subtle reframe for students, some of whom initially felt unclear about and frustrated with the rather process-oriented benefits of case method instruction.

Also at mid-semester, instructors administered a teaching improvement evaluation. Adapted from Weimer, Parrett, and Kerns (1988), this instrument asked students to rate their instructor's classroom methods and performance on a seven-point scale, ranging from one for "Instructor does very well" to seven for "Instructor needs to improve." The particular items were selected or created for relevance to case method teaching skills and attitudes (e.g., "Maintains a high level of safety and respect within the classroom, even when people disagree with each other," "Challenges vagueness in discussions"). Each item also provided space for students to suggest ways the instructor could improve his or her performance. The combined quantitative/qualitative items allowed instructors to obtain both summary judgements and detailed feedback about ways to improve. For instructors new to case method teaching, this instrument provided invaluable feedback. On some items, conflicting student responses gave instructors the opportunity to talk about what they were trying to accomplish and how these efforts elicited divergent reactions from students. Often, these discussions also helped students to gain a better understanding of the case method of instruction, to appreciate the complexity of the learning process, and to reconsider their own strong reactions to certain aspects of the process. Taken together, the learning outcomes measure and teaching improvement evaluation encouraged students to distinguish between what they were learning and how their instructor sought to promote learning, and to think about how these might be related.

Finally, capstone instructors administered a course-objectives measure and a new course-specific evaluation form. The latter asked what contributed or detracted most from students' learning and solicited their suggestions for improving the course, with special emphasis upon course assignments. Because these two instruments were administered at semester end, they could only provide summative data for fine-tuning future courses.

Overall, strong and fairly widespread negative sentiments at mid-semester were clearly reversed by semester end. The overwhelming majority of students expressed satisfaction with the capstone learning experience, with some citing it as the most significant and growth-inducing course in the MSW curriculum (Wolfer & Miller-Cribbs, in preparation).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our positive experience with the case method of instruction, we encourage its use in other schools of social work. We offer the following recommendations for social work faculty interested in adopting the case method of instruction in the way in which we are using it in our university.

Tangible Supports

Numerous tangible supports are needed to develop and implement this innovation. Faculty who are developing the course need support in the form of release time or overload pay for this purpose. We found that developing a course of this nature was far more labor-intensive than other course development in which we have been involved. For this reason, the administration should not assume that an already overworked and overloaded faculty will be able to add the responsibility for developing this course without adjustments in their existing work load. Faculty development funds for case method workshops, institutes, and/or consultation are useful in preparing them for the development and teaching of a course using this method of instruction. Because we recommend a maximum class size of 20 for a course of this nature, a commitment from the administration is needed to keep section sizes small. Administrative support is also needed to configure course scheduling in a way that allows for diverse representation of students in each class section from across the curriculum. This means that students representing all of the program's concentrations or specializations or fields of practice (however the curriculum is organized) should be included in each class section because this diversity substantially enriches case discussions. Classrooms that flexibly allow for face-to-face discussion in both small and large groups are needed (Erskine, Leenders & Mauffette-Leenders, 1998).

Committed Faculty Cohort

A committed cohort of faculty interested in developing and teaching a case-oriented course is critical. As mentioned above, faculty involved in our course met weekly during the semester in which the course was being developed and continued to meet weekly while it was taught. We believe this level of involvement was essential to the success of the course. The intermingled learning and support that flowed from these meetings helped us as faculty to deal constructively with our own uncertainty and anxiety resulting from substantial change, and thereby helped to prepare us to better lead students. When we reminded each other that "teachers also must learn" (Gragg, 1994), we meant not only content but process.

Multiple Feedback Loops

A commitment to evaluation using multiple feedback loops throughout a course using case-oriented instruction is important. Evaluation was an ongoing theme in our course experience. We incorporated a variety of feedback loops that included instructor discussions, student self-reflection, and classroom interaction in order to promote students' awareness about their own learning and assessment of their use of self in social work practice. We employed formative and summative evaluative tools, both oral and written, regarding students' experiences with the course process, our particular strengths and limitations in teaching the course, and learning outcomes. These feedback loops helped us to make mid-course corrections that enhanced the course (e.g., providing handouts and extra discussion on particular learning issues). In the process, we modeled for our students the routine inclusion of evaluation procedures in professional practice and promoted self-reflection among both faculty and students.

Managing Innovation

Explicit attention to managing the innovation is an important component of developing and implementing a case-oriented approach to teaching and learning. In addition to the needed tangible administrative supports and the intangible collaborative support of those teaching the course identified above, we found other aspects of managing the innovation to be important in the success of this course. Students need to be introduced and oriented to the method of case-oriented instruction as part of the course. They need to know the rationale for using this method of instruction and the ways in which it differs from more traditional learning, as well as its challenges and benefits. Faculty who teach an innovative course need to be reminded of the normal resistances and anxieties associated with significant change and encouraged to provide support to students and to each other when people experience discomfort as a result of the change process. There is the potential here for a good lesson for both students and faculty in learning to trust the process. Support from faculty (or at least the absence of resistance) who are not teaching the course is also important to managing this innovation. Therefore, the entire faculty needs to be oriented to case method instruction and its purposes. We experienced the ripple effect in our program during the implementation of this innovation. Faculty in other courses were dealing with "fall-out" in their classes in terms of students being distracted by their experiences in the new course. Some faculty responded in ways that supported the innovation, while others who were perhaps not as well briefed on this curriculum change, responded in ways that seemed to undermine the innovation. A "united front" is useful in managing the innovation and the chances for this occurring are increased when all faculty have sufficient information about the rationale and process for case-oriented instruction.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on our own informal observations, we believe the case method of instruction may be an effective vehicle for promoting and reinforcing critical thinking and problem-solving skills and for helping students to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, and values to which they have been exposed over the course of their MSW education. And given its place in our curriculum, the case method appears

to facilitate students' role transition from that of student to practitioner. As a further benefit, we find our collaborative efforts in developing the capstone course and using the case method of instruction have energized and improved our teaching, both in this course and beyond.

Endnote

[1]A course syllabus, including course assignments, is available from the first author.

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