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Foundation Year Field Instruction in a Master of Social Work Program: A Comparison Study of Learning Outcomes for On-Campus and Off-Campus Students

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FOUNDATION YEAR FIELD INSTRUCTION IN A MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

PROGRAM: A COMPARISON STUDY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR ON-

CAMPUS AND OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS

by

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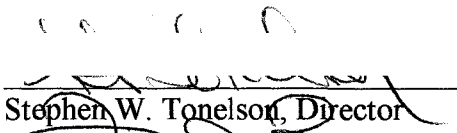Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

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Director: Dr. Stephen W. Tonelson

One of the major concerns in delivering a Master of Social Work program away from the main campus is comparability with the program as it is delivered on campus. Field education constitutes a substantial portion of the hours in a graduate program and is valued as the place where theory meets practice. Persons are involved in the delivery of field education include the students, the clients, the field instructors, and the field liaisons who teach the accompanying field seminars, and the Field Office personnel. This paper reports on a study that focused on learning outcomes of a foundation year field placement for on- and off-campus students matriculating in a graduate social work program. This study also examined the data for the purpose of examining the two groups for comparability of learning outcomes. Input came from three perspectives: the student by self-report, the field instructors, and clients. The study measured students' professional growth as social work professionals, students' ability to perform basic social work tasks, and students' confidence in their ability to perform such tasks at a level a supervisor would consider excellent were measured in this study. On the vast majority of these variables both groups achieved a gain. No significant difference was found between the on- and off-campus groups on these variables.

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To my yellow Lab, Dixie, in appreciation of her

constant companionship and unconditional affection

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The completion of this dissertation represents for me the final step on a long and winding educational journey which began many years ago. I am most grateful to my parents, Ellen and William Tierney, who taught me from the beginning that learning is fun and education is important. It is from these roots that I have continued down this path.

I met Richard Early when I was a sophomore in high school. He has shared this journey with me for these many years and I am thankful for his continued tolerance and support. He has read every paper and heard every presentation, and has become quite a good graduate assistant. To my daughters, Ellen Early and Mary Paige Phillips, I also extend my gratitude for their understanding and patience with my educational endeavors. I hope that they have learned from my adventures that education is important and hard work brings just rewards, and that age does not matter.

I wish to express my appreciation to my dissertation committee. It has been an honor to work with three such outstanding educators. When I asked Dr. Stephen Tonelson if he would serve as my chair, I knew that he would provide guidance as well as great challenge for good work. I feel fortunate he accepted this task and thank him for his commitment. Dr. Dana Burnett has been my advisor throughout my doctoral program. Along the way, as an instructor and as a dissertation committee member, he has provided feedback, encouragement and support, without which I may not have reached this goal. I first met Dr. Reginald York as a professor of research in my Master of Social Work program. Since that time he has been for me a co-worker, a supervisor, a mentor, and a

friend. Dr. York, like Drs. Tonelson and Burnett, exemplifies all the qualities one would expect from the best of teachers and gentlemen.

I am grateful also for others who have meant so much to me along this journey. Dr. Linner Griffin was my own field liaison in my advanced year of social work field instruction and brought me into the field of education as a adjunct faculty in the School of Social Work at East Carolina University. She has always been for me supportive and encouraging, and a role model as teacher, mentor, and friend. Dr. Glenn Rohrer also has been a professor, co-worker, mentor and friend for many years. I learned from him the pleasure that comes from teaching with enthusiasm and the great gifts given to us by our students.

No educational program runs well without the care and support of those persons who take care of so many details for us. I wish to express my thanks to Barbara Webb at ODU, who has been there all along the way with guidance and tips on everything from registration to copying this dissertation.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Chapter I will provide an overview of social work distance education as it relates

to this study. It will posit the importance of field education. The chapter will also address

the purpose and description of the study, the means of evaluation, the research questions

considered, and the significance of the study.

Distance Education

The concept of delivering higher educational courses and programs to students

located away from the traditional campus classroom began as early as the mid-nineteenth

century with correspondence programs. Following World War II, the GI Bill created an

even greater incentive for making education available to more students. With this growth

in the delivery of education to off-campus students, the issues of quality versus quantity

and of how to measure successful program delivery have gained increasing importance

(Heerema & Rogers, 2001; Neal, 1999).

The perceived need for distance education has led to the adoption of technology

to support the process, including the internet, interactive television delivery of a course

to two sites at the same time, and the hybrid or multiple methods delivery model that

includes face to face and internet components. Delivery also site-based became a model

used to accommodate off-campus students. The site based model offered the ability to

reproduce the dynamics of classroom discussion while also focusing attention on the needs of students on an interpersonal level (Neal, 1999). In a site-based model of program delivery the program coursework is delivered to a selected location away from the main campus.

With the continued expansion of distance education programs and continued funding opportunities comes the continued need for evaluation of program delivery. Pertinent questions in program evaluation are how and what to measure to identify success.

Social Work Distance Education

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the accrediting body for social work education. CSWE provides a body of accreditation standards for higher education and continues to revise and update these standards regularly. As late as 1994, revisions were based on the assumption that course delivery was done face to face. In 1995, CSWE developed a new revision entitled , "Guidelines for Distance Education Proposals in Social Work." This revision incorporated the use of technology for delivery of coursework to distance sites and included the use of interactive television (ITV) and other satellite systems. These guidelines required that any program offering a year or more of course work at a distance site submit a formal proposal for approval by CSWE (Council on Social Work Education, 1995).

Specifically, the CSWE guidelines for distance education programs were designed with an emphasis on the need for comparability with the "mission, goals and objectives of the main campus program." The guidelines address all aspects of program delivery from administrative support to comparability of library resources. One particular issue

they require a program to address in its proposal is "criteria, procedures, and responsibilities for the development and monitoring of field placement and training of field instructors." The importance of field education and its role in distance education programs clearly is stated (Council on Social Work Education, 1995).

Due to the continued increase in distance education and the use of technology in the delivery of social work programs, CSWE approved additional guidelines in 2000 that were incorporated into the 1995 Distance Education Guidelines. These new guidelines were to be used for "computer-mediated technology," whether separate or a part of other program delivery. CSWE has continued to adhere to a policy of comparability in the quality of distance programs with campus programs (Council on Social Work Education, 2000).

Master of Social Work Distance Education at East Carolina University

The demand for off-campus MSW distance education began soon after the establishment of the Master of Social Work (MSW) program by the School of Social Work at East Carolina University (ECU) in 1984. A significant part of the mission of ECU is to serve the eastern part of North Carolina, a primarily rural and agricultural area, and to improve the quality of life for its residents.

The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center (2006) defines a rural county as one with a population density of fewer than 200 persons per square mile based on the 1990 U.S. Census. Figure 1 indicates that the entire eastern portion of the state is defined as rural. The off-campus program delivery sites described in this study are located in the rural eastern part of the state.

Figure 1: Rural and Urban Counties – North Carolina and Program Delivery Sites

RURAL AND URBAN COUNTIES
North Carolina
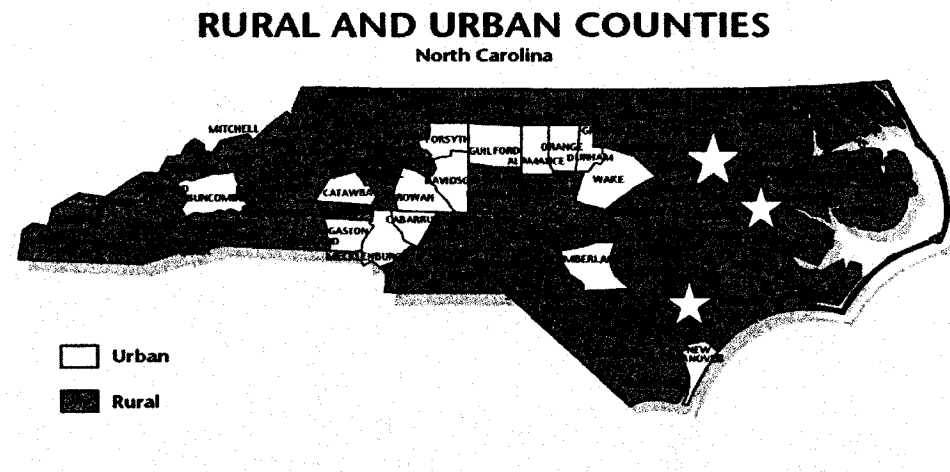
Retrieved January 14, 2006 from http://www.ncruralcenter/databank/rural_county_map_asp

For the 1990 census, the United States Census Bureau defined "urban" as a place serving as residence to 2,500 or more persons, and referred to other population units with fewer than 2,500 persons as "rural." This study accepts those definitions for areas where MSW students conduct their field placement internships. (See Table 1).

Table 1

Population of Counties and Towns of Student Internships

County	Population	Town	Population	Classification
Beaufort	19,773	Belhaven	1,929	Rural
Brunswick	73,143	Bolivia	158	Rural
Craven	91,436	New Bern	23,308	Urban
Cumberland	302,963	Fayetteville	124,372	Urban
Dare	29,967	Manteo	1,208	Rural
Dublin	49,063	Beulaville	1,080	Rural
		Kenansville	1,149	Rural
Durham	223,314	Durham	198,376	Urban
Edgecombe	55,606	Princeville	1,712	Rural
Forsyth	306,067	Winston-Salem	190,299	Urban
Hertford	22,601	Ahoskie	4,314	Urban
Lenoir	59,648	Kinston	22,978	Urban
Martin	25,593	Williamston	5,749	Urban
Nash	87,420	Nashville	4,375	Urban
		Rocky Mount	55,984	Urban
New Hanover	160,307	Wilmington	91,137	Urban
Northhampton	22,086	Jackson	674	Rural
Onslow	150,355	Jacksonville	67,386	Urban
Orange	118,227	Chapel Hill	49,301	Urban
		Hillsborough	5,361	Urban
Perquimans	11,368	Hertford	2,070	Rural
Pitt	133,798	Greenville	67,190	Urban
		Winterville	4,660	Urban
Robeson	123,339	Lumberton	21,161	Urban
Sampson	60,161	Clinton	8,636	Urban
Wake	627,846	Raleigh	316,802	Urban
Wayne	113,329	Goldsboro	38,484	Urban
Wilson	73,814	Wilson	45,921	Urban

Source for County Populations: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau
Release Date: April 14, 2005
Source for Town Populations 2003: Retrieved January 15, 2006 from http://epodunk.com,

The area of eastern North Carolina east of Interstate 95 encompasses nine of the nation's 20 poorest counties. Thirteen of the state's 41 counties are in the top 25% of the nation's counties with the highest percentage of poverty. In eastern North Carolina the military serves as one of the largest industries. Eight of the top 10 counties in school drop out rate are in the East. Sixteen of the 20 North Carolina counties with the highest percentage of residents receiving food stamps are located in eastern North Carolina

(Business North Carolina, *2003*). Poverty and the accompanying lack of resources constitute frequent challenges for the social work professionals in eastern North Carolina. In many of these counties in the East there are few graduate level social work professionals, and therefore few licensed social workers. In the changing environment of the delivery of mental health and substance abuse services, where service delivery is being divested from public mental health centers to private, for pay providers, a state license is mandatory for social work and substance abuse practice. A master's degree is required for these state licenses. Suddenly, it has become necessary for persons who want to work in the social work field, as well as for persons already working in the field, to acquire an MSW degree. This creates a steady market throughout eastern North Carolina for site-based, part-time programs for working students.

In an early response to this need, the ECU School of Social Work offered its first off-campus program in Wilmington, North Carolina in 1988. In this program, students completed 30 semester hours on site and completed the remaining 30 hours of their advanced year on campus at ECU's main campus in Greenville, North Carolina. Twenty-one students graduated with an MSW degree from this program in 1991.

As additional money became more available for distance education, ECU offered a second off-campus program in 1994 in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Students completed 29 semester hours on site, and the remainder of the 60 semester hours on campus. This program graduated 35 students. A similar program was instituted for a third cohort in Wilmington in 1997, delivering 29 semester hours off-campus and requiring students to come to campus in Greenville for the remaining 31 hours.

Due to market demand and the increasing need for licensed social work practitioners in the eastern part of the state, in January 2001, the ECU School of Social Work program once more elected to deliver a part-time, off-campus program, this time establishing two concurrent sites in Elizabeth City and Wilmington. These programs started off with simultaneous courses delivered face to face at each site, and with the initial intent of bringing students to campus for the advanced year. In the second year of the curriculum, however, program administrators decided to implement interactive television jointly between the two sites allowing the students to remain at their respective local campuses until they graduated in 2004.

Given the support and encouragement of the university through distance education funding and professional support, the part-time, off-campus program at ECU evolved into a series of programs, offered at strategic locations throughout eastern North Carolina on a rotating basis. With the commitment to continue part-time, off-campus program delivery, and in response to CSWE criteria, the need for research validating the effectiveness of the distance format compared to on-campus education gained more importance.

The distance education model for the two cohorts used in this study was designed for part-time delivery of coursework with weekend programs. The School of Social Work at ECU implemented these programs to bring graduate social work education to off-campus students throughout eastern North Carolina. Off-campus students who participated in this study were admitted to one of two cohorts entering the program at designated off-campus sites located in Kenansville, North Carolina, which drew students

from the southeastern corner of the state, and in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, which drew from the central northeastern area of the state.

The regular track, full-time program, with coursework delivered on Mondays and Tuesdays, is offered on campus at East Carolina University in Greenville. The regular on campus track program consists of two years or study and draws students from a wide area of the state. In both the part-time off-campus and the full-time on-campus programs, students complete internships in both rural and urban settings (see Figure 1).

Importance of Field Instruction as an Area of Assessment

Field education is an important component of any social work program. Because of the role that field education plays in producing a well prepared social work professional, there is a need to reassess the factors that make field education an optimal learning experience for the student (Fortune, McCarthy & Abramson, 2001). The need for further examination of the field component of distance programs is recognized as more important than ever before due to the growth in social work distance education (McFall & Freddolino, 2000).

Field instruction accounts for nearly one third of the semester hours in the MSW program at ECU, comprising 18 of the 60 hours of coursework. The field component consists of a one-semester foundation year course, accounting for six (6) semester hours, and two semesters of advanced field instruction in the final year, accounting for 12 semester hours (see Appendix A).

Field instruction in the practice setting and the accompanying seminar class require more human resources than ordinary coursework. Field instruction requires a member of the faculty who serves as a field liaison and also conducts the required field

seminar class. In addition to the field liaison, a master's level social worker must serve as the field instructor, providing one hour of supervision each week. Due to the lack of MSW workers in the rural eastern North Carolina placement agencies, there is often the need for a task supervisor who is employed at the student's internship agency and who oversees the student's work on a daily basis when there is no MSW supervisor present on site. With so much commitment to field instruction, there is justification for appropriate evaluation.

The importance of field education is reflected in literature relating to outcomes in student learning. A 2001 article explored which activities are related to student performance in the field and which learning opportunities are seen as important to the student. This article also addressed the need to separate student satisfaction from student performance and the importance of finding what contributes to learning, (Fortune, et all, 2001).

In 2002 researchers explored the importance of the assessment process of evaluating competencies and defining learning goals and related the use of an assessment model for self-appraisal. This model included both student and field instructor evaluations and provided the opportunity to examine in what areas the students needed the most work. The authors noted that the learning contract and the students' participation in the evaluation of competencies constituted the working components of self-directed learning. They highlighted the role of field instructor feedback and of the relative agreement between the student and field instructor was highlighted, (Regehr, Regehr, Leeson & Fusco, 2002).

Knight (2001) also documented students' own reflections on successful learning outcomes in an other article that provided student views on effective field supervision. This article examined the influence of supervision at various stages in the supervisory relationship and highlighted the importance of the field instructor's role as an educator for the integration of theory into practice.

Social work knowledge combines theory with techniques of working with individuals, families and groups. The standards for social work practice require a knowledge of community resources, including federal, state and local programs, and an understanding of community organization theory. Diversity, human behavior, research, and program management are also components of professional knowledge, as are an understanding of ethical practice and the Social Work Code of Ethics (Barker, 1991).

There are 12 primary skills basic to social work practice, including listening, gathering information and assessment processes, creating a helping relationship with a nonjudgmental approach, and engaging clients to work with sensitive issues. Mediating conflict and assisting with identifying and obtaining social resources for clients are important activities of a social work professional. Understanding the concept of advocating for clients' needs and social policy and linking clients to resources are pertinent for successful social work practice. Direct practice skills involve personal relationships with clients. Indirect practice does not involve direct personal contact with clients but relates to the administration and development of social agencies and policy development and (Barker, 1991).

The proficient practice and application of basic social work knowledge and skills are at the core of the learning experience in the foundation year field placement at ECU.

This experience marks the successful transition from theories and techniques learned in the classroom to actual practice with clients in various agency settings that is represented in the various learning objectives.

In the preface to an edited work, *Empirical Studies in Field Instruction*, Shatz, the executive director of CSWE, noted that in 1989 there was not a body of knowledge, supported by concrete evidence that related a clear understanding of what makes a successful field experience. Among the questions Shatz proposed, are (1) which competencies (learning objectives) are achieved by students in field instruction, and (2) do placement methods affect learning and professional practice (Raskin, 1989).

Significance of Employment Based Internships

With the further development of the part-time, weekend MSW program, there has come an increased percentage of students who seek employment based internships. Ninety-seven percent of the students in the part-time off-campus programs in this study were placed in their foundation year internship at their place of employment. Fourteen percent of the full-time students were placed in employment based internships. A traditional placement is one outside the student's employment setting. One of the CSWE requirements for internships is that each field experience offer new learning opportunities, and that both the foundation year placement and the advanced year, two semester placement for the ECU program require new learning and a different MSW field instructor (Council on Social Work Education, 1995).

The type of placement, employment based or traditional, cannot be considered as an intervening variable because it does not vary in a meaningful way as indicated above, since the majority of off-campus students (97%) were in agency-based placements

whereas the majority of on-campus students (86%) were in traditional placements (see Table 4). However, because of the consistently high percentage of employment based placements in the off-campus cohorts and because of the noticeable increase in employment based internships on campus, this study will examine these categories, including qualitative feedback obtained from an exit survey completed by the off-campus students at the completion of their program (see Appendix K).

Statement of the Problem

The MSW program at ECU is a professional program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE provides approved guidelines for social work education delivered at a distance from the campus. In this study, distance education is defined as off-campus part-time programs delivered at sites other than the main campus. The on-campus program is the full-time MSW program offered at ECU.

Because of the increased interest in and the need for off-campus delivery of the MSW program and the faculty's commitment to the delivery of site-based programs, there is a clear need to define and implement evaluation of the distance programs. A major component of the evaluation of any social work program is to address comparability of the off-campus programs with the on-campus program as outlined in the CSWE guidelines.

According to these guidelines, any social work program offering more than a year of coursework at an off-campus location using distance education technology is required to submit a formal proposal to CSWE for approval. The guidelines specifically address criteria, procedures, and responsibilities for the development and monitoring of field placements, including training of field instructors, campus liaison personnel, and the

presence of a field advisory board. In reference to evaluation, the CSWE Guidelines note that evaluation of program implementation and outcomes for off campus delivery of off-campus social work programs is of particular importance. The guidelines also refer to the importance of evaluation during program start up and until the program is well established (Council on Social Work Education, 2000).

Purpose of the Study

The are two major purposes of this study: 1) to assess educational outcomes of a foundation year field placement for on-campus, full-time MSW students and for part-time MSW students matriculating in two off-campus locations, and 2) to compare educational outcomes of the on-campus students with the off-campus students. The results of this study will aid in evaluating the successful delivery of a quality social work graduate education program to rural areas and will assist in assuring the comparability of the off-campus program to the full-time on-campus program. The model used in this study will be helpful in designing future evaluations of social work field education.

Description of the Study

The key question in this study is whether program delivery, defined in this study as part-time off-campus or full-time on-campus, is a predictor of learning outcomes when other potential intervening variables are controlled. Learning outcomes are measured by scores on a variety of instruments rated by the students, the field instructors, and the clients, which scores will provide information on the students' growth in areas of social work professional knowledge and skills, and student self-efficacy.

Means of Evaluation

This study will evaluate the foundation year field instruction data from the field placement experience and accompanying seminar course. For the 30 part-time, off-campus students in Kenansville and Rocky Mount, the foundation year field instruction course occurred in the fall of 2004. This course was delivered in the spring of 2005 to the 14 regular track, full-time on-campus students. Data were drawn from information gathered from both groups of students. The field experience serves as an indication of the successful transition from social work theory learned in the classroom to practice; and this study will be examine it in a number of ways.

Field instructors, the students, and clients provided input relating to advancement in social work professionalism and the practical application of knowledge and professional skills. The utilization of results from three perspectives will provide a more comprehensive evaluation of student performance.

It is expected that off-campus students are older and have more work experience than the on-campus students. Internships for both on- and off-campus students are set up in locations that vary differently in population and resources, and these differences are expected to have an effect on the opportunity for a student to experience a full range of social work practice opportunities. Therefore, the location of the field placement in terms of population density and resources for practice (urbanicity) will be considered as a control variable. The relationship among these variables will indicate if they should be controlled.

Research Questions

Questions to be addressed in this study include:

1. Does the foundation field instruction for off-campus students result in significant gain in social work knowledge and skills?

2. Does the foundation field instruction for on-campus students result in significant gain in social work knowledge and skills?

3. Is there a significant difference in the gain in social work knowledge and skills achieved by on-campus and off-campus students during the foundation field instruction?

4. Are there variables that serve to confound the relationship between program delivery and educational outcome, and, if so, do they explain the relationship between these two key variables of the present study?

Significance of the Study

Because field education is such a large part of an MSW program and because it requires such a large commitment from various resources, including manpower and community support for the program and its management, the field experience becomes the cornerstone of a successful program. Through the field instruction experience a student can exhibit an integration of theory to practice. Successful outcomes in field placements are indicative of a successful program delivery.

Through the use of field placements designed for students in two concurrent off-campus, site-based programs, this study will offer a unique opportunity to examine the learning outcomes of off-campus, part-time students in a first year field placement, and to compare those outcomes with the those of on-campus, full-time students.

This study also will afford an opportunity to investigate the results of learning outcomes in employment based internships compared to internships in traditional settings, away from the student's place of employment. Students in the off-campus, part-time cohorts bring to the internship experience a wider range of age and work experience than the full-time students. These factors will be related to learning outcome results. The findings of this study will add to the body of material available to ensure comparable outcomes for students at off-campus locations in a part-time program per CSWE guidelines.

Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to this study and gave an overview of distance education, social work distance education and the Master of Social Work distance education program at East Carolina University. The chapter described the two delivery methods of part-time off-campus and full-time on-campus programs which are the focus of this study. It highlighted the importance of field instruction. It stated the problem and purpose of the study and defined the means of evaluation and research questions. Significance and limitations of the study were discussed.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter will present a review of literature pertinent to social work distance education, the importance of field instruction in an MSW program, and learning outcomes for the field education component of an MSW program. The review will include evidence supporting the importance of distance education program development and the evaluation of learning outcomes, and will highlight the significance of field education in a social work program. It will describe the meaningfulness of examining the impact of such variables as age, work experience, location, and placement setting.

It is important to note that references to distance education most often refer to courses delivered via the internet to off-campus students at various locations. The distance education program that is the focus of this study involves distance education students who are grouped into two cohorts and who receive coursework at two sites away from campus. The two courses specific to this study were delivered face-to-face.

Distance Education

Higher education has a long history with distance education, which is defined as the delivery of coursework and degree programs to students located outside of the traditional campus classroom. Correspondence programs were offered as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Following the introduction of the GI Bill after World War II, it became even more important to make education available to anyone who desired to participate. The increased demand for distance education led immediately to the question of quantity versus quality and how success would be measured. The question became

whether success would be defined by income for the educational facility or by the delivery of the best education for the student (Heerema & Rogers, 2001; Neal, 1999).

One important attempt at conducting distance education in a more effective way has been the use of advanced technology in the delivery of the courses. The first educational television license was issued in 1945. Other formats for distance education followed, including interactive television and more recently internet-based courses, resulting in a new design for delivery - the hybrid or multiple-media delivery model. Site-based distance education also became the method favored by a number of institutions, particularly as a means of addressing the need by students for classroom dynamics, communication, and building a group identity (Neal, 1999).

Researchers have addressed evaluation and feedback as key components of distance education programs that have been used for faculty development and course design. Individual class reports, feedback sessions at mid-term and/or end of the semester, and formal evaluations by faculty and students were noted in a 1993 article as important components for assessment. This feedback has historically led to successful distance education programs (Shaeffer & Farr, C, 1993).

A recent special issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* addressed distance education was addressed several times among the 10 challenges for the next 10 years for higher education, noting the development of tools for technology, the concern for security of the systems, and the matter of intellectual property. The prediction was that distance education would continue to grow, as well as its associated costs and expectations. Among the challenges mentioned was the need to incorporate the capabilities of

technology, while managing the increasing costs and insuring quality education (Information technology, 2004).

Ebersole (2004) noted that graduate education is growing in importance, and with that growth the need for working students to continue their education is also growing. The volume of available knowledge has expanded rapidly and individuals in the workforce need continuing education on a regular basis if they are to remain competent workers. Ebersole proposed that the graduate student of the future will be older and increasingly female. The impact of these demands has suggested a need for more online instruction, more blended programs, and more weekend and evening classes. The challenge to the administrators of higher education will be how to make this education available to potential students while providing comparable educational experiences and meeting the needs of the various accrediting bodies.

When asked about program evaluation at the university level, Michael Poteat, Director of Institutional Effectiveness at ECU, provided data that indicated that from 2001-2002 through 2004-2005 the number of distance education semester hours grew from roughly 19,000 to 64,500. According to this information, about 95% of those hours were delivered using non face-to-face methods defined as when 25% or more of the instruction is delivered in a setting where the instructor and the student are not in the same classroom. Institutional Effectiveness has studied not just student satisfaction with a particular course but also how well their educational experience meets the standards of their programs of study. Preliminary results indicated that students are as satisfied with their distance graduate education as the other group was with their on-campus programs. Unofficial summary data suggested that at the university level, as well as at the

departmental level, program evaluation is an important part of ensuring the delivery of quality education (Poteat, 2006).

With a future of an expanding distance education market, there is an evident need for course and program delivery to large numbers of students. There is also an evident need for the assessment of what constitutes a quality program delivery.

Social Work Distance Education

As the demand for distance education increased at the university level and the incorporation of technology into teaching methods grew in popularity, so did the demand grow for social work distance education. This growth was soon reflected in the accreditation guidelines for social work education.

As reported by the Council on Social Work Education, until 1994 the accreditation standards for social work distance education addressed off-campus programs that used face-to-face instruction only. In 1995, CSWE developed a new set of guidelines for distance education to account specifically for new technologies, including interactive television (Council on Social Work Education, 1995).

As social work programs expanded and faculty began to incorporate more computer-based technology into course delivery, new guidelines for course delivery and distance education became necessary. CSWE made it clear that the new guidelines were developed to help social work distance education programs maintain comparable quality to on-campus course delivery. Comparability is a consistent theme throughout the CSWE guidelines for distance education. The Council also has required a formal proposal for approval of any program consisting of a year or more of course work at an off-campus location using distance education technology (Council on Social Work Education, 2005).

Scholarly research examines social work distance education more than ever before. Ligon, Markward, & Yegidis (1999) reviewed the assessment of standard and distance learning courses and explored the use of student evaluations. The authors urged further research to determine which social work courses would be appropriate for the distance learning environment. The authors' comparison of student evaluations found that clinical practice courses were rated lower in the distance education format as compared with the standard classroom.

In research designed to study on-campus and distance cohorts for undergraduate social work courses delivered via interactive television to four rural sites, Haga and Heitkamp (2000) addressed the need for comprehensive evaluation of such programs for comparability and mentioned specifically student outcomes and student satisfaction. Results of their study suggested a high degree of student satisfaction with instruction and very little difference in general satisfaction expressed by students enrolled in the two environments. A summary of the suggestions in this article indicated the importance of face to face contact to ensure student interaction, and the need for faculty–student relationships, development related to teaching in the distance learning environment, and the availability of academic advising. Also recommended in this article was the need for frequent contact with field instructors to assist in the understanding of program objectives (Haga & Heitkamp, 2000).

Petracchi (2000) questioned how students who were enrolled in distance learning courses at two urban campuses perceived their learning experiences, and then reported that knowing how students perceive their learning experiences can influence teaching ability. The courses used in this study were delivered by interactive television and

videotapes of a course. This author noted an increase in social work coursework taught in a distance education environment over a two-year period, and articulated the need for evaluation, including multi-site assessments. This study focused exclusively on the perspective of the student. There was a 63% response rate (22 students) to a survey at one school, and a 48% response rate (126 students) at a second school. The survey was conducted post-hoc and results found that respondents were pleased with their learning experiences and that a vast majority of the students would enroll in a distance learning course again.

In 2000, Petracchi and Patchner compared three groups of students in a research methods class. Instructional techniques included interactive television with one group located in the site where the delivery was initiated and therefore receiving face-to-face instruction, one group at a remote site receiving only the interactive television delivery, and another group in a face-to- face instructional setting. Important points addressed included the students' access to the instructor outside of class and the quality of the technology used. Similar classroom learning experiences showed no statistically significant differences and a majority of the students indicated they would enroll again in courses in the various formats (Petracchi and Patchner, 2000). Studies such as this have helped validate the successful delivery of social work education using distance education formats and encourage further evaluation.

Part-time distance education evaluation research reflected research begun in 1981 with a CSWE symposium on part-time and full-time program comparability and led in 1991 to a proposed model for evaluating distance education social work programs. Coe and Elliott (1999) studied the delivery of a graduate level practice course using face-to-

face television instruction and face-to-face on-campus instruction and found successful

outcomes in areas of grades, faculty/student relationships, and perception of instructors.

The only concerns resulting from this study concerned access to support services. One of

the authors' goals was to assess whether the program met CSWE standards in providing

professional knowledge and acculturation into the profession. They looked at the

difference in demographic characteristics, access to services, peer group socialization,

identification with the University of Texas/Austin School of Social Work, and learning

outcomes. Findings indicated that off-campus distance education students were older and

had significantly more social work experience. In summary, though focused only on one

practice course, this study described the success of one distance program in meeting the

need for rural social workers while providing quality social work.

Schools of social work are the gatekeepers of the profession because they provide

the training for bachelor and master level social workers. There is a need to maintain a

sense of professional responsibility regarding the course content and practice methods

taught by social work programs and the resulting educational outcomes for the student.

This responsibility becomes increasingly important with the continued development of

distance education programs using a variety of delivery methods. CSWE provides

standards for equality of program components for off- and on-campus students, including

field education, assessment of field education needs and monitoring of performance in

field placements.

McFall and Freddolino (2000) stressed the importance of evaluation in relation to

the chaotic context of practice at a time of reform and change in the delivery of services.

Through a comparative study of field education at three sites, one local and two distance

campus locations, the authors emphasized four focus objectives important to the design, implementation and evaluation of a distance education program:

1. Developing adequate local resources with a local advisory board, including supportive agencies, lead individuals as coordinators, qualified practitioners as MSW supervisors, and field liaisons to serve the needs of students.

2. Creating sensitivity to agency structure and culture, including recognition of differences in urban and rural settings, relationships of students to peers and supervisors, and understanding of agency culture.

3. Increasing field office resources, including local coordinators and administrative assistance; and

4. Maintaining individual and organizational confidentiality, a particularly important concept in small interrelated rural communities.

McFall and Freddolino (2000) highlighted the importance of planning and a willingness to commit sufficient resources to ensure a quality field instruction component in the distance education experience, an experience often more energetic and creative than on-campus programs.

Bisno and Cox (1997) support the need for program evaluation adapted to the social work field in an article assessing social work education. Assessment of practice outcomes was termed "complex and daunting" in a field where goals and objectives for working with clients are less than concrete. Social work was seen as a changing field requiring re-evaluation of needs of the curricula for training.

Social Work Field Education

Field instruction, including both the internship and the seminar class, plays a unique role within an MSW program. It is the students' experiences in the field setting which translates theory to practice and bring the curriculum to life in the form of clients in real practice settings. In the ECU School of Social Work, 18 of 60 semester hours are dedicated to the internship experience and accompanying seminar class.

CSWE respects the importance of field education and therefore requires policies and procedures for the implementation of the internship experience. These policies must include criteria for selecting field instructors and insuring that they are knowledgeable practitioners. Supervision can be seen "as an educationally focused teaching relationship that is authority based and has periods of closeness and distance" (Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, 2007).

Articles and research on many aspects of social work program evaluation note the importance of field education as a significant part of any social work educational program. Bogo, Regehr, Hughes, Power and Globerman (2002) addressed the question of how to measure students' field performances. They noted that field education is recognized by educators, alumnae, and employers as the most important part of the training and that social work programs are indeed the "gatekeepers" of the profession.

The maintenance of learning appropriate field placement settings is an ongoing challenge for social work educators. Change is the theme throughout the delivery of mental health and social services and adds to the difficulty of creating and sustaining internships and the accompanying need for competent field instructors. In 2000 the North Carolina Legislature passed legislation to reform the state delivery system for mental

health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services. This plan has been changed and updated each year since, and with each change has come a new definition of services and of who may deliver those services (North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services). Due to the transformation process many agencies have divested themselves of service delivery, many others have gone out of business, and new agencies have been formed.

The North Carolina Department of Social Services has developed a new formula for child welfare services has been developed and is in the process of implementing it. The Multiple Response System (MRS) was designed to promote reunification of families and to make child welfare services more effective (North Carolina Division of Social Services & the Family and Children's Resource Program, 2003). These changes also have had an impact on the nature of the work done and on who is entitled to provide the services.

The unique training needs of child welfare placements are continuing to be addressed. Alperin (1998) examined the factors that served to increase student satisfaction in child welfare placements. Relevant learning assignments and work in multiple areas were seen as positive factors for the learning experience as was the intent for future employment in child welfare. The authors noted that, "*Social work* educators often assert but seldom test the importance of relevant learning and student involvement in designing practicum experiences" (Alperin, 1998).

As the delivery of mental health and other social services becomes more complex, and as service delivery is removed from area mental health programs, managed care companies, designed to control the costs and assure a standard of care for delivery of

these services, have been growing. With the increase of privatization and managed care involvement in the practice of social work, a number of issues have arisen for the worker and student intern, including confidentiality, appropriate and timely care, and conflict of interest, all of which impact field instruction. Because the reimbursement aspects of practice have been affected by managed care companies, and because licensed persons are required for reimbursement, internships have become limited (Strom-Gottfied and Cocoran, 1998).

With all of these changes, sustained placements have become more difficult and the role of the field instructor and/or task supervisor has become more important in providing the maximum opportunity for learning. Globerman and Bogo (2002) recognized an example of the impact of such change when they cited the challenges of hospital restructuring on social work field education. They mentioned the difficulty of managing successful internships in a less than systematic restructuring of the hospital, and emphasized the importance of support from the university and the need for creativity in delivering learning opportunities within the organizational change.

One examination of the comparability of field instruction in three MSW programs (McFall and Freddolino, 2000) noted the chaotic context of practice during a time of reform and change in the delivery of services. The three sites studied included one local site and two distance sites. The authors pointed out the importance of planning and commitment of sufficient resources for proper development of field experiences for students at distance sites. They outlined four objectives in implementing a successful program delivery at a distance site and pointed out the importance not only of design and implementation of the program, including outlined goals and objectives, but also of

evaluation to insure comparable quality of program delivery to the local site. This study used interviews and self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data regarding various aspects of the field experience. Among the points of field education quality were the goals of self-development and understanding the use of self work with clients.

There have been limited studies of field learning outcomes and what constitutes a successful field experience, although virtually every study refers to the need for further evaluation of the field education experience. The question of how to evaluate student field performance is a challenging one.

<center>Social Work Foundation Skills</center>

Within the ECU foundation year field placement, the focus is on basic social work skills. These skills include the process of engaging the client, exploring and assessing the clients' issues and treatment needs, facilitating change, terminating interaction with the client, and such administrative duties as record keeping. In addition, aspects of professionalism are addressed and are reflected in items on both the Student Status Report and the Learning Agreement.

The importance of these basic skills was reflected by Shulman (1983), who stated that along with many aspects of professional and personal growth that come out of a field internship, the teaching and learning of practice skills was and is still most important. These skills include interactional skills, assessment skills, and skills of working with human behavior and applying research. Defining and relating to students the role of workers with clients, has been seen as challenging. It is the basic skills that often are neglected in favor of communicating the underlying knowledge of social work practice.

Engagement with the Client

Recent research has indicated that the therapeutic alliance is one of the best predictors of outcome in work with clients. A thorough analysis of research on the therapeutic alliance underlies the Session Rating Scale, an instrument that was used in the present study for client feedback reflecting students' ability to engage the client in a productive working relationship using foundation skills of engagement and empathy.

Research findings indicated that clients' perceptions of the alliance are more important than the therapist's own evaluation. Relationship factors have been shown to account for a great deal of client improvement. In *The Heart and Soul of Change*, Hubble, Duncan, and Miller (1999) summarized evidence of what works in the psychotherapeutic relationship and focused on a number of common factors that are shared by different theories despite what theory was the popular approach at a given time. The factors that were foremost on the list and were present across therapeutic lines included such things as caring, warmth, empathy, and a nonjudgmental acceptance of the client. This book presented both quantitative and qualitative studies that used this approach.

Common factors of the therapeutic relationship are reflected in the Session Rating Scale, an instrument designed to address four components of the therapeutic alliance. These authors related the development of their work to three previously defined elements of the therapeutic process: a relational bond between the therapist and client, an agreement on the goals of therapy, and an agreement on the tasks of therapy. They added to these factors perspective on the client's theory of change and the idea of confident collaboration, or the level of confidence the client has that the work together with the

clinician will be helpful. The other aspect of the relationship the authors found to be important was the client's level of comfort in expressing negative feelings about the session (Duncan, Miller, Reynolds, Sparks, Claud, Brown, and Johnson 2003).

Cramer and Takens (1992) addressed the importance of the therapeutic relationship and summarized three dimensions of unconditional acceptance, empathy, and congruence as being essential to a quality therapeutic relationship.This study examined mean levels of therapist-rated progress and client-rated progress, therapist empathy and therapist acceptance at sessions 2 and 6 with data from 63 clients who were receiving weekly individual psychotherapy session. Clients and therapists completed a short questionnaire after sessions 2 and 6 relating to the therapeutic relationship. Results provided support for the therapeutic role of empathy and acceptance.

Other studies have examined the importance of therapeutic engagement in various phases of therapeutic work with clients. Oetzel and Scherer (2003) addressed the topic in working with adolescents in psychotherapy. Burns and Nolen-Hoeksema (1992) addressed empathy and recovery from depression; treatment outcomes in child abuse-related posttraumatic stress disorder were found to be enhanced through the contribution of a positive therapeutic alliance (Cloitre, Stovall-McClough, Miranda, R. and Chemtob, 2004). Such studies reinforced the concept that the basic engagement process and the associated skills are effective in therapeutic work.

Research and social work theorists have long suggested that the basic skills of engagement, including the genuineness and unconditional regard shown by the counselor, are crucial to the process of client change. Empathy and the therapist's ability to understand and share in the client's meaning of experiences appear to be at the center of

the work to be done between a counselor and client; such findings were reported in a review of research by Feller and Cottone (2003).

Given the importance placed on the relationships and the effect of the engagement process on outcomes of treatment, information provided by the client early in the relationship appears to be extremely helpful to the clinician in maintaining the client and allowing for adjustments in the work done together. In the foundation year placement in the current study, a major goal for the student is basic skill building, including the successful process of engagement with a client.

<div align="center">Importance of the Field Instructor</div>

Social work education looks to the field instructor as an important player in the translation from theory and classroom based learning to actual work in the field. The field instructor provides guidance, promotes a positive learning environment, and assists in developing a plan for the creation of a workload. The field instructor provides information on all aspects of the practice of social work in the agency from appropriate dress to special learning opportunities such as conferences, meetings, or other activities (Birkenmaier, J. & Berg-Weger, M., 2007, pp. 14-15

Field instructors are challenged to address their role in mediating between the learner and the material being learned. An early focus has been those aspects of professional work that includes practice, job management, professional performance and professional impact, described as a course of action leading the process of social change whether in the agency, the neighborhood, or even in the profession (Shulman, 1983).

Sherer and Peleg-Oren (2005) studied 30 teachers, 120 field instructors, and 287 students and invest*tigated what social work students do during their field placement and

how important these activities were to each group through responses to a Job Analysis Questionnaire. They formed no clear conclusions in this study. It did suggest that significant differences existed among the groups as to their perception of how roles were performed and their importance. One conclusion noted was that teachers most likely held unrealistic views about what students do in field placements and that teachers were "remote" from the thoughts of the field instructors and students. The authors noted the need for clarification of field instruction and suggested that there is a need to know if it is effective.

Field instruction can be seen as somewhat of an apprentice model where professional ethics, among other things, are exhibited and observed. The field instructor serves as a master practitioner who is a role model for the student learner. Training in ethical conduct as a practitioner is one of the targeted goals of a social work curriculum. To become more aware of ethical issues in practice is one of the required course objectives in field education that enhances the student's level of professional practice (Dolgoff, Loewenberg, & Harrington, 2005, pp. 11-12).

Research has examined many aspects of the role of field instructor. Learning processes have been studied to determine what works best for training within the field experience where learning opportunities are often identified by the students as important. Fortune, et al. (2001) identified two types of learning activities: observational-participatory activities such as one-way mirrors and role modeling, and conceptual linkage activities that connect specifics to principles of practice, such as explanation by a field instructor. They noted in this work that there are differences between first and second year placements, with more structure needed in the first placement.

Knight (1996) noted that although field instruction is the primary learning experience that translates theory to practice, there are no clear standards for this part of the curriculum and there had been little empirical related research. Descriptions indicate various roles for field instructors, including those of a role model and of an instructor of skills needed by a social work professional. Support and encouragement for independent work are important to the student. A field instructor serves as the "enabler" and is described as "someone who promotes the emotional and professional growth of the student through direct instruction, modeling, and exploration of relevant personal issues." The author also explored 11 specific field instruction skills. Bachelor and master's level social work students from 12 institutions completed a survey that included rating the field instructors on the 11 skills using a 5-point Likert scale. Nearly 57% of the students responded. Skills included many aspects of instruction from "understanding students' feelings" to "discussing taboo subjects." Results showed that field instructors' supervisory skills and the quality of the learning experience were pertinent to the students' positive assessments. Weekly supervision was also a factor for positive correlations.

There is an ongoing call for examination of field instruction, particularly with the current status of welfare reform and managed care and the pressure to cut costs and increase productivity, leaving little time for supervision. Support, structure and feedback are the most important factors associated with student satisfaction of field instruction. Knight (2000) examined the influence of supervision at various stages in the supervisory relationship; i.e., orientation in the beginning phase, with self-evaluation and self-awareness being more effective in the latter supervisory stages.

Knight (2001) reported additional findings that place further importance on the field instructor's role as an educator who is able to help students integrate theory and practice and made note that there was a well defined process involved. That role is described as a dynamic, evolving one determined by where the student was in the learning process. Supervisory skills included giving the students a clear understanding of their cases, agency, and themselves. Ability to apply classroom learning and the supervisor's ability to engage with the student also were important.

In a 2002 study, Regehr, Regehr, Leeson and Fusco addressed goal setting through a process of understanding student needs and the expectations of those in authority. Students and field instructors used a structured assessment format to encompass both student needs and the expectations of others in authority. Through a joint effort, the student and the field instructor developed a learning contract that incorporated self-directed learning and self-assessment by the student. Both the students and field instructors evaluated goals at midterm. The model was used for the purpose of evaluating competencies and defining goals for the second half of the placement. The authors concluded that self-directed learning as exhibited in the development of the learning contract is an excellent model for adult learners. This model addressed students' personal skills and ability to identify areas of need for learning and served as a positive means of goal setting.

A study of teaching skills in practice classes and the impact of those skills on instructor's effectiveness reported that students found that instructors' understanding of what students were doing in the field was more important to students than the instructor's understanding of social work practice overall. In response to a survey administered to 194

students at a school of social work in Maryland, both undergraduate and graduate students indicated the need for instructors to be able to define the connection of classroom learning to field practice. The authors concluded that often field education is seen as the "weak link" in the social work curriculum and deserves more attention (Knight, 2001).

Student ratings of the field internship often are not noted or validated. In response to that concern, Sinicrope and Cournoyer (2004) conducted a study comparing student ratings or field instructor behavior with field instructor self reports using a supervision questionnaire administered to 40 students and their field instructors in a MSW program. The study found that students responded to items "less distinctly and more globally" than did the field instructors. Findings did not question the reliability of student ratings but did indicate problems with the use of student ratings as outcome measures. The need for outcome variables that would reflect the goals of field education was noted. The authors indicated the need for further study of field internships and how to measure outcomes.

The literature reflects the fact that field instructors serve an important role in the translation of theory to practice training and that they are held accountable and responsible to a large degree for the work of the student. Feedback from field instructors is valuable because of the importance of the work and teaching they provide and the close relationship they have with the students.

Social Work Self-efficacy

Referencing the work of Albert Bandura, self-efficacy was defined as the belief in one's capabilities to complete tasks required for a goal. Self-efficacy is like self-awareness and is an indication of an individual's confidence in his or her ability (Holden,

Meenaghan, Anastas, & Metry, 2002). Self-efficacy relates not to the skills one has, but to the judgments of how one can perform. Self-efficacy then is a reflection of self-confidence in one's ability to perform duties required to accomplish prescribed goals successfully.

Social workers' confidence about their ability to perform the duties of hospital social work was examined in a study using the Hospital Social Work Self-efficacy Scale, a 39-item scale. This scale was developed around Bandura's social cognitive theory. It was designed originally to evaluate hospital based fieldwork. Respondents rated their level of confidence at performing each task. A second study using the HSWSE measured reliability and validity for the scale and indicated its effectiveness. Though it was a small, nonrandom sample measuring results from a unique setting, the study's outcomes are promising (Holden, Cuzzi, Rutter, Chernack, & Rosenberg, 1997).

The Social Work Self-efficacy Scale used in the present study was developed and tested and results were reported by Holden, et al. in their 2002 article. A wide range of social work duties were assessed by students and related to their confidence in completing basic tasks. The group that developed this scale had previously developed the Hospital Social Work Self-efficacy Scale mentioned previously. The scale reflects the five curricular areas of social work: practice, human behavior, field, policy, and research. Using this scale, this study used a pretest design for one group and a posttest only design for students who were present for posttest only. Ultimately a restrospective pretest-posttest design addressed the problem of bias which may occur in routine self-report pretest-posttest instruments. The authors related that in light of the few measurable means of assessing social work students' educational outcomes, particularly those outcomes that

clients achieve, this instrument provides an indication of growth in one's competency in practice which of itself is a meaningful goal.

Intervening Variables

The references in literature to the control variables of age, work experience, and urbanicity as highlighted in this study are sparse. Though demographics often are used to define populations in various research, little attention has been paid to the impact of these variables on social work learning outcomes.

Age and Work Experience

Assessment of distance education courses often has included demographic differences. Often the non-traditional student is older and has more professional experience. Though it is important to recognize these differences, distance education modalities of course delivery also need to examine the coursework itself, a shift presented in a proposal for expanding distance education evaluation. Rather than an outcome study of one group, a comparison of students' performance in distance education classes to their performance in traditional classes have been recommended as an improved evaluation design (Dominguez & Ridley, 1999). The present study utilizes a similar design in enhanced assessment by comparing results with other traditional students.

Koroloff (1990) studied student performance in field instruction and assessed student skills using a pre/posttest format. Students with prior work experience rated themselves higher on both pre and posttest scoring.

Hopkins, Deal and Bloom (2005) addressed the field placement experiences of students who are older and part-time, and who were in employment-based internships. These authors noted the lack of research available regarding these particular students.

Their study surveyed 779 students from a 1,291 student sample from the University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Social Work, regarding the students' experiences with the field setting, field supervision, and faculty field liaisons. The authors were particularly interested in the older, part-time and field employment based students, and noted that in 2000, 55% of MSW students were 31 or older. They also noted the growth in the number of part-time students, increasing from 35% to 40% in the five years prior to 2000. Findings of this study, based on a self-administered questionnaire provided by the field office to graduate social work students, found that the non-traditional students had better experiences with their field instructors and field liaisons and were more positive about their field experience.

Hopkins, et al. (2005) noted that for non-traditional students in employment based internships, having worked as a social work professional may explain the more realistic expectations of the non-traditional student, and that the more gradual pace of a part-time program may provide a more comfortable pace of professional change. Having a field experience in an agency where the student already had a comfort level was found to make for a more positive learning experience. They found that age, being a part-time student, or being in an employment based internship were not significant factors in their analysis. The authors noted also that these non-traditional students were found to experience a high degree of satisfaction in their field experiences. This study identified a need for further research on the part-time, older, working student.

Urbanicity of Placement Setting

A definition of "rural social work" supports the fact that, in addition to facing problems shared by urban clients, persons in rural areas often have special needs related

to lack of resources, different cultural norms, and fewer school and job opportunities (Barker, 1991, p. 205).

Social work involves work with individuals, families, groups, and communities. Skills required for practice in smaller communities involve an understanding of specific needs for clients and a creative ability to get to the appropriate resources. Social work in communities with lower rates of population often result in a more informal use of limited resources than in social work in larger urban areas. Knowledge of community networks is essential to successful practice. Understanding the key players at all levels of community involvement is necessary to social work at both the indirect and direct levels (Birkenmaier & Berg-Weger, 2007).

CSWE stipulates that educational programs must include foundation courses that embrace knowledge of basic social work practice and which prepare students for a generalist practice working with all levels of populations. Advanced generalist practice focuses on specialized practice situations. In making a case for the generalist-advanced generalist social work continuum, Gibbs, Locke and Lohmann (1990) noted that there is a need for a full range of social work skills when practicing in a rural area. The authors emphasized that when analyzing rural practice it is important to understand the social context of the practice and that social workers be trained about the interaction of the environment and the client. These authors referred to the common features of small towns and rural areas, and specifically made reference to human and financial resource limits, geographic isolation, and a lack of social institutions. The strengths of these areas lie in the community networks, formal and informal, and in personal relationships that must be understood by the social worker in order to handle a wide range of social work practice

tasks. The authors stressed the importance of encompassing these special perspectives in the curriculum and specifically in field instruction.

A recent article in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) News highlighted a new program designed to address health concerns in rural areas. The CREEK (Community–based Research Education in Eastern Kentucky) program was designed to educate a community on health issues and provide the community residents with skills and experience in handling health problems. This article noted the fact that people in rural areas have "a list of health care disparities greater than or comparable to their non-rural counterparts." In this article the NASW executive director underlined the importance of understanding the needs of the rural poor (NASW News, 2006). In a follow up article the next month, Elizabeth Clarke, director of NASW, recounted her visit to the CREEK project and described it as a "great model for linking research, practice, and policy." Dr. Clarke noted that few social work programs are located in rural areas and therefore students are more educated about urban poverty and the linking and development of resources in the urban community. According to Dr. Clarke, the predominantly white rural population lacks medical and other health care resources, a fact that is not always recognized. The rural poor should receive equal attention as their urban counterparts (Clarke, 2006).

The present study acknowledges the differences between social work practice in a rural setting and in an urban environment. One question addressed in the examination of the data in the present study is the effect of urbanicity on learning outcomes for students in foundation year field placements.

Summary

A review of the literature pertinent to this study revealed that the majority of the literature related to distance education focuses on internet delivery of courses. Little research was found on other distance education models. It was also apparent that articles addressing distance education or off-campus delivery of courses, regardless of delivery method, made reference to the need for assessment to ensure effective delivery of the courses. The results of such evaluation would be utilized to enhance course and program development and ensure comparability to on-campus course delivery.

There is also a lack of research on other topics of interest in this study, including the impact of urban or rural placements, age and work experience. Field instruction, though of great importance to a social work curriculum, was a topic of only limited current research. There is little evidence of social work research on the impact of these variables on learning outcomes. This study will attempt fill this void and encourage future studies.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will review the research design for this study and define the variables involved. The data collection procedure and the research methods will be outlined and instruments of measure will be described.

There are two major purposes of this study: 1) to assess educational outcomes for part-time MSW students matriculating in two off-campus locations, and 2) to compare educational outcomes of the off-campus, part-time students with master of Social Work students matriculating in a full-time program on the main campus. This study examines data collected in two foundation year MSW courses: 1) a foundations skills course, taught face-to-face both on and off campus by regular social work faculty; and 2) a one-semester foundation year field placement supervised by a field instructor, along with an accompanying field seminar class led face-face by a member of the social work faculty.

The conceptual plan for this study is shown as indicating the independent variable program delivery, defined as either off-campus full time or on-campus part time, and the dependent variable educational outcomes. Three other intervening variables that may influence the relationship of program delivery to educational outcomes will be tested (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Research model
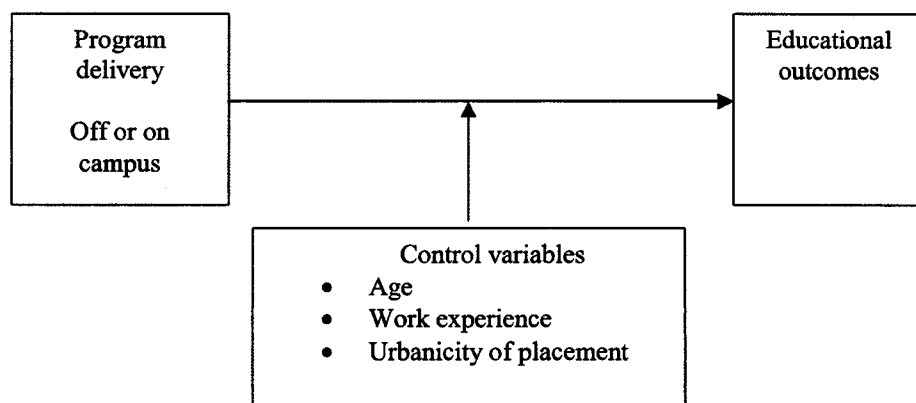
Human Subjects Protection

An application was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at East Carolina University for permission to use student data collected in the normal course of study in the Foundation Skills course and in Field Instruction I in the summer II and fall of 2004 terms for the off-campus students, and the fall of 2004 and spring 2005 terms for the on-campus students (see Appendix B). An application also was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Old Dominion University (see Appendix C). Each participant signed a consent form that explained the purpose of the study and outlined confidentiality (see Appendix D). To ensure confidentiality of participants, the instruments used in this study have been labeled only with a student identification number.

Population and Sample

The population in this study consisted of students who are seeking a Master of Social Work degree from a mid-size, southeastern university in both a traditional on-campus full time program and those students seeking the MSW degree in an off-campus part-time program. The sample is comprised of those students who were enrolled in a social work foundation skills course and a foundation year one-semester field placement. The on-campus courses were delivered in the fall of 2004 and the spring of 2005 and the off-campus students participated in the courses delivered in the summer and fall of 2004.

There were 14 on-campus students and 30 off-campus students. The off-campus students constituted two site-based cohorts in Rocky Mount and Kenansville, North Carolina, while the on-campus students were located on the main campus of East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. All instruments were administered to all participants. In the opinion of the author who has served as coordinator of the off-

campus program where this study took place, the number of students in the off-campus cohorts is typical in size for a cohort in this type of professional program of study. The number of students in the on-campus class was also representative of a typical MSW class size at ECU.

The students were assigned to field internships which were either employment based or traditional placements. Traditional placements were those at a facility where the student is not an employee. These placements were located throughout eastern and central North Carolina and have been defined as urban or rural based on population (see Table 1). In addition to the differences in population, there was a distinct lack of resources for social work practice in the rural communities. Facilities such as in-patient psychiatric hospitals, detoxification centers, community support agencies, and other health care related programs are often not available in the more rural towns and counties, unlike the larger cities such as Raleigh or Wilmington, North Carolina.

Data Collection Timeline

Data was drawn from the scoring of the instruments at various points in time throughout the field instruction semester. Table 2 illustrates the point in the field instruction semester when the instruments were scored and by whom.

Table 2

Timeline for Data Collection

Instrument	Beginning of semester	Mid-term	End of semester	End of program
Demographic information	Student			
Student Status Report		Field instructor	Field instructor	
Student Learning Agreement		Student	Student Field instructor	
Social Work Skills Self-appraisal Questionnaire	Student		Student	
Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form	Student		Student	
Social Work Self-efficacy Scale			Student Post/Then	
Session Rating Scale	3 clients		3 clients	
Exit Survey				Off-campus students

Description of Variables

Dependent Variables

The general focus of this study is learning outcomes of a foundation year field

instruction course. There are three major categories of variables: The dependent variable

is gain in educational outcome, the independent variable is program delivery, and there

are several potential control variables.

For this study, learning outcome is measured in relation to student growth in

social work knowledge and the application of this knowledge using foundation skills in

practice. Outcome is also related to a student's level of professionalism. Social work

professionalism relates to such areas of practice as the recognition of, and respect for,

values such as cultural diversity, the application of social work ethical standards to

practice, the ability to work non-judgmentally with clients, and the skill to perform on an

interpersonal level within a social work practice setting.

These learning outcomes are measured by scores on a number of instruments chosen not only to reflect specific foundation skills, such as interviewing and engaging the client, but also to provide a comprehensive view from a variety of stakeholders in the learning process. Stakeholders include the student, the field instructor, the client and the School of Social Work. Success of the student educational program, as exhibited in the theory to practice element of the field placement, is representative of the successful delivery of graduate social work education which is the goal of the program. In return for the time and money expended on a graduate program, the student deserves to be the recipient of a curriculum designed and delivered to educate the student to an advanced level of social work practice and to prepare the students for a career in the profession. The client is the focus of social work practice and deserves to receive assessment, intervention and treatment at the level of a prescribed standard of care. The field instructor is responsible for overseeing the actions of the student intern and for providing the evaluation for the outcome of the student's performance. Each of these parties has an investment in the educational outcome exhibited by the students' ability to perform social work tasks.

<div align="center">Description of the Dependent Variable</div>

There are three dependent variables, each related to educational outcomes. Each of these variables is described below.

<div align="center">*Students' Perception of Gain in Knowledge and Social Work Skills*</div>

As a major stakeholder in the educational process of the MSW program, the students' perception of their gain in social work knowledge and skills is pertinent to an effective evaluation. Student feedback on the outcomes of the foundation year field

education course was measured on three different instruments including the Social Work Skills Self-Appraisal Questionnaire, the Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form, and the evaluation of the successful accomplishment of the learning objectives on the Learning Agreement.

The students' self-confidence in their ability to perform as a social work practitioner has been shown to be one important indicators of successful education (Holden, et al., 2002). The Social Work Self-efficacy Scale was used to examine the students' perception of gain in their ability to perform social work tasks.

Field Instructors' Perception of Students' Gain in Social Work Knowledge and Skills

The importance of the field instructor's role is well recognized. Feedback from the field instructor provides another view of the student's growth in social work practice. The field instructors rated the students on two different instruments. The Student Status Report was used to evaluate social work professionalism in practice. The Learning Agreement was used to evaluate the students' ability to transfer the social work knowledge gained in the classroom to the practice setting by rating the students' performance on 31 core competencies. (See Appendix F).

Clients' Perception of Students' Gain in Social Work Skills

As the recipient of social work service delivery, the client is an important stakeholder in the successful provision of social work practice. The clients' perception of the students' ability to engage with them in a session that would result in further work together provides a third perspective on student skill development. The Session Rating Scale was used for this measurement. This scale provides feedback which is relative to

some of the basic foundation skills including engaging with the client, listening and providing appropriate feedback in the course of talking. (See Appendix J).

Description of the Independent Variable

The independent variable program delivery was defined as MSW coursework delivered on campus as a full-time program or off campus, at two site-based locations as a part-time program, extended over three years. This variable is important as it provides the means for comparing learning outcomes between off- and on-campus students.

Intervening Variables

There are a number of variables that may have had an effect on the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. These relationships were examined to determine their potential effect on outcomes. If a relationship was found between any of the control variables and the independent variable, then a multivariate analysis was done.

Demographics: Age and Work Experience

The student demographics of importance to this study include the students' mean age and the students' years of experience in the social work field. In general off-campus, part-time students tend to be older and have more extensive work experience. This information was gathered from an information sheet completed by each student at the beginning of the field instruction course.

Urbanicity

Of interest to this study is the location of the internship as to whether the internship is in an urban or rural area. Urbanicity was examined for any effect on the students' growth in social work knowledge and skill as reflected in the data. Urban, according to the Census Bureau, can be defined as:

1. Places of 2,500 or more persons incorporated as cities, villages, boroughs (except in Alaska or New York), and towns (except in the six New England states, New York, and Wisconsin), but excluding the rural portions of "extended cities."

2. Census designated places of 2,500 or more persons.

3. Other territory, incorporated or unincorporated, included in urban areas.

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

For the purpose of this study, internships will be defined as "rural" if the location is an area or locale with a population of fewer than 2,500 persons, with all other areas or locales being designated as "urban," as shown in Table 1.

The off-campus programs are designed to provide sites for graduate level training for persons already working in the field. The off-campus sites are in areas where there is a substantial need for graduate level social work practitioners, and the students are drawn to the sites from a variety of areas, mostly from the more rural counties of eastern North Carolina. There are also some students in the full-time, on-campus program who live and do internships in rural areas.

Skills learned in the foundation year placement include linking clients to appropriate referral sources in the community. Rural areas often offer fewer resources for client care. This study examines whether or not placements in rural settings with this difference in the accessibility of resources has any effect on the comparability of educational outcomes, such as gain in the basic knowledge and skills of practice for a foundation year internship. Information on the site of the internship for each student was

gathered as part of the demographic information sheet completed at the beginning of the field instruction course.

Evaluation and Instrumentation

The instruments used in collecting data in this study were completed by field instructors, by the students, and by clients. In this section the various instruments used in the assessment of learning outcomes will be described.

Field Instructor Assessment

Student Status Report

Two instruments were used by field instructors for assessment of student learning. The first of these, the Student Status Report, was completed by the field instructor at mid-term and again at the end of the semester. This report consists of 16 items rated on a Likert scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Unsatisfactory	Needs some improvement	Satisfactory	Very Satisfactory	Outstanding.

This scale was developed by the School of Social Work field office approximately five years ago. A 10-member Field Advisory Committee, consisting of persons experienced in various areas of social work practice and designed to advise the Field Office on issues around successful field placements and policy, reviewed the scale in 2004. The field instructors reviewed the items relating to professionalism as addressed on the report, and added a qualitative feedback section for additional comments on the students' performance. The qualitative information is not being used in this study. This examination by a professional advisory board enhanced the content validity of the instrument (see Appendix E).

As noted in the review of the literature, increased professionalism in social work practice is an expectation of field placements. The items addressed in this scale reflect those qualities that impact effective social work practice, including attendance and punctuality, appearance, dependability, resourcefulness, initiative, organization of work, grasp of agency function, clean and effective record keeping, ability to relate to people, ability to communicate, ability to identify and express problems, ability to set appropriate goals, recognition of personal strength and limitations, use of supervision, and identification with the Social Work profession.

Learning Agreement.

The second document evaluated by the field instructor is the Student Learning Agreement. The Learning Agreement serves as a written contractual framework between the student and the field instructor, outlining objectives to be attained during the field placement. The foundation year field placement is designed so the student experiences a generalist social work practice setting. The learning objectives outlined in the Learning Agreement as 31 core competencies of social work practice are designed to reach the attainment of three goal areas as outlined in the Field Manual. Goal I, Professional Growth and Development, includes evaluation of self and commitment to professional values and responsibilities in the field. Goal II, Organizational and Community Context of Practice, includes knowledge of the structure, policies, and function of an agency as well as knowledge of the community's structure and resources. Goal III, Direct Service Practice Knowledge and Skills, relates to the application of core interpersonal communication skills with clients, sensitivity to diverse populations, problem identification and assessment, selection and implementation of an intervention plan, and

evaluation, termination and feedback (School of Social Work, East Carolina University, 2004).

Under the three goal areas there were 31 core competencies or learning objectives listed on the Learning Agreement provided to the students. Each student was required to include these 31 core competencies on his or her learning agreement (see Appendix F).

During weekly supervision sessions, field instructors are encouraged to provide ongoing evaluation to assist students in recognizing areas in need of work, areas of greater strength, and to provide an evaluation of the student's progress. Review of the core competencies adds to the credibility of this process.

For the purpose of this study the 31 core competencies were evaluated by the field instructor and the student using a 5 point Likert scale:

1	2	3	4	5	N/A

Ready for MSW Practice	Meets expectations for the semester. Competent for supervised practice	Need intensive work. Must make significant progress to meet expectations for the semester

The field instructors rated each learning objective at mid-term and at the end of the semester. Mean scores for the field instructor evaluations for the off- and on-campus students at the end of the semester were compared. The mean scores at the end of the semester for the students also were compared between the off- and on-campus students.

Student Self-evaluation

Three scales were used for the student's self-evaluation of the practice knowledge and skills. These instruments are designed to evaluate the student's perception of their knowledge of social work practice and their ability to perform social work practice skills. *The Social Work Skills Self-Appraisal Questionnaire*

Foundation Skills of Social Work Practice is a one-semester course designed to prepare students for entry into the field practicum and the social work profession, and is taken by the students the semester prior to their foundation field placements. The Social Work Skills Self-appraisal Questionnaire was included as Appendix 3 in the workbook used in the Foundation Skills course and was completed by the students at the end of the Skills course and again at the end of the field semester. The basic skills are defined as ethical decision-making skills, basic interpersonal skills of talking and listening, preparing skills, beginning skills, exploring skills, assessing skills, contracting skills, working and evaluation skills, and the ending skills. These skills represent aspects of work with clients from engagement to termination and provide a special focus on the ethics of practice (see Appendix G) (Courneyor, 2004).

Students were asked to evaluate themselves on their proficiency in social work skills as addressed in their workbook. The students rated themselves on each skill with a numerical response as follows:

4	3	2	1
Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

The higher the score, the more likely it is the student feels he or she is competent in the given skill areas. Scores range between 55 and 220 with a higher score reflecting a higher level of self-assessed proficiency at each task.

Though Courneyor has not completed psychometric studies on this instrument, he notes that his text reflects "some twenty-five years of social work practice and more than twenty years of teaching experience" (Courneyor, 2000, p. xv). A Cronbach's α (alpha) was used to measure the reliability for this instrument and to provide further indication

of the extent to which the results from scores on this test may be generalized as indicators of students' self-appraisal of the ability to perform basic social work skills.

Scores were totaled for each student and a mean score determined for the off- and on-campus cohorts. A pretest/posttest analysis of mean scores for off- and on-campus students was used to determine gain in educational outcomes, and a t-test of compared means were used to evaluate the difference in scores for off- and on-campus students.

Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form

This instrument consisted of 42 statements relating to the basic skills of a client interview. It was included in the text for the Social Work Foundation Skills course as Appendix G. This particular instrument is to be used in relation to a face to face interview with clients. Cournoyer (2000) noted that because of the face to face focus of these interviewing skills, other social work practice areas such as ethical decision making, assessing, and recording were not included.

This scale is divided into sections reflecting each of the following skills: the basic interpersonal skills of talking and listening; the beginning skills of exploring, contracting, working and evaluating; and the ending skills. This instrument reflects the importance of the skills assessed in the Social Work Self-appraisal Questionnaire (see Appendix H). The scores on this instrument are gained from student self-report of their perception of their interviewing skills.

A pretest/posttest format was used for calculating the gain in interviewing skills. This instrument was completed by the student at the end of the foundation skills course, and again at the end of the field instruction semester. A paired t-test was performed comparing the means of the two sets of scores.

Learning Agreement

The same 31 core objectives rated by the field instructor on the Learning Agreement are rated by the student at the mid-term of the field semester and at the end of the semester using the same rating scale as the field instructor (see Appendix F). These self-appraisal scores represent the students' perception of their ability to accomplish foundation graduate social work practice competencies with success. A pretest/posttest format is used for calculating the gain in interviewing skills. This instrument was completed by the student at the mid-term of the foundation field instruction course, and again at the end of the semester. A paired t-test was performed comparing the means of the two sets of scores.

Social Work Self-efficacy Scale

One other instrument was administered as further reflection of the students' perception of their ability to practice social work effectively. The Social Work Self-efficacy Scale was used to measure the students' perception of their own ability to perform successfully the tasks and objectives of the foundation year of graduate social work education. This instrument was designed to evaluate learning objectives set by the council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for the foundation year. It is used in this study with permission of Dr. Gary Holden, one of the developers of the scale (see Appendix I).

This instrument is a 52 item scale developed from two sources. One source was chairpersons of five curricular areas at the Ehrenkranz School of Social Work who created a combined list of important skills that students should obtain. The second source was the Practice Skills Inventory (PSI) which assesses the frequency with which certain skills are used in practice. Students were asked to rate themselves on how confident they

are to perform tasks successfully enough to warrant an excellent rating by a supervisor (Holden, et al., 2002).

A post-then design was used with this instrument and was scored by students at the end of the field instruction semester, reflecting their own interpretation of their ability to perform social work practice at the beginning of the semester and at the end. A paired t-test was performed comparing the means of the two sets of scores.

This instrument follows Holden's work in the development of The Hospital Social Work Self-efficacy Scale. The reliability and validity of the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale has been examined with initial research comparing this scale to an empowerment scale and other reciprocal studies, as had the Hospital Social Work Self-efficacy Scale, developed by the same persons (Holden, et al., 1997).

Client Feedback

One of the most important foundation skills of social work practice is that of engaging successfully with the client. In order to explore, assess, or come to an agreement on a potentially successful treatment plan, a clinician first must engage that client and have that person understand the potential for successful improvement in his or her condition. Belief that the processes involved in the client's work for change is an important predictor of successful outcomes in the long run (Duncan, et al., 2003).

As a result of strong practitioner belief in the importance of the client's feelings of worth and value, and that the client's engagement with the clinician is more important than a model or technique used with that client, Duncan and Miller developed the Session Rating Scale (see Appendix J).

Session Rating Scale

In this study a Session Rating Scale (SRS) was used as an instrument with which client feedback on the session could be obtained. This scale was used with permission of Miller, one of the developers of this instrument. The SRS consists of four categories to be rated by the client: (1) relationship, as it relates to feeling heard, understood and respected; (2) goals and topics, relating to whether or not the they talked about and worked on what the client wanted to talk about and work on; (3) approach or method, relative to whether the worker's approach was a good fit for the client; and (4) overall success of the session. The continuum for rating these categories by the client follows.

Each of the four items on the SRS was scored on a 1 to 10cm line and the four scores were totaled. These scores provided the clinician feedback on how the client experienced the session. Any score below 35 in the first three sessions with a client served as an indication that there was a need for a different approach or the client would most likely not return or not work to his/her fullest capacity. This scale was not used as an evaluation of the clinician, but rather as an evaluation of the therapeutic engagement which occurred during the session. It was this engagement process which serves as a predictor of mutual work with a client that was noted in the literature review to be more important than any particular theory.

For the social work student, the foundation placement focused on basic skill building which includes the process of an interview. The SRS served as a reflection of those beginning and engagement skills which the student learned in the Foundation Skills of Social Work practice course. These same skills were reflected by self-report of the student in the Interview Rating Scale.

Normally, the SRS is administered to the same client in the first three sessions. For the purpose of this study, students were asked to use the SRS once with three of their first clients in the first month of the field seminar. In addition, they were asked to administer it once to three other clients complete at the end of the semester.

The total score on the three SRS rating forms administered at the beginning of the semester will be used as a pre-test score and will be compared with the total scores on the last three forms which will represent the post-test. An independent t-test will be performed comparing the means of the two sets of scores.

Test-retest and internal consistency reliability evaluations found a high degree of internal consistency indicating a high correlation on the four items making the scale a global measure of a therapeutic client engagement. Research findings have indicated the reliability and validity of brief, visual analog scales such as the SRS. Literature also reports evidence of face validity with clients on shorter and less complicated scales such as the SRS (Duncan et al, 2003).

<div align="center">The Questions</div>

The question for this study is whether educational outcomes differ by program delivery mode defined as whether the student is in the off-campus program or the traditional on-campus program. It addresses the following questions through an examination of whether there is a significant outcome for each group before the two groups are compared.

Questions of Learning Outcomes Related to Program Delivery

Question 1

Does the foundation field instruction for on-campus students result in a significant gain in social work knowledge and skills?

Testing of Question 1

The difference between the mid-semester and end-of-semester scores of on-campus students on the Student Status Report as rated by the field instructor was examined.

The difference between the mid-semester and end-of-semester scores of on-campus students on the Learning Agreement was examined. These results were scored by the student and the field instructor at mid-term and end of semester.

The on-campus students' posttest score on the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale and the students' retrospective pretest score on this instrument were compared.

The difference between the mid-semester and end-of-semester scores of on-campus students on the Session Rating Scale as scored by the client was examined.

The difference between the scores at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester for on-campus students on the Interview Rating Scale as scored by the student was examined.

The difference between the scores at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester for on-campus students on the Social Work Skills Self-appraisal Questionnaire as scored by the student was examined.

A paired t-test was used to compare these pre-test and post-test scores. A .05 level of significance was used.

Question 2

Does field instruction for off-campus students result in a significant gain in social work knowledge and skills?

Testing of question 2

The difference between the mid-semester and end-of-semester scores of off-campus students on the Student Status Report as rated by the field instructor was examined.

The difference between the mid-semester and end-of-semester scores of off-campus students on the Learning Agreement as rated by the student and the field instructor was examined.

The difference between the off-campus students' posttest score on the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale and the students' retrospective pretest score on this instrument was examined.

The difference between the mid-semester and end-of-semester scores of off-campus students on the Session Rating Scale as scored by the clients was examined.

The difference between the mid-semester and end-of-semester scores of off-campus students on the Interview Rating Scale as scored by the student was examined.

The difference between the scores at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester for off-campus students on the Social Work Skills Self-appraisal Questionnaire as scored by the student was examined.

A paired t-test was used to compare these pre- and post-test scores. A .05 level of significance was used.

Question 3

Is there a significant difference in the gain in social work knowledge and skills achieved by on-campus and off-campus students during the foundation field instruction?

Testing of question 3

The difference between the gain scores of on-campus students and off-campus students on the Student Status Report as rated by the field instructor was examined.

The difference between the gain scores of on-campus and off-campus students on the Student Learning Agreement as rated by both the student and the field instructor was examined.

The difference between the gain scores of on-campus and off-campus students on the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale was examined.

The difference between the gain scores of on-campus and off-campus students on the Session Rating Scale as rated by the clients was examined.

The difference between the gain scores of on-campus and off-campus students on the Interview Rating Scale was examined.

The difference between the gain scores of on-campus and off-campus students on the Social Work Skills Self-Assessment Scale was examined.

An analysis of covariance was used to examine the difference in the mean scores. A .05 level of significance was used.

<div align="center">Assessment of Potential Intervening Variables</div>

Several potential intervening variables have been identified for this study: age, work experience, and urbanicity of the placement setting. The relationships between these control variables and the independent variable (program delivery) was examined to

determine if any of these variables should be considered as confounding variables in the examination of the relationship between the independent variable (program delivery) and each of the dependent variables.

In examining the data in this study, it was shown that the placement setting, whether employment based or traditional, cannot be considered a variable because almost all the off-campus students were in employment based placements and almost all the on-campus students were in traditional (non-employment) placements. Thus, the placement setting did not vary independently of program delivery.

<div align="center">Analysis of Data</div>

In this study six instruments were used to measure learning outcomes of the foundation year field placement for on- and off-campus students. A seventh instrument, the Exit Survey completed by the off-campus students at the end of the program, was also included to provide some qualitative evidence regarding the successful delivery of field education for the off-campus students. The instruments and statistical methods are outlined in Table 3.

A paired t-test of mean scores was used to determine the gain in scores on each instrument for each group. The analysis of covariance procedure was also employed in the examination of this data. The one-way analysis of covariance procedure is appropriate when two groups are being compared on both pretest and posttest scores on the same instrument (or the same measure of the dependent variable). According to Green and Salkind (2003, p. 191), "A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) evaluates whether population means on the dependent variable are the same across levels of a factor, adjusting for differences on the covariate, or more simply stated, whether the

adjusted group means differ significantly from each other." In this study, program

delivery is the factor, the posttest score on a given measure of educational outcome is the

dependent variable, and the pretest score on that variable is the covariate.

Table 3

Instruments and Statistical Methods of Analysis

Instrument	Evaluator	Measurement	Statistical Measure
Student Status Report	On-campus field instructors	Pre/posttest	Paired t-test
	Off-campus field instructors	Pre/posttest	Paired t-test
	Group comparison		ANCOVA
Learning Agreement	On-campus students	Pre/posttest	Paired t-test
	Off-campus students	Pre/posttest	Paired t-test
	On-campus field instructors	Pre/posttest	Paired t-test
	Off-campus field instructors	Pre/posttest	Paired t-test
	Group comparisons		ANCOVA
Social Work Self-Efficacy Scale	On-campus students	Post/then	Paired t-test
	Off-campus students	Post/then	Paired t-test
	Group comparison		ANCOVA
Session Rating Scale	Off-campus clients	Post/then	Paired t-test
	On-campus clients	Post/then	Paired t-test
	Group comparison		ANCOVA
Interview Rating Scale	On-campus students	Post/then	Paired t-test
	Off-campus students	Post/then	Paired t-test
	Group comparison		ANCOVA
Social Work Self-assessment Scale	On-campus students	Post/then	Paired t-test
	Off-campus students	Post/then	Paired t-test
	Group comparisons		ANCOVA

Summary

This chapter reviewed the purpose of the study and outlined the research questions. It also reviewed the research design and methodology for analyzing the data. The chapter described the instruments of measurement and a timeline of the data collection was provided. A table summarizing the methods of analyzing the data concluded the chapter.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the procedures used to examine the data collected in this study. There are three major categories of variables: The dependent variable is gain in educational outcomes; the independent variable is program delivery; and there are several potential intervening variables which were examined for the strength of their relationship with the independent variable program delivery. The general dependent variable in this study is the educational outcome of a foundation year field instruction course. The results of the statistical methods used will be presented in this chapter. Summary data is provided in the tables and figures.

Descriptive Statistics

There were 14 students in the on-campus program and 30 students in the off-campus cohorts who participated in this study. The descriptive statistics collected included the age of the students, the number of years of work experience of the students, the urbanicity of the placement setting, and the placement setting whether employment based or traditional. A first step in the analysis was to conduct an independent-samples t-test for the purpose of evaluating the significance of the intervening variables of age, work experience, and urbanicity of placement setting.

Age of the Student

Data revealed that for on-campus students ages ranged from 22 to 50 years of age with the median age being 30.5 years. For the off-campus students the ages ranged from 26 to 56 with a median age of 36.34. The mean age of the on-campus students was 31.64 years and the mean age of the off-campus students was 36.34 years. There was no

significant difference found between the two groups in the age of the students in the two

groups, t(41) = -1.63, p = .794. Results are summarized in Table 4.

Student Work Experience

The mean number of years of work experience for the on-campus students was

1.14 years and the mean for the off-campus students was 9.25. The greater work

experience of the off-campus students was found to be significant, t(42) = -4.14, p = .002.

Urbanicity of the Placement Setting

Eighty-six percent of the on-campus students had placements in a rural setting

compared to 83% of the off-campus students. Groups did not differ on urbanicity of the

placement setting, t(42) = .197, p = .692.

Placement Setting

Though not a control variable, the placement setting as employment based or

traditional also was examined. Results found that placement setting could not be used as

a variable because virtually all of the students in the off-campus program (97%) were in

an employment based field placement and 86% of on-campus students were in traditional

placements.

Summary of Results for Intervening Variables

Work experience was the only intervening variable which was statistically

different between groups. Table 4 summarizes these descriptive findings.

Table 4

Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Control Variables

Variable	On-Campus	Off-campus	Significance
Mean age	31.64	36.34	t(41) = -1.63 p = .794
Age range	22-50	26-56	
Median age	30.50	36.54	
Mean years of work experience	1.14	9.25	t(42) = -4.14 p = .002*
Percentage of placements in rural settings	.86	.83	t(42) = .197 p = .692

*p < .05

Analysis of Data from Instruments of Measure

There were two major purposes of this study: 1) to assess educational outcomes of

a foundation year field placement for on-campus, full-time MSW students and for part-

time MSW students matriculating in two off-campus locations, and 2) to compare

educational outcomes of the on-campus students with the off-campus students . Six

instruments were used to measure learning outcomes from three perspectives: those of

the student, the field instructor, and the client. The analysis of the data collected was

addressed for each of the instruments used. This analysis, using a paired samples t-test,

examined the gain for students on each instrument in each of the two program delivery

groups, and compared the scores of the two groups using an analysis of covariance. A

95% level of confidence was used for each statistical test.

Student Status Report

The scores on this instrument were obtained from ratings by field instructors at

mid-term and again at the end of the semester. This instrument includes pertinent points

of performance relative to the students' professionalism in the internship (see Appendix E).

A t-test of paired means gave results that the mean for the post-test scores of the on-campus students (72.58) was significantly higher than the mean for the pre-test scores on this instrument (69.61). This difference was statistically significant, $t = 2.57$, $p = .015$.

The mean for the post-test scores of the off-campus students (72.00) was significantly higher than the mean for the pre-test scores on this instrument (68.2). This difference was also statistically significant, $t = -3.128$, $p = .005$.

An analysis of covariance procedure was used to compare the pre-and post-test scores for each group. The results indicated that the mean for the scores of the on-campus students ($M = 74.25$, $SD = 6.14$) was not significantly greater than the mean for the off-campus students ($M = 72.00$, $SD = 8.59$) on this instrument. Even though the off-campus students scored lower on the instrument at the end of the semester, the difference between the two groups was not significant, $F(1, 28) = .341$, $p = .564$.

Learning Agreement

Comparison of Student Scores

Students rated themselves on the performance of 31 core objectives for social work practice itemized on the learning agreement at mid-term and again at the end of the semester (see Appendix F). Scores on this instrument were rated from 1-5 with 1 being the best score, therefore a lower post-test score would indicate gain in performance ability on each of the core competencies.

Using a t-test of paired means, the results indicated that the mean for the post-test scores of the on-campus students (43.22) was higher than the mean of the pre-test scores

(36.33), indicating that students rated their performance as less satisfactory at the end of the semester. This difference in pretest and posttest scores was not found to be statistically significant, t = -2.023, p = .08.

The mean of the posttest scores of the off-campus students (56.74) was lower than the mean for the pretest scores on this instrument (86.79) when the paired t-test was employed, indicating that students rated themselves on their ability to perform the core competencies as better at the end of the semester. This difference was statistically different, t = 7.45, p <.001.

An analysis of covariance procedure was used to compare the pre and posttest scores for each group. The results indicated that the difference in the pre and posttest mean scores of the on-campus students (43.22) was not significantly different than the difference in the pre and posttest mean scores (56.74) for the off-campus students. This difference was not found to be statistically significant, F(1, 28) = 4.237, p = .145.

Social Work Self-efficacy Scale

Students rated themselves on their confidence in their abilities to perform social work tasks at the end of the semester, and retrospectively at the beginning of the semester. Scores ranged from 0-100 with the higher score greater confidence in performing the specific tasks in a manner that a social work supervisor would consider excellent (see Appendix I).

A t-test of paired means gave the results that the mean for the post-test score of the on-campus students (82.76) was higher than the mean for the pre-test scores (62.02) on this instrument. This difference was statistically significant, t = -2.023, p < .001.

The results also indicated that the mean post-test score of the off-campus students (86.13) was higher than the mean pre-test scores (73.75). This difference was found to be statistically significant, $t = -9.292$, $p < .001$.

An analysis of covariance was conducted to compare the difference in the results of the pre- and post-test differences for the two groups. Even though the off-campus students scored higher (M = 86.13) than the on-campus students (M = 82.76), the difference was not significant, $F(1, 37) = .133$, $p = .717$.

Session Rating Scale

This scale was to be completed on a first social work session with three different clients at the beginning of the semester and again with three different clients at the end of the session. The scores on this scale represented the client's perspective of the session, a perspective reflective of how well the student was able to perform basic important social work skills such as engagement, listening, and focusing on starting where the client is at the point of the session (see Appendix J). The combined scores of the first three SRS forms represent the pretest score and the combined scores on the last three SRS forms represent the posttest score.

No results were found for the on-campus students as no data were collected. For the off-campus students, the mean posttest scores (104.11) was higher than the mean for the pretest scores (101.08). The difference in pretest and posttest scores, however, was not found to be statistically different when the paired t-test was employed, $t = -.813$, $p = .428$).

Social Work Self-appraisal Questionnaire

The scores on this scale reflected the students' perception of their ability to perform certain basic social work skills. The responses were collected at the end of the social work foundation skills course and again at the end of the first field semester (see Appendix G). There were no data for the on-campus group.

To examine this instrument for reliability, alpha values were determined for each section and found valued ranging from .88 to .98. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability was also used to examine consistency for scores on the entire instrument and found a value of .98, indicating a satisfactory reliability.

Using a t-test of paired means, the results for the off-campus students found the mean for the post-test score on this instrument (199.32) to be higher than the mean for the pre-test scores (166.75). This difference was found to be statistically different, $t = -5.79$, $p = <.001$.

Social Work Interview Rating Scale

The students rated themselves on this scale as to their ability to perform tasks involved in a successful social work interview (see Appendix H). Data were collected only for the off-campus group.

To examine this instrument for reliability, alpha values were determined for each section and found values ranging from .83 to .98. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability was also used to examine consistency of scores on the entire instrument and found a value of .98, indicating a satisfactory reliability.

Using a t-test of paired means, the results indicated that the post-test mean for the off-campus students (128.94) was higher than the mean for the pre-test scores (98.13). This difference was found to be statistically different, $t = -5.43$, $p = <.001$.

Missing Data

On two of the instruments, the Social Work Self-appraisal Questionnaire and the Social Work Interview Rating Scale, data was unavailable for the on-campus students due to the collection timeline and lack of access to data by the author. The off-campus data for these two instruments was examined for gain scores and the effect of the control variable work experience. Impact of this missing data on this study is limited since the social work skills and professionalism included in these two instruments were also reflected in four other instruments: the Student Status Report, the Learning Agreement, the Session Rating Scale, and the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale.

A third set of data from on-campus students, scores on the Session Rating Scales, both pretest and posttest, is also missing. Students in the field seminar class on campus did not have access to clients early enough in the field placement to enable them to have enough clients complete the surveys to effectively have pre and posttest scores. The clients were unavailable either due to their condition at the time of the session with the student (i.e., psychotic, intoxicated, etc.) or because the student did not have access to one-on-one contact with a client early in the semester.

Discussion

Group Gain in Learning Outcomes

The first questions addressed in this study were whether or not students in each of the two program delivery groups had a significant gain in social work knowledge and

skills at the end of the foundation year field placement semester. Table 5 and Table 6 summarize the results of the analysis of data in this study examining scores reflecting learning outcomes for each group.

Data were available for the on-campus students on three of the instruments measuring social work knowledge, their ability to perform basic social work skills, their level of social work professionalism, and their self-efficacy about their ability to perform basic social work tasks. On both the Student Status Report and the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale a statistically significant difference was found between the pre and posttest scores. No statistical difference was found between the pre and posttest scores on the Learning Agreement.

Data were available for all six instruments for the off-campus students. A statistically significant difference was found between the pre and posttest scores on five of the instruments measuring performance of basic social work skills, their level of social work professionalism, and their self-efficacy of social work practice. Though the scores did improve slightly on the Session Rating Scale, a client rated instrument, no statistical difference was found between pre and posttest scores.

Table 5

Summary of Results on Instruments of Measure for On-campus Students

Instrument	Educational outcome	Pre-test mean scores	Standard deviation	Posttest mean scores	Standard deviation	Significance
Student Status Report	Social work professionalism	69.61	8.14	72.58	7.99	t(31) = 2.57 p = .015*
Learning Agreement	Ability to perform social work basic skills	36.33	5.81	43.22	12.64	t = -2.023 p = .078
Social Work Self-efficacy Scale	Self-perception of ability to perform social work skills	62.02	19.30	82.76	11.88	t = -4.11 p = .001*
Session Rating Scale	Ability to perform basic skills of engagement	No data				
SW Skills Self-appraisal Questionnaire	Students' perception of their ability to perform basic social work skills	No data				
SW Interview Rating Scale	Student's perception of their ability to perform basic skills of interviewing	No data				

* p < .05

Table 6

Summary of Results on Instruments of Measure for Off-campus Students

Instrument	Educational outcome	Pretest mean scores	Standard deviation	Posttest mean scores	Standard deviation	Significance
Student Status Report	Social work professionalism	68.2	8.59	72.00	8.76	t = -3.128 p = .005*
Learning Agreement	Ability to perform social work basic skills	86.79	24.89	56.74	21.22	t = 7.45 p < .001*
Social Work Self-efficacy Scale	Self-perception of ability to perform social work skills	73.75	12.00	86.13	8.67	t = -9.29 p < .001*
Session Rating Scale	Ability to perform basic skills of engagement	101.08	13.46	104.11	18.15	t= .813 p = .428
Social Work Self-appraisal Scale	Students' perception of their ability to perform basic social work skills	166.75		199.32		t = -5.79 p < .001*
Social Work Interview Rating Scale	Students' perception of their ability to perform basic skills of interviewing	98.13		128.94		t = -5.43 p < .001 *

p < .05

Difference Between Groups on Gain in Learning Outcomes

The second focus of this study was to compare the difference between the gain in

social work knowledge and skills of the students matriculating in a full-time MSW

program on the main campus with that of the off-campus, part-time students at the end of

the foundation year field placement. The pretest and posttest scores for the on-campus

group on each instrument were compared to the same scores for the off-campus students

using the analysis of covariance procedure.

The difference in scores of the Student Status Report, which reflects the students' level of social work professionalism, was not found to be different between the on-campus and off-campus groups, $F(1,28) = 3.41$, $p = .564$. This was also true of scores on the Learning Agreement, reflecting performance of basic social work skills, $F(1, 28) = 4.237$, $p = .145$, and the scores on the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale, measuring students' perception of their ability to perform basic social work tasks, $F(1,37) = .133$, $p = .717$. Table 7 summarizes these comparisons.

Table 7

Summary of Results Comparing Gain Scores for On- and Off-campus Students

Instrument	Educational outcome	Mean gain on campus	Mean gain Off campus	Significance
Student Status Report	Social work professionalism	74.25	72.00	$F(1,28) = 3.41$ $p = .564$
Learning Agreement	Social work foundation skills	43.22	56.74	$F(1, 28) = 4.237$ $p = .145$
Social Work Self-efficacy Scale	Students' perception of ability to perform basic social work skills	82.76	86.13	$F(1,37) = .133$ $p = .717$

Work experience was the only intervening variable found to be significantly different between the groups. Because there were no statistically significant differences found between groups on scores on instruments measuring educational outcomes, there was no reason to examine further any potential effect of this intervening variable.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the results of the examination of the data in this study which used the model and statistical methods outlined in chapter III. The results for the scores on each of the instruments evaluating social work knowledge and skills were reported. The Chapter provided tables summarizing the pertinent data.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

One of the major concerns in delivering an MSW program away from the main campus is comparability with the program as it is delivered on campus. Field education constitutes nearly one-third of the hours in this graduate program and is the place where theory meets practice. Delivery of this field education involved a number of persons, including the students, the clients, the field instructors, field liaisons who teach the accompanying field seminars, and the school itself, as this program delivery requires many resources to support successful delivery.

This research study was designed to evaluate the learning outcomes of the on- and off-campus students in a foundation year field placement and to examine the differences in scores at pretest and posttest measures for each group. Another major focus of this study was to examine the data for the purpose of comparing the two groups for comparability of learning outcomes. Input was obtained from three perspectives: the student by self-report, the field instructors, and clients. Six instruments were used to measure outcomes related to student growth in knowledge of social work practice and their ability to perform foundation level social work skills.

Intervening Variables

An examination of the demographic data collected from the students in this study highlighted several possible intervening variables that were considered as having a possible effect on the outcomes: age, work experience, and the urbanicity of the field placement. A significant relationship was found only on one of these variables, work experience. Table 4 summarized these findings.

Age

The two groups were not statistically different in age. The MSW program is a graduate program and requires the completion of an undergraduate degree. Given the work experience of the off-campus group, it was interesting to find that the mean age difference of the two programs was less than five years and not statistically different.

Urbanicity of the Placement Setting

The MSW program in this study is delivered on campus in Greenville, North Carolina and to the two off-campus cohorts were in eastern North Carolina. The vast majority of this area is rural and few of the students were placed in settings that were defined, for the purpose of this study, as urban. There was no statistically significant difference between groups, as nearly 90% of both groups were placed in rural settings.

Work Experience

Even though the mean age difference between the two groups was not significant, the years of work experience was significant, with a difference between the groups of over eight years. The off-campus program delivery model was designed to take graduate level social work education to areas in need of advanced level social workers and to provide the opportunity for that education to persons who worked and lived in the catchment areas. The majority of these students intended to stay in those areas upon completion of the degree, and some could not leave home and family and jobs to come to an on-campus program.

The program was designed to engage persons with work experience through an extended time, Saturday format. Therefore, the difference in the years of experience is

not surprising. Many of the on-campus students come directly to graduate school from undergraduate programs and have not had the opportunity to work in the field.

Results

The are two major purposes of this study: 1) to assess learning outcomes for part-time MSW students matriculating in two off-campus locations, and 2) to compare learning outcomes of the off-campus, part-time students with MSW students matriculating in a full-time program on the main campus.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes as referenced in this study relate to the students' gain in social work knowledge, gain in their ability to perform basic social work tasks, gain in social work professionalism. Learning outcomes also relate to the students' perceived confidence to perform basic social work tasks in a manner that a social work supervisor would rate as excellent.

Social Work Professionalism

Field instructors rated the students on professionalism and personal growth on the Student Status Report at mid-term and at the end of the semester. The gain found on post-test scores at the end of the semester was statistically significant for both the on-campus and off-campus students. The difference between the two groups was not significant.

Ability to Perform Basic Social Work Basic Tasks

For the on-campus students there was no gain in pre and posttest scores on student self-perception of ability to perform core functions basic to foundation level social work practice as outlined on the Learning Agreement. This difference, however, was not

significant. For the off-campus students there was a significant gain. The difference between the two groups was not significant.

Two other instruments, the Social Work Skills Self-appraisal Scale and the Social Work Interview Rating Scale, provided further information about the off-campus students' perceived ability to perform basic social work tasks. On the Social Work Skills Self-appraisal Scale the students showed a significant gain between pre and posttest scores. These results would suggest that the students who have worked in the field for a while have taken the opportunity to enhance their ability to perform basic social work tasks with success and have acknowledged the application of their new learning.

Skills involved in the basic interviewing of a client were assessed on the Social Work Interview Rating Scale. The results for the off-campus students showed a significant gain between the pre and posttest scores. As with the Social Work Skills Self-appraisal Questionnaire, the off-campus working students gave indication that their ability to perform the social work tasks involved in an interview had improved in a recognizable way.

Students' Confidence in Their Ability

Students rated their ability to perform social work tasks at the end of the semester and provided a reflective rating for their ability to perform the tasks at the beginning of the semester. The mean scores on the end of semester ratings were significantly higher for both groups, indicating the students perceived their ability to perform the foundation social work tasks as having improved over the semester. There was no significant difference between the groups. This scale is particularly important because it provides reflection of the learning objectives set by the Council on Social Work Education, the

School's accrediting body. The fact that there was no statistically significant difference between groups is a good indication of comparability of learning outcomes for the students in both groups as related to foundation social work practice.

Students' Ability to Engage with Clients

Feedback from the client provided an indication of the student's ability to engage effectively with the client in an initial session, and of the student's use of such basic skills as listening and reflecting. The social worker's ability to engage with a client in his/her session has been shown to be pertinent to the development of a successful working relationship with clients.

The on-campus students, mostly in traditional placements and lacking the familiarity of the work setting as found by the off-campus students in employment based internships, were unable to use this scale with new clients until nearly half-way through the one semester internship. Some did not use it at all because of the condition of their clients (psychotic or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs). This is an interesting finding which will promote further investigation into the opportunities given to the new social work intern to truly apply theory to practice successfully with clients in a timely manner. The foundation year placement is only one semester and there is not much time for client interaction in the best of circumstances. If indeed students are not able to have individual person-to-person sessions with clients in a timely manner, then the students are not perhaps in the best learning environment for basic skill building.

For the off-campus students, the gain on the posttest scores provided by client feedback was not significant. This is not surprising given the comfort level of taking on new clients in a familiar setting by students with a working knowledge the agency and

social work practice. These findings were supported in the literature review through references to the comfort level of the students completing an internship in their own place of employment (Hopkins, et al., 2005).

Comparability of Program Delivery

One of the concerns in delivering a MSW program to an off-campus site is comparability. Measures of learning outcomes found no statistically significant difference between groups in this study. These results provide a validation of success for the field education of each of these groups of students. Comparison of the results between groups also provides validation of comparability between the field education experiences of the on- and off-campus students and indicates a successful transition from theory to practice in the internship.

Placement Setting

It has been noted that the educational outcomes of the off-campus students in this study reflect also outcomes of students who are for the most part placed in employment based internships. Though the placement setting, employment based or traditional, was not used as a discriminating variable, the topic of employment based internships is one of interest. As reflected in the literature review, there are a growing number of students coming back to school while remaining employed, and there is a continued growth in the need for social work distance education. Information on the type of agency used for the employment based internship also would be of interest as to any effect on learning outcomes.

The Exit Survey

The results of this study indicate statistically significant gain for the off-campus students in social work skills, professionalism, and confidence to perform basic social work functions. These gains in learning outcomes have indicated a successful field education experience. To enhance these findings further in relation to the success of the employment based setting, the results of an exit survey delivered to these off-campus students at the end of their program in May 2004 were reviewed. This survey was developed in 1994 by the director of the School of Social Work at ECU, the chair of the MSW program, and the off campus program coordinator, with input from faculty, to acquire information about students' perception of successful program delivery in the extended time, weekend format. Questions on the survey address, among other topics of interest to the School, employment based field experiences (see Appendix K).

Results of this survey confirm that the vast majority of students in the off-campus program were in employment based placements. These students were working in a variety of social work practice settings representing virtually all aspects of social work practice, including mental health centers, hospitals (both psychiatric and general medicine), schools, departments of social services, and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

In response to the request for a description of any advantages of having an employment based internships, several themes emerged. The major advantage students reported was being able to continue working in their home communities and providing support for their families. Another advantage mentioned was the matter of time management. By doing an employment based internship they did not have to incorporate

an extra 24 hours per week into their already busy lives. Several students made note of the beneficial support and encouragement they received from their employers and co-workers.

As for educational benefits, many students made note of the fact that changing their work within their agencies gave them the opportunity to broaden their experiences and increase their ability to provide services for their clients, while enhancing their social work learning experience. Several students made note of the fact that they felt they got more out of their internship because they already knew a great deal about the client base, the agency policies, and had a sense of clarity about the work to be done. They felt they had a head start in getting into their new learning situations. These themes were supported in the literature review and were also supported by the results on the off-campus students' ability to use the Session Rating Scale with direct client contact in a timely manner.

The major disadvantage mentioned to employment based internships was the difficulty of meeting the new learning requirements often while still maintaining regular job responsibilities. Several students mentioned the challenge it was to carve out a new learning experience when they were already so busy.

All but one of the students acknowledged that the internships in the program had provided them an opportunity to learn advanced social work practice. Many also mentioned the benefits of their own personal and professional growth.

Nine out of 10 students reported they planned to remain in their current jobs after graduation. This is an important factor in promoting the development and implementation of off-campus MSW programs. This exit survey has been used several times with the

off-campus cohorts of the MSW program at ECU and the feedback has been consistent over time.

Student Opinion of Instruction Survey

At the end of each semester of study, ECU conducts a Student Opinion of Instruction Survey (SOIS) is conducted each semester in order to obtain student evaluations of their instructors. This instrument rates various aspects of each course including learning objectives, teacher preparation and enthusiasm, evaluation methods, textbooks, and the overall effectiveness of the course. Items are rated on a Liker scale of 1 that the student strongly disagrees, to 7 that the student strongly agrees with each statement.

The field instruction course sections evaluated in this study were taught by the same faculty member for the on-campus students and both sections of the off-campus students. The SOIS score for overall effectiveness of the course as rated by the on-campus students was a mean of 6.57. The scores provided for the two off-campus cohorts were 6.89 and 6.92. Scores for all three sections indicate a strong agreement that the field instruction course was overall effective.

Limitations of the Study

This study has provided some information which will prove helpful in the further development and implementation of field instruction for the off-campus MSW program at ECU. There are a several limitations to this study which will have an effect on the generalizability of the outcomes.

The Sample

Sample Selection

Students were self-selected into the off-campus, part-time program or the on-campus, full-time program, without the benefit of random assignment. They were also self-selected into the placement location, urban or rural, based on where they lived and worked. The students in this study were all students of an MSW program through the same School of Social Work.

Sample Size

The number of students in the study is small. Historically, the acceptable number of students in an off-campus cohort in the MSW program in this study has been 20. Though the size of the cohorts and the on-campus class from which the data was gathered is typical for a graduate program, future studies including a greater number of students would be beneficial for the validation of these findings.

Missing Data

In spite of a concerted effort to collect complete data sets, there is data missing on two of the instruments for the on-campus student, the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale and the Social Work Interview Rating Scale. The content of these two instruments, however, is reflected in other instruments used to measure outcomes and learning outcomes were evaluated for the off-campus students, including the Student Status Report, the Learning Agreement competencies, and the Social Work Self-efficacy Scale.

Instrumentation

Each of the instruments in this study has been used repeatedly to evaluate learning outcomes for students in field education settings. There has been little in the way of

empirical studies conducted to provide validity and reliability for these instruments. Although data collected was through student self-report on the majority of these instruments, gathering data from the three perspectives of the student, the field instructor and the client was included to provide a more complete overview of the students' performance and, in turn add credibility to the outcomes.

Recommendations for Future Research

Perspectives on Learning Outcomes

One significant contribution of this study is the use of several perspectives in the evaluation of the data collected on the various instruments. Input from the students, the field instructors, and particularly from the clients provides a broader view of the successful delivery of field education than would only self-report of the student. The review of the literature found frequent mention of the need for more and better evaluation of field education. Further research involving clients, field instructors, and students would be worthwhile to promote attention to which specific tasks need attention for training and the need for more opportunity for hands on practice in the placement setting.

Instrumentation

There is a defined need to determine what and how to measure field learning outcomes. The use of various tools of measurement in this study provided a depth of input from which to evaluate the data around learning outcomes. Further research with these instruments, as well as with additional instruments, would further the inspection of the successful delivery of field education to both on- and off-campus students. Research on the reliability and validity of the instruments would also be important. With the growth in distance education, and the increase in the need for graduate level social

workers, the need for evaluation of successful distance education program delivery and comparability becomes even more important. Determining appropriate means of measure to insure proper evaluation is necessary.

Descriptive Statistics

Also of interest for future studies would be the examination of more and different descriptive statistics. One area of particular interest would be the work and supervisory experience of the field instructors, and the impact of these areas on training and evaluation of student performance. The type of agency where the student is completing an internship may also prove to be of interest. Students in this study were placed in a variety of agencies and it would be interesting to explore the learning opportunities provided in each type of agency. Employment based internships must provide the student a new learning experience with new supervision for each field placement. The development of a way to explore the effectiveness of these new learning settings would be helpful in the furtherance of a successful educational outcome for field placements.

Generalization

The self-selection of participants into the on- or off-campus groups and into placement settings, and the sample size present as limitations to this study and may limit the overall generalizability of the results. To the extent that the sample size and the student demographics are typical for such a MSW program, the outcomes would be generalizable and of use to other similar programs. One consideration which may affect any differences in outcomes for this sample and the target population is the fact that the program studied is located in a rural, Southern area. Another factor which may have an

effect on the general application of the outcomes is that the field placement in this study was only one-semester and programs vary in the design and length of foundation field education.

Summary

This paper reports on a study that compared learning outcomes for on- and off-campus students in a graduate social work program. The students' professional growth, the students' confidence to perform basic social work tasks, and students' confidence in their ability to perform basic tasks at a level a supervisor would consider excellent were measured in this study. No significant difference was found between the on- and off-campus groups on these variables. On the vast majority of these variables both groups achieved a gain.

There were additional findings that were noteworthy. It was interesting to discover that even though work experience was significantly greater for the off-campus students and their program was delivered as part-time and based at a site away from campus, the results indicated that the learning outcomes did not differ between the groups even before examining the data for effect of that variable.

Program comparability is essential to accreditation and successful delivery of coursework is the desired outcome. Student performance in the field education component of a Master of Social Work program has been shown to be highly valued as an indication of the successful transition from classroom coursework to social work practice. The implications of the findings in this study validate that transition and are worthy of further research in subsequent studies.

Schools of social work are the gatekeepers of the profession and the field experience provides the practical test of the application of knowledge and skills. It is very clear that field education is an important part of graduate social work education. It is also clear that research to date is somewhat limited and there is a need for further research to clarify what and how to measure as learning outcomes. This study concludes with a sense of success for the field education of these groups of students. It also concludes with comparability between the field education experiences of the on- and off-campus students which in turn exemplifies a successful delivery of the off-campus programs.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Curriculum for Kenansville and Rocky Mount Cohorts, 2003

COURSE SCHEDULE
OFF-CAMPUS MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
KENANSVILLE AND ROCKY MOUNT

Summer 2003
SOCW 5900 (3 sh) Foundations of Social Work
SOCW 5001 (3 sh) Human Behavior in the Social Environment

Fall 2003
SOCW 6200 (3)   Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations (1)
SOCW 6702 (3)   Social Work Response to Human Difference

Spring 2004
SOCW 6701 (3)   Psychopathology
SOCW 6711 (3)   Conducting Social Work Research (1)

Summer 2004
SOCW 6100 (3)   Social Work Practice with Individuals
SOCW 5910 (3)   Social Work Foundation Skills

Fall 2004
SOCW 6940 (6)   Field Instruction (1)
SOCW 6201 (2)   Program Management in Social Work (2)

Spring 2005
SOCW 6202 (2)   Program Development in Social Work
SOCW 6102 (2)   Social Work Practice with Families

Summer 2005
SOCW 6101 (2)   Social Work Practice with Groups
SOCW 6392 or
SOCW 6422 (3)   Specialization Practice Option (1) [See note A]

Fall 2005
SOCW 6394 or
SOCW 6426 (3)   Social Work Specialization Policy Option (2)   [See Note B]
SOCW 6950 (6)   Field Instruction (2)

Spring 2006
SOCW 6960 (6)   Field Instruction (3)
SOCW 6730 (3)   Evaluating Social Work Practice (3)

2/15/04

APPENDIX B

East Carolina University Institutional Review Board Application

TO: Martha T. Early, MSW, School of Social Work, ECU

FROM: UMCIRB

DATE: December 14, 2004

RE: Exempt Category Research Study

TITLE: "Foundation Year Field Instruction in a Master of Social Work Program: A Comparison Study of
            Outcomes for Off-Campus Part-Time and On-Campus Full-time Students"

UMCIRB #04-0486

This research study has undergone expedited review on **12-06-04** and **12-13-04**. This research study meets the crit
for an exempt status because research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involvii
normal educational practices, such as research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or research
the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management method
Dr. S. McCammon deemed this **unfunded** study **no more than minimal risk.** This research study does not requir€
additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are changes in this study.

The following items were reviewed:
- Internal Processing Form
- Consent Document (version date 12-12-04)
- Social Work Skills Self-Appraisal Questionnaire
- Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form
- MSW Field Education Learning Agreement
- Student Status Report
- Social Work Self Efficacy Scale
- Session Rating Scale and Scoresheet

Dr. S. McCammon does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

**The UMCIRB complies with 45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 50, 21 CFR 56, ICH Guidelines, UMCIRB operating polici
and procedures, institutional policies and other applicable federal regulations.**

Unique Identifier:

UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL CENTER INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE IRB PROCESSING FORM
SUBMISSION FOR UMCIRB REVIEW
EXEMPT RESEARCH

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Type of application: X New   ☐ Modification   **Date:** 08/25/04   **UMCIRB #:**

Title of proposed research (this title must match protocol, funding application and consent form): Foundation Year Field Instruction in a Master of Social Work Program: A Study of Outcomes for On- and Off-campus Students

List of all items related to this research study submitted for UMCIRB review and approval:

Principal Investigator, credentials, department, section, and school: Martha T. Early, MSW, Instructor and Off-campus Program Coordinator; College of Human Ecology; School of Social Work; East Carolina University

Check the institutions for which the principal investigator is affiliated: X ECU ☐ PCMH ☐ Other   Investigators not affiliated with ECU or PCMH require submission of an Unaffiliated Investigator Agreement.

Subinvestigators, credentials, department, section and schools:

List the duties of the research team members and describe the qualifications of each member to perform their duties. Collect and analyze data

SOURCE OF FUNDING

☐ Government Agency, Name:
☐ Private Agency, Name:
☐ Institution or Department Sponsor, Name:
x No funding
☐ Grant, include 1 copy of the final grant application
NOTE: The UMCIRB Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form does not need to be submitted for exempt research.

CHECK ALL INSTITUTIONS OR SITES WHERE THIS RESEARCH STUDY WILL BE CONDUCTED:
x East Carolina University
☐ Other

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE EXEMPTION CATEGORY

X (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

☐ (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded n such a manner that human participants can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants; and (ii) any disclosure of the human participants' responses outside the research could reasonably place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participants' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

☐ **(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human participants are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.**

☐ **(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants.**

☐ **(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.**

☐ **(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.**

NOTE: Exemptions #1, #3, #4, #5, and #6 are applicable to research involving minors. Exemption #2 regarding educational tests is also applicable to research involving minors. However, research involving survey or interview procedures or observations of public behavior can not be given an exempt status when minors are involved, except for research involving observation of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed.

Unique Identifier:

PROTOCOL SUMMARY

Provide a brief, one page summary of the research study. Provide a separate protocol if one is available.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relative effectiveness of the foundation field instruction in a Master of Social Work program for both on- and off-campus students, in both traditional and employment based internships in Social Work 5940. Evaluation methods include those assessment scales, learning objectives, and personal observations gathered in the normal routine of this course delivery.

Required Research Approvals

Is the research study being conducted outside of your institution? ☐ Yes X No
If yes, attach a letter of support from that site.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing address for all correspondence: **Martha T. Early, MSW**
School of Social Work
126 Ragsdale Building
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27858

Telephone Number: 252-328-5376   **Fax Number:**   **e-mail: earlym@mail.ecu.edu**
Research assistant: **Telephone number:**

Responsible faculty member for any Principal Investigator that has a graduate, post-graduate student status including residents and fellows, or visiting professor status

Responsible Faculty:
Mailing address:
Telephone Number: **Fax Number:**   **e-mail:**

Signature responsible faculty as above   Print   Date

NOTE TO INVESTIGATORS:

The principal and sub-investigators understand that:

1. Exempt research under the regulations is human subject research that is deemed at no more than minimal risk and fits into one of six categories as designated on this application form.
2. Research that is deemed exempt according to the established criteria does not require continuing review by the UMCIRB; however, the investigator must meet all institutional obligations in the conduct of the research.
3. Only one of the UMCIRB chairs or their designee may determine that a research study meets the criteria for an exempt status.
4. The UMCIRB chair or designee may require necessary modifications prior to granting an exempt status.
5. The investigator should consult the UMCIRB for any changes in the study that may impact the required level of review to that of expedited or full committee status.

Signature Principal Investigator   Print   Date

Signature Sub - Investigator   Print   Date

Signature Sub - Investigator   Print   Date

Signature Sub - Investigator   Print   Date

APPENDIX C

Old Dominion University Institutional Review Board Application

APPENDIX B
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH

Note: For research projects regulated by or supported by the Federal Government, submit 10 copies of this application to the Institutional Review Board. Otherwise, submit to your college human subjects committee.

Responsible Project Investigator (RPI)		
The RPI must be a member of ODU faculty or staff who will serve as the project supervisor and be held accountable for all aspects of the project. Students cannot be listed as RPIs.		
First Name: Stephen	**Middle Initial:**	**Last Name: Tonelson**
Telephone: 638-6295	**Fax Number:**	**E-mail: stonelso@odu.edu**
Office Address: CSC 210		
City: Norfolk	**State: VA**	**Zip: 23529**
Department: Early Childhood Education (ESSE)	**College: Darden College of Education**	
Complete Title of Research Project: Foundation Year Field Instruction in a Master of Social Work Program: A Comparison Study of Learning Outcomes for On-campus and Off-campus Students	**Code Name (One word): Field**	
Investigators		
Individuals who are directly responsible for any of the following: the project's design, implementation, consent process, data collection, and data analysis. If more investigators exist than lines provided, please attach a separate list.		
First Name: Martha	**Middle Initial: T.**	**Last Name: T,**
Telephone: 757-483-9421	**Fax Number:**	**Email: earlym@ecu.edu**
Office Address: 324 Rivers Building, School of Social Work, East Carolina University		
City: Greenville	**State: NC**	**Zip: 27858**
Affiliation: _X_Faculty __Graduate Student __ Undergraduate Student __Staff __Other_____		
First Name:	**Middle Initial:**	**Last Name:**
Telephone:	**Fax Number:**	**Email:**
Office Address:		
City:	**State:**	**Zip:**
Affiliation: __Faculty __Graduate Student __ Undergraduate Student __Staff __Other_____		
List additional investigators on attachment and check here: __		
Type of Research		

1. This study is being conduced as part of (check all that apply):

_	Faculty Research	_	Non-Thesis Graduate Student Research
X_	Doctoral Dissertation	_	Honors or Individual Problems Project
_	Masters Thesis	_	Other_____

Funding

2. Is this research project externally funded or contracted for by an agency or institution which is independent of the university? Remember, if the project receives ANY federal support, then the project CANNOT be reviewed by a College Committee and MUST be reviewed by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

___Yes (If yes, indicate the granting or contracting agency and provide identifying information.)
_X_No

Agency Name:
Mailing Address:
Point of Contact:
Telephone:

Research Dates

3a. Date you wish to start research (MM/DD/YY) __01___/__15___/_07*____ *Data was collected beginning in 2004 w/consent of ECU. Dissertation analysis will begin using existing evaluative data base.
3b. Date you wish to end research (MM/DD/YY) __06___/__15___/__07___

Human Subjects Review

4. Has this project been reviewed by any other committee (university, governmental, private sector) for the protection of human research participants?
  _X__Yes
  ___No

4a. If yes, is ODU conducting the primary review?
  __Yes
  _X_No (If no go to 4b)

4b. Who is conducting the primary review?

East Carolina University Institutional Review Board – Approved as UMCIRB#04-0486 12-14-04

5. Attach a description of the following items:

_X_Description of the Proposed Study
__Research Protocol
__References
_X_Any Letters, Flyers, Questionnaires, etc. which will be distributed to the study subjects or other study participants
__If the research is part of a research proposal submitted for federal, state or external funding, submit a copy of the FULL proposal

Note: The description should be in sufficient detail to allow the Human Subjects Review Committee to determine if the study can be classified as EXEMPT under Federal Regulations 45CFR46.101(b).

Exemption categories

6.   Identify which of the 6 federal exemption categories below applies to your research proposal and explain why the proposed research meets the category. Federal law 45 CFR 46.101(b) identifies the following EXEMPT categories. Check all that apply and provide comments.

SPECIAL NOTE: The exemptions at 45 CFR 46.101(b) do not apply to research involving prisoners, fetuses, pregnant women, or human in vitro fertilization. The exemption at 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2), for research involving survey or interview procedures or observation of public behavior, does not apply to research with children, except for research involving observations of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed.

_X___(6.1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
Comments:

____(6.2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; AND (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
Comments:

____(6.3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if:
(i) The human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
Comments:

____(6.4) Research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
Comments:

____ (6.5) Does not apply to the university setting; do not use it
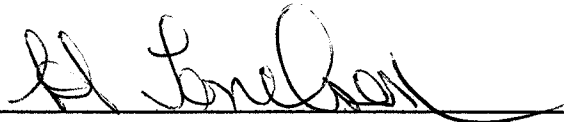
____(6.6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
Comments:

PLEASE NOTE:

1.   You may begin research when the College Committee or Institutional Review Board gives notice of its approval.
2.   You MUST inform the College Committee or Institutional Review Board of ANY changes in method or procedure that may conceivably alter the exempt status of the project.

Responsible Project Investigator   Date 12/12/06

APPENDIX D

Consent Form

East Carolina University
School of Social Work

CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Research Study: Field Instruction in a Master of Social Work Program: A Comparison Study of Outcomes for Off-campus Part-time and On-campus Full-time Students.
Principal Investigator: Martha T. Early, MSW, LCSW, CCAS, CCS
Institution: East Carolina University
Address: 126 Ragsdale Building, ECU, Greenville, NC 27858
Telephone #: 252-328-5376

> This consent document may contain words that you do not understand. You should ask the study doctor or the study coordinator to explain any words or information in this consent form that you do not understand.

INTRODUCTION

You have been asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Martha T. Early. The purpose of this study is to examine the relative effectiveness of the foundation field instruction course and student placements for off- and of-campus students in a Master of Social Work program. Outcomes will also be used to address the relative effectiveness of employment based and traditional field placement.

PLAN AND PROCEDURES

The data is being collected from questionnaires and exercises which are part of the course content in SOCW 5910, Foundation Skills, (Summer 2004 for off-campus and Fall 2004 for on-campus students) and from SOCW 6940, Field Instruction I, (Fall 2004 for off-campus and Spring 2004 for on-campus students). Pre- and post- test data from student scores on the Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form, the Social Work Skills Self-Appraisal Questionnaire, and the MSW Field Education Learning Agreement with 31 core competencies will be used. Ratings from Field Instructors on the Student Status Report and the MSW Field Education Learning Agreement will be collected at mid-term and at the end of the semester in the Field Instruction I course. Student's Pre-test, post-test and post-then scores on the Social Work Self Efficacy Scale will also be used. In addition, the Session Rating Scale, a training tool, will be scored by clients in initial interviews to provide feedback to students on use of basic social work skills of engagement. The SRS is used in the regular course of business and is coded only with the last four digits of the students' social security numbers.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Outcomes from this study will be of assistance in addressing the successful delivery of course content to off-campus students and to the field office in designing and implementing employment based internships. Results may also be used as part of a program evaluation of the off-campus MSW programs and for SACS and CSWE accreditation.

1

ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF TREATMENT

N/A

SUBJECT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Student names will not be used and participation will remain anonymous. All participants' data will be identified by only the last four digits of their social security number to maintain confidentiality.

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

Students may stop participating in this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, or without jeopardizing their continuing education at ECU.

COSTS OF PARTICIPATION

None.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Students' participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which students would otherwise be entitled. Refusal to participate will NOT affect any student's grade. If you decide not to be in this study after it has already started, you may stop at any time without losing benefits that you should normally receive. You may stop at any time you choose without penalty, loss of benefits, or without a causing a problem with your education at this ECU.

PERSON TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS

The investigator will be available to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the investigator, Martha T. Early, at (252) 328-5376 (days) or (252) 337-4470 (nights and weekends). If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Chair of the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board at phone number 252-744-2914 (days) and/or the hospital Risk Management Office at 252-847-4584.

2

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read all of the above information, asked questions and have received satisfactory answers in areas I did not understand. (A copy of this signed and dated consent form will be given to the person signing this form as the participant or as the participant authorized representative.)

_____

Participant's Name **(PRINT)**   **Signature**   **Date**   **Time**

WITNESS: I confirm that the contents of this consent document were orally presented, the participant or guardian indicates all questions have been answered to his or her satisfaction, and the participant or guardian has signed the document.

_____

Witness's Name **(PRINT)**   **Signature**   **Date**

PERSON ADMINISTERING CONSENT: I have conducted the consent process and orally reviewed the contents of the consent document. I believe the participant understands the research.

_____

Person Obtaining consent **(PRINT)**   **Signature**   **Date**

_____

Principal Investigator's **(PRINT)**   **Signature**   **Date**

11/15/04

3

APPENDIX E

Student Status Report

Social Work
College of Human Ecology
East Carolina University
104-C Ragsdale Building • Greenville, NC 27858-4353
252-328-4189 office • 252-328-4196 fax

STUDENT STATUS REPORT

STUDENT: _____   DATE: _____

AGENCY: _____

FIELD LIAISON: _____

FIELD INSTRUCTOR: _____

Please rank each area of student performance using a 1-5 Likert scale: 1 – Unsatisfactory;
2 – Needs some improvement; 3 – Satisfactory; 4 – Very satisfactory; 5 – Outstanding
Make any additional comments on back of this form. Form is to be reviewed and signed by
both the student and the field instructor.

AREA OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE	1	2	3	4	5	If problem area exists, please explain
1. Attendance and punctuality						
2. Appearance						
3. Dependability						
4. Resourcefulness						
5. Initiative						
6. Organization of work						
7. Grasp of agency functions						
8. Clear and effective record keeping						
9. Ability to relate to people						
10. Ability to communicate						
11. Ability to use critical thinking and decision making skills in identifying and expressing problems						
12. Ability to set appropriate goals						
13. Recognition of personal strengths						
14. Recognition of personal limitations						
15. Use of supervision						
16. Identification with Social Work Profession						

VERIFICATION OF REVIEW:

1. I have discussed each of the student's significant assignments to date with the student   YES __ NO __

2. I have reviewed the learning agreement with the student with regard to progress   YES __ NO __

3. I have summarized the most significant areas of progress with with the student as well as areas of marginal or unsatisfactory progress   YES __ NO __

4. I have evaluated the student/supervisor relationship with the student with regard to teaching and learning styles, directness of feedback and other process issues   YES __ NO __

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

DATE: _____

FIELD INSTRUCTOR: _____

STUDENT: _____

APPENDIX F

Learning Agreement

Instructions for Completing
MSW Field Education Learning Agreement

A. Field Educational Emphasis (Goals)

   Goal I. Professional Growth and Development

      --Evaluation of self

      --Commitment to professional values

   Goal II. Organizational and Community Context of Practice

      --Knowledge of structure and function of agency

      --Knowledge of community's structure and resources

   Goal III. Direct Service Practice Knowledge and Skills

      --Apply core interpersonal communication skills with clients

      --Sensitivity to diverse populations

      --Problem identification and assessment

      --Selection and implementation of an intervention plan

      --Evaluation, termination and feedback

Student _____

Semester _____ Year _____

Agency _____

Field Instructor _____

Task Supervisor _____

Faculty Liaison _____Martha Early_____

Please Circle 1st Year   2nd Year   A/S

B. Each of the above goals with its subsections need to be addressed as you complete your Learning Agreement.

C. Definition of Terms:

1. **Student Learning Objectives:** Statement of intended accomplishment written with expected outcome. Select a specific area within the chosen goal. Learning objectives and action steps need to be carefully planned and stated because they become the yardstick by which the student's performance is measured.

2. **Student Learning Activities (action steps):** Specific, short term accomplishments which, when completed, will lead to accomplishment of learning objectives. There may be more than one action step to each learning objective.

3. **Target Date:** The date when student anticipates accomplishing the learning objective.

4. **Evaluation:** Nos. 1-5 = levels of competence in practice. 1--ready for MSW entry level; 5--needs intensive work; N/A--not addressed.

5. **Comments:** Brief phrases by field instructor describing work flow, successes, stumbling blocks, etc. in each of the action steps.

6. **Evaluation Summary:** Please comment on each of the three areas of Educational Emphasis (Goals).

7. **Written Assignment:** Please have samples available for each end of semester faculty liaison visit (e.g., organizational narrative, psychosocial/family assessment, treatment plan, process recording, discharge summary, or similar assignment).

1

MSW FIELD EDUCATION LEARNING AGREEMENT

Goal	Student Learning Objective	Student Learning Activities (Action Steps)	Target Date	Evaluation	
				No.	Comments
I.	1. Participate as an active and responsible learner.	a. Take initiative for developing the Learning Agreement and participate in identifying learning needs and experiences in the field agency that addresses those needs b. Use supervision constructively to discuss performance. c. Organize and plan work so that assigned field responsibilities are completed on time.			
	2. Define and function in the role o professional social worker.	a. Differentiate the value base, purpose, sanction, and methodology of the professional social work role. b. Identify and apply social work values and ethics in work with clients and colleagues. c. Differentiate between representing a personal, professional, or organizational position.			

MSW FIELD EDUCATION LEARNING AGREEMENT

Goal	Student Learning Objective	Student Learning Activities (Action Steps)	Target Date	Evaluation	
				No.	Comments
.	3. Demonstrate developing self-awareness.	a. Examine personal values and biases, and the effect they have on interactions with others. b. Identify the impact of race, cultural or social diversity, ethnicity, individual or group oppression, age, sex, religion, special population, and handicaps on his/her delivery of service to clients. c. Demonstrate ability to use constructive criticism to modify one's own practice.			
	4. Demonstrate appropriate verbal and written communication skills as needed to carry out field assignments.	a. Demonstrate ability to verbally convey ideas and feelings to other clearly and purposefully. b. Contribute relevant comments in groups (e.g., case presentations, staff meetings, etc.) c. Express ideas clearly in writing and complete written work required by the field placement (e.g., case recording, memos, etc.).			

MSW FIELD EDUCATION LEARNING AGREEMENT

Goal	Student Learning Objective	Student Learning Activities (Action Steps)	Target Date	Evaluation	
				No.	Comments
II..	1. Identify and incorporate into practice information about the field agency or setting.	a. Identify and explain mandate, goals, services, source of funds, organizational structure, and administrative process. b. Analyze the mandate, purposes, and resources of the field agency and their impact on service delivery.			
	2, Identify and apply information about interorganizational relationships among agencies and the community.	a. Describe the relation of the field agency to other agencies or organizations in the community. b. Identify the range of relevant services (formal and informal) available in the community and the ways in which these services are used for referrals by the field agency.			
	3, Identify and apply information about the community or population that the field agency serves.	a. Describe the demographic characteristics of the field agency's service population and implications for service delivery. b. Describe the under-served or inappropriately served groups in the service population and the implication of their needs for service delivery, e.g., ethnic/racial, sexual minority.			
	4. Identify the impact of agency policies on service delivery.	a. Describe how policies and procedures in the field agency affect service delivery.			

4

MSW FIELD EDUCATION LEARNING AGREEMENT

Goal	Student Learning Objective	Student Learning Activities (Action Steps)	Target Date	Evaluation	
				No.	Comments
III.	1. Apply core interpersonal communication skills to engage clients in helping relationships.	a. Use appropriate empathy to communicate a concern for an understanding of what clients are experiencing. b. Show genuine interest in clients by using congruent attending behavior. c. Demonstrate respect by accepting the client's point of view as a valid perspective. d. Use concreteness to help clients be more specific about personal and relevant concerns. e. Show awareness of and respond appropriately to pertinent non-verbal communication. f. Use self-disclosure only if it will help clients explore and understand their concerns more clearly. g. Use immediacy to keep the worker/client relationship focused on the here-and-now.			
	2. Conduct and critically assess the helping interview.	a. Open an interview and clearly establish its context. b. Use a range of questioning skills in a timely manner. c. Demonstrate diverse and appropriate responding skills. d. Guide the direction and provide focus during an interview. e. Close an interview and give direction for future contacts			

5

MSW FIELD EDUCATION LEARNING AGREEMENT

Goal	Student Learning Objective	Student Learning Activities (Action Steps)	Target Date	Evaluation	
				No.	Comments

LEARNING AGREEMENT:

This Learning Agreement may be amended or renegotiated at any time if both the student and field instructor agree. The faculty liaison must be notified of any major changes.

Contract Period: (dates) From 8/20/05 To 12/06/2005

Fall √ 2005   Winter ___ 20
Spring ___ 20 ___   Summer ___ 20

Signatures:

Student _____ Date _____   Agency _____

Field Instructor _____ Date _____   Recommended Grade _____

Task Instructor _____ Date _____

Faculty Liaison _____ Date _____

APPENDIX H

The Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form

Appendix 7

Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form[1]

You may use this rating form as part of the process of evaluating your own or others' performance of the social work skills during interviews with clients. You may use it, for example, in rating your performance during an interview with an individual, a couple, a family, or a small group. You may also use the form in order to provide evaluative feedback to a colleague who is attempting to improve the quality of his or her performance.

In using the rating form, please use the following coding system:

N/A   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was not appropriate or necessary and was therefore not used, having no effect on the interview.

−3   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was used at an inappropriate time or in an unsuitable context, seriously detracting from the interview.

−2   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was attempted at an appropriate time and in a suitable context but was done so in an incompetent manner, significantly detracting from the interview.

−1   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was not used at times or in contexts when it should have been, detracting from the interview.

0   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was used and demonstrated at a minimal level of competence. Its use did not detract from nor contribute to the interview.

+1   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was attempted at an appropriate time and in a suitable context and was generally demonstrated at a fair level of competence. Its use represented a small contribution to the interview.

---

[1]Because this rating form is intended for the purpose of evaluating social work skills used during face-to-face interviews, skills related to ethical decision making, assessing, and recording are not included.

Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form   **429**

+2   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was attempted at an appropriate time and in a suitable context and was generally demonstrated at a moderate level of competence. Its use represented a significant contribution to the interview.

+3   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was attempted at an appropriate time and in a suitable context and was generally demonstrated at a good level of competence. Its use represented a substantial contribution to the interview.

+4   During the course of the interview, the skill in question was attempted at an appropriate time and in a suitable context and was generally demonstrated at superior level of performance. Its use represented a major contribution to the interview.

Talking and Listening: The Basic Interpersonal Skills

1.   Speech and Language   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

2.   Body Language   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

3.   Hearing   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

4.   Observing   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

5.   Encouraging   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

6.   Remembering   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

7.   Active Listening   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

Beginning

8.   Introducing Yourself   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

9.   Seeking Introductions   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
Comments:

10. Describing Initial Purpose   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

11. Outlining Client Roles   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

12. Discussing Policy   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    and Ethical Factors
    Comments:

13. Seeking Feedback   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

Exploring

14. Asking Questions   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments

15. Seeking Clarification   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments

16. Reflecting Content   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

17. Reflecting Feelings   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

18. Reflecting Feeling and Meaning   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

19. Partializing   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

20. Going Beyond What Is Said   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

Contracting

21. Reflecting an Issue   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form   **431**

22. Identifying an Issue   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

23. Clarifying Issues for Work   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

24. Establishing Goals   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

25. Developing an Action Plan   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

26. Identifying Action Steps   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

27. Planning for Evaluation   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

28. Summarizing the Contract   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

Working and Evaluating

29. Rehearsing Action Steps   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

30. Reviewing Action Steps   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

31. Evaluating   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

32. Focusing   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

33. Educating   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments

34. Advising   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

35. Representing   N/A −3 −2 −1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

36. Responding with Immediacy   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

37. Reframing   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +
    Comments:

38. Confronting   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

39. Pointing Out Endings   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

Ending

40. Reviewing the Process   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

41. Final Evaluating   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    Comments:

42. Sharing Ending Feelings   N/A –3 –2 –1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4
    and Saying Goodbye
    Comments:

Social Work Skills Interview Rating Form   **433**

APPENDIX I

Social Work Self-efficacy Scale

Date _____

Social Work Self Efficacy Scale*

Instructions: We want to know how confident you are, in your ability to perform specific social work tasks. After you consider each task, please rate your ability to perform that task successfully, by choosing the number from 0 to 100 that best describes your level of confidence. What we mean here by successfully, is that you would be able to perform the specific task in a manner that a social work supervisor would consider excellent. The phrases beside the numbers [0 = Cannot do at all; 50 = Moderately certain can do; and 100 = Certain can do] are only guides. You can use these numbers or any of the numbers between to describe your level of confidence. We want to know how CONFIDENT you are that you could successfully perform these tasks today.

Reflect on how confident you were before taking the class and record your response in the blank under the heading "Before The Class." Then, reflect on how confident you were after taking the class and Record your response under the heading "After The Class."

Respond with:
  0 = Cannot do at all
  10
  20
  30
  40
  50 = Moderately certain can do
  60
  70
  80
  90
  100 = Certain can do

Before The Class   **After The Class**

____ 1.   Initiate and sustain empathetic, culturally sensitive, non-judgmental, ____
disciplined relationship with clients?

____ 2.   Elicit and utilize knowledge about historical, cognitive, behavioral ____
affective, interpersonal, and socioeconomic data and the range of
factors impacting upon client to develop biopsychosocial assessments
and plans for intervention?

Before the Class   **After the Class**

_____ 3. Apply developmental, behavioral science and social theories in your   _____
work with individuals, groups and families?

_____ 4. Understand the dialectic of internal conflict and social forces in a   _____
particular case?

_____ 5. Intervene effectively with individuals?   _____

_____ 6. Intervene effectively with families?   _____

_____ 7. Intervene effectively with groups?   _____

_____ 8. Work with various systems to obtain services for clients (e.g., public   _____
assistance, housing, Medicaid, ect.)?

_____ 9. Assume the social work role of change agent / advocate by identifying   _____
and working to realistically address gaps in services to clients?

_____ 10. Function effectively as a member of a service team within the agency   _____
and service delivery system, consistently fulfilling organizational and
client-related responsibilities?

_____ 11. Maintain self-awareness in practice, recognizing your own personal   _____
values and biases, and preventing or resolving their intrusion into
practice?

_____ 12. Critically evaluate your own practice, seeking guidance appropriately   _____
and pursuing ongoing professional development?

_____ 13. Practice in accordance with the ethics and values of the profession?   _____

_____ 14. Analyze a critical piece of welfare legislation?   _____

_____ 15. Define the impact of a major social policy on vulnerable client   _____
populations (e.g., the Welfare Reform Act)?

_____ 16. Use library and on-line resources to retrieve published articles and   _____
reports from the empirical research literature?

_____ 17. Critically review and understand the scholarly literature?   _____

_____ 18. Evaluate your own practice using an appropriate research method   _____
(e.g., single system designs, brief measures such as scales, indexes
or checklists)?

Before the Class   **After the Class**

____19. Participate in using research methods to address problems encountered   ____
         in practice and agency based settings?

____20. Teach clients skills to relieve their own stress?   ____

____21. Educate clients about how to prevent certain problems from reoccurring?   ____

____22. Help clients to reduce dysfunctional ways of thinking that contribute to   ____

_____

         their problems?

____23. Help clients to anticipate situations that can cause problems for them?   ____

____24. Teach clients specific skills to deal with certain problems?   ____

____25. Help clients to understand better how the consequences of their   ____
         behavior affect their problems?

____26. Teach clients how to manage difficult feelings?   ____

____27. Demonstrate to clients how to express their thoughts and feelings   ____
         more effectively to others?

____28. Help clients to practice their new problem-solving skills outside of   ____
         treatment visits?

____29. Teach communication skills to clients?   ____

____30. Teach clients how to manage their own problem behaviors?   ____

____31. Show clients how to reward themselves for progress with a problem?   ____

____32. Teach clients how to accomplish tasks more effectively?   ____

____33. Coach clients in how to make decisions more effectively?   ____

____34. Teach clients the skills for reducing unhealthful habits?   ____

____35. Show them how to set limits with others' dysfunctional behavior?   ____

____36. Assess the level of their material resources?   ____

____37. Monitor the delivery of services provided by several other providers?   ____

Before the Class   **After the Class**

____38. Advocate on others behalf?   ____

____39. Make referrals to other services?   ____

____40. Analyze social problems and policies relevant to the client's problems?   ____

____41. Provide information about other services available to clients?   ____

____42. Network with agencies to coordinate services?   ____

____43. Reflect thoughts and feelings to help clients feel understood?   ____

____44. Employ empathy to help clients feel that they can trust you?   ____

____45. Provide emotional support for clients?   ____

____46. Help clients feel like they want to open up to you?   ____

____47. Employ the treatment relationship so clients can fell accepted for who   ____
        they are?

____48. Point out their successes to increase their self-confidence?   ____

____49. Define the client's problems in specific terms?   ____

____50. Collaborate with clients in setting intervention goals?   ____

____51. Define treatment objectives in specific terms?   ____

____52. Ask clients to evaluate the effects of treatment on themselves?   ____

____ Total   Total ____

Permission to use this instrument was obtained from Dr. Gary Holden

APPENDIX J

Session Rating Scale

Session Rating Scale (SRS V.3.0)

Name _____ Age (Yrs): _____

ID# _____ Sex: M / F

Session # _____ Date: _____

Please rate today's session by placing a hash mark on the line nearest to the description that best fits your experience.

Relationship:

I did not feel heard, understood, and respected
I--I
I felt heard, understood, and respected

Goals and Topics:

We did *not* work on or talk about what I wanted to work on and talk about
I--I
We worked on and talked about what I wanted to work on and talk about

Approach or Method:

The therapist's approach is not a good fit for me.
I--I
The therapist's approach is a good fit for me.

Overall:

There was something missing in the session today
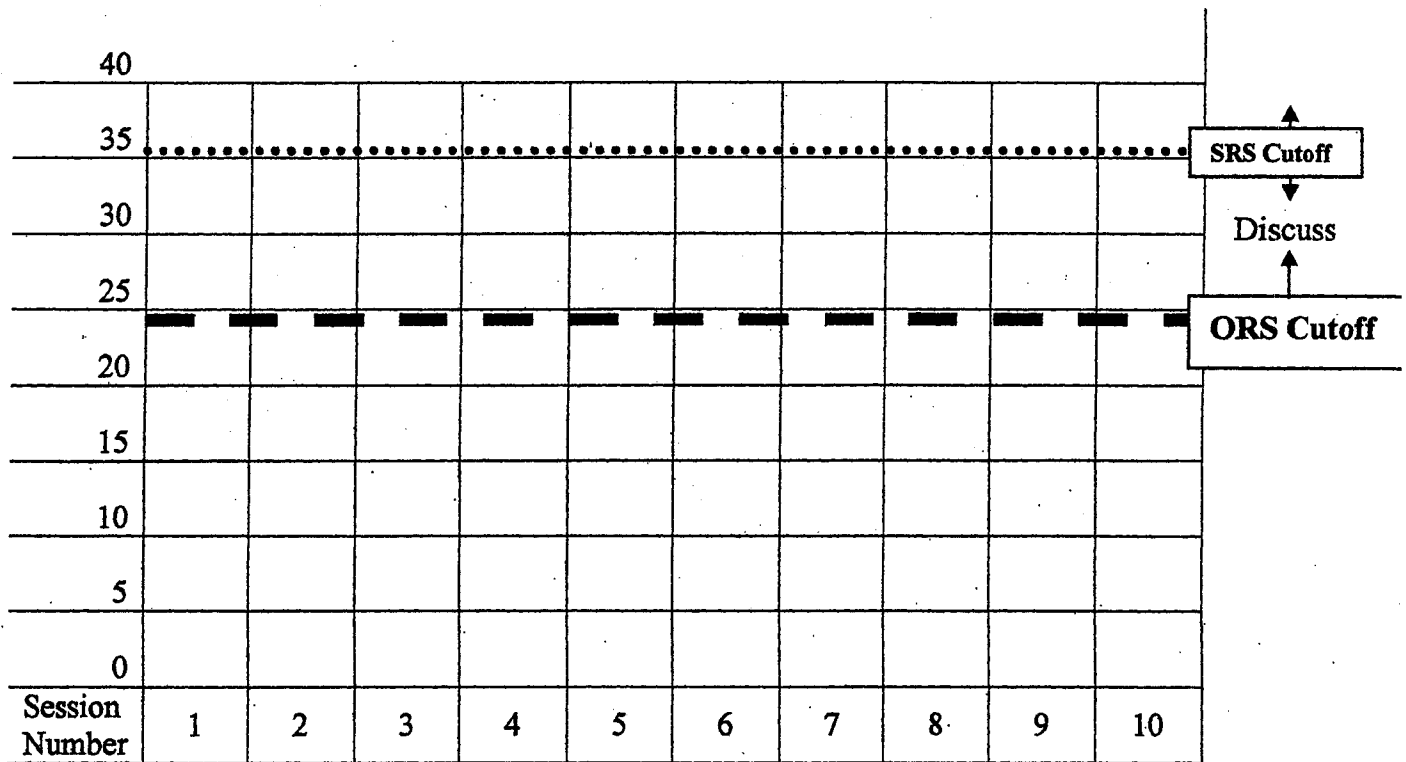I--I
Overall, today's session was right for me

Institute for the Study of Therapeutic Change

www.talkingcure.com

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	Session Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40

SRS Cutoff

Discuss

ORS Cutoff

APPENDIX K

Exit Survey – Kenansville and Rocky Mount Cohorts – May 2004

EXIT SURVEY

Agency where internship took place:

_____

Is your regular employment more direct or indirect? Direct __ Indirect __

ABOUT YOUR PLACEMENT:

Employed based: Yes __   No   __   Both __

If yes, describe any advantages you found in having an employment based internship.

If yes, describe any disadvantages you found with an employment based internship.

If yes, describe any issues you may feel exist when comparing your employment based internship with a traditional internship as you know it.

If no, describe any advantages for you as an off-campus extended time student in this placement setting.

If no, describe any disadvantages for you as an off-campus extended time student in this placement setting.

1

Has being a combined (i.e., direct and indirect) student affected your internship in any way?

Describe any advantages you may have found in being a combined student.

Describe any disadvantages you may have found in being a combined student.

Has your internship provided you the opportunity to learn advanced social work practice as you may have expected? If yes, give an example. If no, explain why.

ABOUT FUTURE PLANS:

Do you plan to stay in your current job after completing the MSW?
                                                   Yes _No __ N/A __
Do you plan to pursue an LCSW following completion of the MSW?
                                                   Yes __ No __ Unsure __

Thank you for your feedback.

2

VITA

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EDUCATION:

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	Dissertation: Foundation Year Field Instruction in a Master of Social Work Program: A Comparison Study of Learning Outcomes for On-campus and Off-campus Students
May 1995	East Carolina University Greenville, NC Master of Social Work
August 1993	Old Dominion University Norfolk, VA Bachelor of Science Psychology Major Business Management Minor

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

May 2001 –
Present
	East Carolina University
	School of Social Work
	Greenville, NC
	    Off-campus MSW Program Coordinator
	    Clinical Instructor

March 2, 1998 –
Present
	Albemarle Behavioral Medicine, P.C.
	Elizabeth City, NC
	    Licensed Clinical Social Worker
	    Certified Substance Abuse Counselor
	    Private Outpatient Mental Health Practice

January 4, 2000 –
May 2001

Eastern Virginia Medical School
Department of Family & Community Medicine
Residency Program
Norfolk, VA
     Behavioral Health Instructor

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

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Physician's Assistant Program
East Carolina University Medical School

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Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist

Certified Clinical Supervisor

NC Foundation for Alcohol and Drug Studies
President/Board Member

MEMBERSHIPS:

National Association of Social Workers
Addiction Professionals of North Carolina
North Carolina Drug & Alcohol Council
National Association of Alcoholism and
     Drug Abuse Counselors
Society of Credentialed Addiction Professionals