

**Are Students Competent?
Methods of Assessing
Bachelor of Social Work
Student Competence**

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Background

- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
Accredits Social Work Programs every 8 years.
- Competence is Measured Using:
 - 13 Core Competencies (2.1.1 – 2.1.10d), and
 - 41 Practice Behaviors
- Social Work Programs Submit 2 Data Sources:
 - Field Instructor Assessment (Required)
 - Faculty or Student Assessment (2nd Most Common)

(Council on Social Work Education, 2008)



Problem Statement

Assessment outcomes have serious implications for social work students and educational institutions; yet, there are conflicting studies regarding the reliability of field instructor, faculty, and students' self-assessment.

(Sussman, Bailey, Richardson, & Granner, 2014)

Gap

There were no studies found comparing the consistency of faculty, field instructors, and students' self-assessment of the CSWE's 13 core competencies.

Students' Self-Assessment

- High ¹
- Accurate ²
- Varied by Academic Performance ³
- Improved with Various Forms ⁴

Faculty Assessment

- “Norm Group” Impact ⁵
- Biased by Relationships ⁶
- Best with Various Forms ⁷

Field Instructor Assessment

- Higher Face to Face ⁸
- Attributes & Relationships ⁹
- Not Emotionally Impacted ¹⁰
- Consistent in Diverse Settings ¹¹

LITERATURE REVIEW:

1 Choi & Bakken, 2013; Cole, 2009; Dunagan et al., 2014; Jenner et al., 2006;

O' Boyle, Henley, & Larson, 2001; Rawlings, 2012

2 Achcaoucaou et al., 2014; Chan, Lam, & Yeung, 2013; Ward et al., 2003

3 Jackson, 2014; Karnilowicz, 2012

4 Plant, Corden, Mourad, O'Brien, & van Schaik, 2013

5 Geisinger, 1980

6 Güvendir, 2014

7 Alquraan et al., 2010

8 Vinton & Wilke, 2011

9 Bogo, Regeher, Power, & Regeher, 2007; Bogo et al., 2006;
Sussman et al., 2014

10 Bennett, Mohr, Deal, & Hwan, 2012

11 Bogo et al., 2004

Purpose and Significance

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate three different methods of assessing Bachelor of Social Work student competence in order to identify similarities or differences in how faculty, field instructors, and students assessed BSW competence when evaluating the same educational objectives.

Significance

To provide insight into effective methods of assessing BSW student competence in order to improve academic and professional outcomes in social work education.



Research Questions

Is there a difference in how: faculty assess Bachelor of Social Work students' competence across three years, field instructors assess students' competence across three years, and students self-assess competence across three years?

Is there consistency across the raters when comparing how faculty, field instructors, and students assess the same Bachelor of Social Work students' competence across three years?

Participants




- De-identified, historical data
- Midwestern, accredited BSW Program
- Academic years of 2012, 2013, & 2014
 - * $n = 83$ students assessed by three faculty
 - * $n = 83$ students assessed by 75 field instructors
 - * $n = 45$ students self-assessments

All students were rated during the final semester of their Senior year, while in field placement.

Design

Data for Both Research Questions:

2012-2014 Core Competency ratings (2.1.1-2.1.10d) from:

- * Five Faculty Rubrics 
 - * 13 core competencies; 24 practice behaviors
- * 450-hour Field Evaluation Assessment 
 - * 13 core competencies; 41 practice behaviors
- * Students' Post-test 
 - * 13 core competencies; 24 practice behaviors

Limitations

- Differences in the three assessment tools:
 - Competence vs. Confidence
 - 13 Core Competencies, but not all 41 Practice Behaviors
 - Numeric rating scale only listed on faculty rubrics
- Small sample size:
 - One Midwestern University
 - Results can not be generalized to the larger population
- Ceiling Effect for each rater group
- Number of faculty raters
- Inherent risk of statistical error

Data Collection

- University Permission to Use Historical Data Set
- IRB Approval
- Converted Assessment Scales to Consistent 4-point Scales

Field Instructor	Faculty	Student
Exceeds Expectations = 4	Excellent = 4	Confident = 4
Meets Expectations = 3	Meets Expectations = 3	Somewhat Confident = 3
Needs Improvement = 2	Needs Improvement = 2	Somewhat Unconfident = 2
Unacceptable = 1	Unacceptable = 1	Unconfident = 1







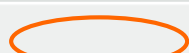
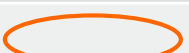






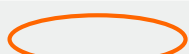
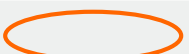

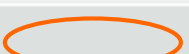
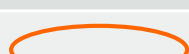
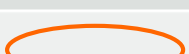





- Utilized SPSS® to examine data

Methodology

Analysis:

- Quantitative Research
- Descriptive Statistics
- Research Question One: 39 Kruskal-Wallis H tests (13 faculty; 13 field instructors, 13 students)
- Research Question Two: 13 Friedman's tests (2012-2014)
- Post hoc Pairwise Comparisons with a Bonferroni Correction
- False Discovery Rate

Research Question One Results: Kruskal Wallis H Test

Competency	Faculty <i>N</i> = 83	Field Instructors <i>N</i> = 83	Students <i>N</i> = 45
2.1.1 Identification as a Professional Social Worker	<.001		
2.1.2 Application of Social Work Principles	<.001		
2.1.3 Application of Critical Thinking	<.001		
2.1.4 Diversity in Practice	<.001		
2.1.5 Advancement of Social & Economic Justice	<.001		
2.1.6 Engaging in Research-Informed Practice	<.001		
2.1.7 Application of HBSE Knowledge	<.001		.006
2.1.8 Engage in Policy to Advance Social Well-Being			
2.1.9 Response to Context that Shapes Practice	<.001		
2.1.10a Effective Engagement	<.001		
2.1.10b Effective Assessment	.005		.009
2.1.10c Effective Intervention	.014		
2.1.10d Effective Evaluation	<.001		

$p < .05$

Research Question One Results: Pairwise Comparison with Bonferroni Correction

2012 Faculty

Rated students
higher than
2013 Faculty
nine times:

2.1.1 2.1.7
2.1.2 2.1.10a
2.1.3 2.1.10b
2.1.4 2.1.10c
2.1.5

Higher than
2014 Faculty
five times:

2.1.2 2.1.10b
2.1.6 2.1.10d
2.1.9

2014 Faculty

Rated students
higher than
2012 Faculty
one time:

2.1.9

Higher than
2013 Faculty
five times:

2.1.1 2.1.9
2.1.3 2.1.10d
2.1.4

2013 Faculty

Rated students
higher than
2012 Faculty
zero times

Higher than
2014 Faculty
one time:

2.1.6

2014 Students

Rated their own
competence
lower than the
2012 and 2013
students:

2.1.7
2.1.10b

- Faculty: 21 statistically significant pairwise comparisons
- Students: two statistically significant pairwise comparisons

Conclusions: First Research Question

- A ceiling effect existed for faculty, field instructors, and students' self-assessment (Bogo et al., 2006; Choi & Bakken, 2013; Cole, 2009; Dunagan et al., 2014; Geisinger, 1980; Sussman et al., 2014; Vinton & Wilke, 2011).
- Faculty were the most inconsistent in assessing competence year to year (Bennett et al., 2012).
- Field instructors were the most consistent evaluators, in spite of diverse clinical settings (Bahous & Nabhani, 2011; Bogo et al., 2004; Gorton & Hayes, 2014).

Research Question Two Results: Friedman's Test

Competency	2012-2014 Comparing how Raters Assess the Same Students <i>N = 45; p < .05</i>
2.1.1 Identification as a Professional Social Worker	<.001
2.1.4 Diversity in Practice	.001
2.1.5 Advancement of Social & Economic Justice	<.001
2.1.6 Engaging in Research-Informed Practice	.003
2.1.8 Engage in Policy to Advance Social Well-Being	.013
2.1.10c Effective Intervention	.001

p < .05

Research Question Two Results: Pairwise Comparison with Bonferroni Correction

Students

Rated their own
competence higher
than Field

Instructors four
times:

2.1.1

2.1.4

2.1.5

2.1.8

Higher than Faculty
two times:

2.1.5

2.1.6

Faculty

Rated students'
competence higher
than Field

Instructors one time:

2.1.10c

Higher than
Students zero times

Field Instructors

Rated students'
competence higher
than Faculty zero
times

Higher than
Students zero times

- Students: six statistically significant pairwise comparisons
- Faculty: one statistically significant pairwise comparisons

Conclusions: Second Research Question

- Students rated competence higher than field instructors and faculty on six occasions (Austin & Gregory, 2007; Byrd & Matthews-Somerville, 2007; Lawson et al., 2012; Root Kustritz, Molgaard, & Rendahl, 2011).
- Students assessed Advancement of Social & Economic Justice (2.1.5) higher than field instructors and faculty (Gorton & Hayes, 2014).
- Field instructors rated students lowest on all competencies (Gorton & Hayes, 2014).
- Faculty and field instructors' assessment most closely aligned.
- Findings did not support previous studies that reported students and field instructors assess similarly (Mathiesen & Hohman, 2013; Sherer & Peleg-Oren, 2005; Vinton & Wilke, 2011).

Implications

- This study fills a gap in the literature.
- Supports field experience as a consistent method of assessing BSW student competence (Council on Social Work Education, 2008).
- Supports the need for multiple methods of assessment (ceiling effect) (Senger & Kanthan, 2012).
- Supports the need for reliable and valid instruments (Alquraan, Bsharah, & Al-Bustanji, 2010; Council on Social Work Education, 2008; Jeffreys & Dogan, 2013; Lakanmaa et al., 2014; Rawlings, 2012).

Recommendations

- Expand the study, so results are generalizable.
- Incorporate methods for students to view their performance to see if self-assessment becomes more accurate (Hwang, Hsu, Shadiey, Chag, & Huang, 2015).
- Utilize the same assessment tool for all raters.
- Create methods for collecting and retaining all data.
- Utilize more than one faculty assessor (Leedy & Ormond, 2010).
- Clearly define the “norm group” (Geisinger, 1980; Nasrallah, 2014).
- Examine fewer variables to reduce the risk of statistical error (Benjamini & Hochberg, 2000).



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Instruments Used: Faculty Rubric Assessment 2.1.1

Levels/Criteria	Excellent (90-100%)	Meets Expectations (80-89%)	Needs Improvement (70-79%)	Unacceptable (0-69%)
<p>Identification as a Professional Social Worker (2.1.1):</p> <p>-Does the student identify a specific area of needed attention in dealing with professional boundaries? (#3)</p> <p>-Does the student effectively use supervision to gain insight into strategies for managing professional boundaries? (#6)</p>	<p>Student identifies and clearly describes an area of professional boundaries that will require ongoing attention. Student provides concrete examples.</p> <p>Student uses supervision with the field instructor to learn ways to manage specific stressors.</p>	<p>Student identifies and generally describes an area of professional boundaries that will require ongoing attention. Student uses supervision with the field instructor to learn ways to manage specific stressors.</p>	<p>Student generally discusses boundaries without identifying a personal area of concern. Student does not clearly articulate lessons/management strategies gathered from supervision with the field instructor.</p>	<p>Student fails to identify an area of ongoing professional boundaries and does not reflect lessons learned through supervision with the field instructor.</p>



Instruments Used: Field Evaluation Assessment 2.1.1

Identification as a Professional Social Worker (2.1.1)	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectation	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
The student understands how to advocate and connect clients to the services of social work.				
The student engages in personal reflection that improves his/her abilities.				
The student practices professional boundaries.				
The student acts, speaks, and writes in a professional way.				
The student makes efforts to learn the best practices of your area of social work.				
The student understands his/her responsibility to seek and use supervision.				

Instruments Used: Student Post-test Assessment 2.1.1

How would you rate your confidence in your ability to perform the following behaviors	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Somewhat Unconfident	Unconfident
I understand and practice professional roles and boundaries. (#3)				
I understand my responsibility to seek ongoing professional supervision and consultation (#6).				