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Innovations in Assessing Practice Skills: Using Social Cognitive Theory, Technology, and Self-Reflection

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Innovations in Assessing Practice Skills:
Using Social Cognitive Theory, Technology, and Self-Reflection

by

Mary Kay Brennan

A Banded Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

St. Catherine University | University of St. Thomas
School of Social Work
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Abstract

The dissertation seeks to bridge the research and practice domains in social work education by advancing disciplinary thinking and pedagogical approaches informed by social cognitive theory, reflective practice, and the use of technology. The use of social cognitive theory (Bandura 1977, 1995, 1997) and reflective practice (Schön 1983, 1987) are proposed as complementary constructs. Together these theories have the potential to guide educational approaches that result in evidenced-informed, skills-trained social workers with the capacity for critical thinking and self-reflection, thus bridging the evidence to practice gap.

The first product, a conceptual paper, advances disciplinary thinking and pedagogical approaches for teaching social work clinical practice skills by applying social cognitive theory and concepts (i.e., mastery modeling, behavioral rehearsal, self-efficacy, resiliency to difficulties) in combination with the theory of reflective practice to promote critical thinking and skill agility. Implications for social work education are discussed and pedagogical strategies offered.

The second product presents research conducted within a BSW micro practice course with 28 students, in which teaching strategies informed by social cognitive theory combined with self-reflection aided by videotaping were evaluated. The developed teaching method included the sequential steps of mastery modeling of partialized skills, multiple student behavioral rehearsals, instructor feedback, and student self-reflection of videotaped sessions. Students significantly gained proficiency and self-efficacy in interviewing and problem-solving skills.

The third product provides an overview of the presentation entitled “Practice Skill Pedagogy: Evaluating Use of Social Cognitive Theory, Taping, and Self-Reflection,” which was presented on March 3, 2017, at The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program

Directors 34th Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA. Attendees' feedback and a critical analysis of the learning process is provided.

Social cognitive theory and reflective practice and their related assumptions and concepts are complementary theoretical constructs that address both the science and artistry required in social work practice. Social work skill pedagogy developed from these theories aided by Panopto videotaping software resulted in significant gains in BSW student interviewing and problem-solving skill acquisition and improved self-efficacy. Implications for social work education indicate the promise of the combined and sequenced use of mastery modeling, behavioral rehearsal, self-reflection, and innovative use of technology in social work education, developing social work practitioners who can intervene using skills with fidelity and yet remain flexibly responsive to the client context.

Dedication/Acknowledgements

I would like to profoundly thank my dear friends and family near and far that provided moral and tangible support, cheering me on with every accomplished milestone. To Kathleen LaVoy, Jodi O'Brien, and the late Madeline Lovell who helped me envision the possibility and remained steadfast in their support. I will forever be grateful to each and every member of our DSW cohort, a true learning community. Finally, I wanted to thank, my son Matthew who is also working diligently toward completing his degree, it has been wonderful to commiserate and celebrate our school journey together.

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Innovations in Assessing Practice Skills:

Using Social Cognitive Theory, Technology, and Self-Reflection

The focus of this dissertation seeks to bridge the research and practice domains in social work education by advancing disciplinary thinking and pedagogical approaches informed by social cognitive theory, reflective practice, and the use of technology. Social workers are educated from a competency-based approach (CSWE, 2015) and increasingly, once in the field, are being called upon to engage in evidenced-based practice (Beidas & Kendall, 2010). The use of social cognitive theory (SCT) (Bandura 1977, 1995, 1997) and reflective practice (Schön 1983, 1987) are proposed as complementary constructs to inform practice pedagogy. Together these theories have the potential to guide educational approaches that result in evidenced-informed, skills-trained social workers with the capacity for critical thinking and self-reflection, thus bridging the evidence to practice gap. Teaching and assessment methods developed from incorporating both theories are supported by the use of technology, specifically videotaping using Panopto, a promising and innovative video platform for higher education.

Social work as a profession has historically held a tension between knowledge grounded in science and the role of real experience to inform and guide practice (Hollis & Taylor, 1951). This competing yet complementary duality has also been referred to within social work textbooks as the science and art of social work practice (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2015). The valuing of research-informed practice as well as critically applied knowledge, values, and skills can be found in the architecture of social work education as defined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

CSWE adopted a competency-based approach to foundation and specialized social work education at the BSW and MSW levels in 2008 and revised this in 2015 as articulated in the

Educational Policies and Academic Standards (EPAS; CSWE, 2015). Competency-based education focuses on student demonstration of purposeful application of social work knowledge, values, and skills to a range of client systems to improve well-being. The CSWE 2015 EPAS define the demonstration of competency to include the “social worker’s critical thinking, affective responses, and exercise of judgment in unique practice situations” (CSWE, 2015). Of the nine social work competencies, four address practice skills, including the ability to engage (Competency 6), assess (Competency 7), intervene (Competency 8), and evaluate (Competency 9) with systems of various sizes (CSWE, 2015). In each of the practice skills, social workers are expected to critically consider before action, what is needed given a unique practice context. In addition to the practice skill competencies, Competency 4 focuses on practice informing and being informed by research. Hence, social work education seeks to prepare professionals to appraise and apply research-informed knowledge and skills critically.

Social work practitioners, like other helping professionals, are increasingly expected to utilize evidence-based practice (EBP) protocols, manuals, and techniques in clinical practice (Powers, 2010). The underutilization of EBP within community practice settings has been noted, identifying inadequate methods of practitioner preparation as a potential contributing factor (Herschell, Kolko, Baumann, & Davis, 2010). Attempts have been made to understand and measure attitudes and resistance to adoption of evidenced-informed treatments (Aarons, 2004). Social work’s orientation to context (i.e., person in the environment) and educational emphasis on critical thinking in application of knowledge and skill may additionally contribute the profession’s response (Gambrill, 2003; Shlonsky & Gibbs, 2004; Shlonsky & Stern, 2007).

Competency-based education and the use of EBP in the field has consequently placed emphasis on theoretical constructs and teaching methods that provide opportunities for students

to acquire and demonstrate skills with proficiency while developing the capacity to be critical consumers of EBP with the ability to self-reflect on contextual aspects (Bennett-Levy & Lee, 2014). SCT (Bandura, 1986) and reflective practice (Schön, 1987; Kinsella, 2009) can provide a needed counter-balance to the proliferation of manualized treatment through a broadened focus that includes the capacity of the social worker to utilize EBP. Pedagogy that engages students to participate in learning actively (Cross, et al., 2011, Kolb, 1984; Swell, 1968) with feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) and deeply analyze their progress through self-assessment (Bay & Macfarlane 2011; Bennett-Levy & Lee, 2014; Kinsella, 2010) is proposed in this dissertation.

Conceptual Frameworks

Two conceptual frameworks guided this dissertation, SCT (Bandura, 1986) and reflective practice (Schön, 1987). Given the focus of this scholarly work (i.e., practice skill attainment and self-reflection), the first and overarching theory that guided the research was SCT (formally called social learning theory) by Albert Bandura (1986). SCT provided a grounding theoretical lens upon which the teaching of social work practice skills was situated. SCT has been proposed as a comprehensive conceptual theory to guide social work education and training (Thyer & Wodarski, 1990). Thyer and Wodarski (1990) further noted the need for a "...discussion of the more intensive use of teaching methods derived from social learning theory to train students in sophisticated practice skills" (p. 150).

Theoretical concepts from SCT, which were particularly relevant to the teaching and student acquisition of new professional skills, included mastery modeling, guided practice and behavioral rehearsal, self-efficacy, and training for resiliency to difficulties. Mastery modeling (Bandura, 1997) by the instructor provided skill demonstrations for student observation and discussion. Guided practices of partialized skills in simulated situations (also referred to as

behavioral rehearsal) have a rich history of use in various professional training efforts (Beidas, Cross, & Dorsey, 2014; Cross, et. al, 2011; Dorsey, et.al, 2016). Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1995), involves self-confidence regarding one's perception of skill competence to engage in action that results in achievement of desired outcomes. Multiple opportunities for confidence-building practice was thought by Bandura to improve motivation to gain skills. Attention to analyzing and understanding how intervention decisions were made and why added to students' ability to think and practice critically, which Bandura (1997) termed training for resiliencies to difficulties. The concept of training for resilience to difficulties was particularly relevant, because it spoke to the development and use of practitioner wisdom when faced with the complexities of real clients with a myriad of problems, in real situations.

Reflective practice, according to Daniel Schön (1983), focuses on a professional's ability to reflect while engaging in action and afterward on action taken, in order to gain understanding and knowledge to strengthen practice. Reflective practice places emphasis on the development and transformative power of gained practice wisdom. The ability to reflect while in the moment, referred to also as embodied reflection (Schön, 1987) is viewed as both a theory to conceptualize and a method to improve skills. Several concepts of reflective practice have relevance in the development of critical thinking and as a counter balance to EBP.

The concept of artistry of practice prompts trainees in social and health professions to expand from a technical proficiency approach (Blatt, Plack, Maring, Mintz, & Simmens, 2007; Kinsella, 2007; McCoyd & Kerson, 2013). Schön (1987) developed reflective practice in response to his perception of the dominance of technical rationality that promotes the concept of practitioners as problem solvers drawing exclusively from scientific theory. He saw practitioners employing the use of skills-based knowledge but being explicit in the underpinnings of case

conceptualization and choice of intervention. Reflective practice has been used to develop various teaching strategies and approaches, including the practice in context framework (McCoyd & Kerson, 2013) that promotes anti-oppressive practice focused on deconstructing dominant discourses and power differentials in practice (Bay & Macfarlane, 2001).

Summary of Banded Dissertation Products

This banded dissertation is composed of three papers. The first product is a conceptual paper entitled *Social Cognitive Theory and Reflective Practice: Adding the Art to Evidence-based Practice*, which analyzes the use of SCT and reflective practice to inform the teaching of social work skills. The second product is a pedagogical research paper, entitled *Evaluating Practice Skill Pedagogy: Using Social Cognitive Theory, Technology, and Self-Reflection*. This paper examines BSW student micro practice skill attainment when taught from a SCT orientation, incorporating principles of reflective practice and utilizing videotaping of skill practice. Finally, the third paper, entitled *Practice Skill Pedagogy: Evaluating Use of Social Cognitive Theory, Taping, and Self-Reflection*, summarizes and critically reflects on the experience of presenting the research contained in the second paper, including attendees' responses and evaluations at the 34th Annual Baccalaureate Program Directors' (BPD) of Social Work Conference.

The conceptual paper entitled *Social Cognitive Theory and Reflective Practice: Adding the Art to Evidence-Based Practice* advances disciplinary thinking and pedagogical approaches for social work clinical practice skills by applying Bandura's (1986) SCT and concepts (i.e., mastery modeling, simulation, self-efficacy, resiliency to difficulties) in combination with Schön's theory of reflective practice (1983, 1987) to promote autonomous critical thinking and skill agility. The theories serve to provide a theoretical base for a renewed focus on the capacities

and practice wisdom of the social worker in light of an increasing scientific focus in the field. Implications for social work education are discussed, and pedagogical strategies are offered.

The second product of the dissertation is a paper entitled *Evaluating Practice Skill Pedagogy: Using Social Cognitive Theory, Technology, and Self-Reflection*. An research-based evaluation of teaching strategies within a BSW micro practice course informed by social cognitive theory and concepts combined with self-reflection aided by videotaping was found to have effectively trained social work students to use interviewing and problem-solving skills. Students significantly grew in their ability to demonstrate skills with fidelity as well as their development of self-efficacy. Findings also indicated that students were more likely to be receptive to evidence-based practice if intrinsically motivated and had an element of choice. Overall, pedagogical methods informed by SCT, using self-reflection with videotaping, produce confident, critical thinking, skilled social work students who are open to EPB.

The third product of this dissertation is a paper that provides an overview of the presentation entitled *Practice Skill Pedagogy: Evaluating Use of Social Cognitive Theory, Taping, and Self-Reflection, which was presented March 3, 2017, at The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors 34th Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA*. This national conference research paper presentation provided a summary of the research conducted in product two. Attendees' feedback and a critical analysis of the learning process is provided.

Discussion

The research of this banded dissertation adds to the body of work in the areas of social work practice skill pedagogy, the developing conversation of a bridge between evidenced-based practice and practitioner wisdom through self-reflection, and innovations in the use of

technology . Students who were trained in interviewing skills and the problem solving method within a BSW micro practice class using pedagogy informed by SCT and reflective practice made significant gains post intervention. Students were able to demonstrate interviewing and problem solving skills with fidelity using behavioral rehearsal while engaging in self-reflection to improve skill acquisition and generalizability to varying situations. Self-efficacy, which has been linked to motivation significantly, improved as students had multiple opportunities to practice and gain confidence. The incorporation of Panopto, a video platform used to record behavioral rehearsals and embed reflective comments was integral to skill acquisitions.

SCT and reflective practice were found to be complementary theoretical constructs to inform a social work practice skill pedagogy that addresses both the science and artistry needed by skilled practitioners. Together the theories address both the acquiring of practice skills with fidelity and the development of practitioner wisdom to be flexible when necessary in clinical situations. SCT and its related concepts (i.e., mastery modeling, guided practice and behavioral rehearsal, training for resiliency to difficulties, and self-efficacy) can be successfully used to design teaching methods and assess attainment of practice skills. Reflective practice theory adds a dimension of critical analysis and self-assessment to the development and use of practice skills.

The intervention, consisting of the method of designed instruction, was overwhelmingly confirmed as effective. The developed teaching components of mastery modeling, behavioral rehearsal, taped simulations of skill demonstrations, instructor feedback, and student self-reflection sequenced in their delivery resulted in significant skill gain. Behavioral rehearsal was fidelity to a taught skill, confirming Dorsey and colleagues (2016) work. When behavioral rehearsal is combined with self-reflection over multiple opportunities to practice, it seems to anchor the acquired skill within a students' repertoire of interventions. This solidity of skill

proficiency allows for skills to be banked and then flexibly drawn upon when in a simulated session, which can create room for practitioner wisdom responsive to varying client situations. The integration of well-honed skills with reflection in the moment and afterward serves to successfully integrate both theoretical constructs.

Implications for Social Work Education

There are five proposed implications for social work education. First, SCT can provide a comprehensive conceptual construct to guide social work practice education and training. SCT and its assumptions are consistent with social work's person in the environment focus, in that learned behavior takes place through interactions between the person and their environment. The SCT theoretical concepts of mastery modeling, guided practice, resiliency to difficulties, and self-efficacy are especially relevant to the teaching and critical application of practice skills. Second, students' skills can be developed through multiple confidence-building behavioral rehearsals and regular self-reflection, with the byproduct of increased self-efficacy. Also, extensive practice with frequent feedback enables students to grow in their proficiency and decrease their fear of making mistakes. This finding supports Bandura's stance that self-efficacy is a strong determinant of motivation for behavior change.

Third, the pedagogy of mastery modeling of practice skills initially demonstrated in their entirety and then partialized for videotaped student behavioral rehearsal resulted in significant gains in skill proficiency. Students were able to demonstrate the taught interviewing and problem-solving skills with fidelity, as observed by the instructor in taped behavioral rehearsals. Fourth, students can be trained habits of self-reflection to build the capacity for resiliency to difficulties, that is to respond with knowledge and skills needed in the moment within the myriad of client situations that arise. The development of reflective practice seeks to make explicit case

conceptualization and the thinking behind intervention decisions. Finally, simulated behavior rehearsals videotaped with the use of the learning platform Panopto can provide a valuable method of instruction as well as skill assessment.

Implications for Future Research

Future research could build upon these initial promising results to include continuing the refinement of teaching and methods of evaluation. The use of SCT as an overarching construct to inform the teaching of specific practice skills can be further elucidated. The pedagogical pattern of instructor partialized skill modeling, student behavioral rehearsal, feedback, self-reflection based on videotaped sessions, and explicit identification of internal decision-making led to solid skill demonstration with fidelity.

While developing a pedagogical approach that results in accurate skill acquisition, the use of reflective practice has the potential to assist in the development of critical thinking and agility in the practice moment. The potential of this theory could be developed into specific teaching methods, similar to how SCT was developed. The disciplined use of self as a reflective practitioner could assist in moving the profession toward evidenced-informed practice while maintaining fidelity.

Finally, the use of a video platform (i.e., Panopto) can advance the current research in use of technology in practice skill development. The initial coding tool developed to evaluate skill demonstrations could be refined. Prompts for reflective practice as in a digital process note could yield multi-dimensional learning. In conclusion, pedagogy informed by SCT, reflective practice, and a video taping learning platform can move the social work field into the next wave of research bridging science and practitioner wisdom.

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Social Cognitive Theory and Reflective Practice:

Adding the Art to Evidence-based Practice

Abstract

The field of social work has historically held the tensions between the scientific grounding of knowledge and skills and the *art* of practice through the disciplined use of self. Competency-based education in schools of social work and the use of evidenced-based practice figure predominantly in social worker preparation and practice. This dominating scientific focus or technical rationality has been at the cost of the simultaneous development of the epistemology of practice. Social cognitive theory (SCT) and Schön's reflective practice can provide a conceptual base for a renewed focus on the capacities and practical wisdom of the social worker. This paper advances disciplinary thinking and pedagogical approaches for teaching social work clinical practice skills by applying SCT and concepts (i.e., mastery modeling, simulation, self-efficacy, resiliency to difficulties) in combination with the theory of reflective practice to promote critical thinking and skill agility. Implications for social work education are discussed and pedagogical strategies offered.

Keywords: Social cognitive theory, reflective practice, epistemology of practice, technical rationality, and evidenced-based practice.

The purpose of this conceptual article is to examine the relevance and application of social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1986) and reflective practice (Schön, 1983, 1987) within the clinical education and training of social work students. First, a discussion is presented on why a renewed focus on the capacities and practical wisdom of the social worker is relevant and needed at this time. Second, a literature review of SCT and the theory of reflective practice's assumptions and concepts relating to professional training is discussed. Both theories offer theoretical frames to advance social work practice teaching focused on practice wisdom and skill agility. Finally, the implication of applying SCT and reflective practice in the form of pedagogical strategies to ground the teaching of evidenced-based practice skills are offered. The formation of critical thinking and reflective social workers that possess evidenced-based practice skills is faithful to the art and science of the profession. This article seeks to advance disciplinary thinking and pedagogy in support of training social work practitioners to use all of their capacities when using competency based skills and evidenced-based strategies.

The Use of Self in a Time of Competency and Evidenced-based Practice

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) adopted a competency-based approach to social work education in 2008 as articulated in the Educational Policies and Academic Standards (EPAS; [Council on Social Work Education, 2015](#)). Competency-based education focuses on student-demonstrated attainment of the knowledge, values, and skill elements of each competency (Holloway, Black, Hoffman, & Pierce, n.d.). Within the 2015 EPAS, four of the nine competencies address practice skills, including the ability to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with systems of various sizes (CSWE, 2015). Also, CSWE EPAS (CSWE, 2015) stipulate practice-informed research and research –informed practice utilizing critical thinking.

Hence the profession's education and training of future social workers seek to advance the empirical science of our profession.

In tandem with the recalibration of social education toward competency-based practice, is the rise in prominence of evidenced-based practice (EBP). Social work practitioners are increasingly being called upon to utilize EBP across a variety of clients, presenting problems, and settings (Singer & Greeno, 2013). Evidenced-based practice ideally constitutes treatments that have been scientifically validated (Singer & Greeno, 2013). The emphasis on EBP has resulted in the growth of manualized practice. To examine the efficacy of emerging practice approaches often contained in prescriptive manuals, practitioners must implement the approach with fidelity. Research within the implementation science field has focused on identifying successful elements of teaching, training, and supervision of an EBP with practitioners (Beidas & Kendall, 2010). Successful implementation is evaluated by the degree of adherence to the treatment protocol of the EBP. Concerns have been raised about the seemingly reductionistic approach inherent in EBP (Leitner, 2005; Schlonsky & Gibbs, 2004) in the service of fidelity. In pursuit of fidelity, the capacities of the practitioner appear to be de-emphasized other than their ability to follow protocols.

In the quest for accurate implementation, the profession cannot lose sight of the value of wisdom and insight gained from experience, the critical thinking in the *art* of applying the knowledge, values, and skills (Schlonsky & Gibbs, 2004). The social work profession, as well as other disciplines in the helping field, has made significant strides in the articulation and advancement of practice anchored in research. Pedagogy that targets students' abilities to learn, demonstrate, and retain practice skills with accuracy (Bennett-Levy & Lee, 2014; Cross et al., 2011) is growing. However, the developed capacity to respond with agility to the myriad of

clinical variations in real life is equally imperative. This article seeks to examine the contribution SCT (Bandura, 1986) and reflective practice (Schön, 1987) can make to inform and advance pedagogy for the professional use of self in the world of evidenced-based practice.

Literature Review

SCT provides a theoretical framework for designing learning opportunities that integrate knowledge, skills, and use of practitioner wisdom (Bandura, 1986). Active learning is a critical pedagogical approach that has been found to promote deep learning by anchoring knowledge and acquisition of skills (Cross, et al., 2011; Kolb, 1984). The SCT concepts of modeling, mastery modeling (Bandura, 1997), behavioral rehearsal (i.e., role play) (Beidas, Cross, & Dorsey, 2014; Swell, 1968); with simulated clients (Linsk & Tunney, 1997; Rawlings, 2012) actively engages learners. Also, SCT, when applied to professional training, focuses on teaching practitioners to possess a resiliency to difficulties (Bandura, 1997). The role of feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) and self-reflection (Bennett-Levy & Lee, 2014; Kinsella, 2010; Schön, 1987) had been found to further skill attainment and self-efficacy. These teaching methods have the goal of producing knowledgeable and skilled practitioners who can flexibly draw upon their professional capacities to implement evidence-based practice techniques.

Social Cognitive Theory

Defined. The overarching theory guiding this conceptual paper is SCT formally called social learning theory by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1986). It is a theoretical construct that grew out of analyzing the shortcomings of learning theory as articulated in the 1950s (Bandura & Walters, 1963). Bandura initially developed SCT and the concept of modeling for the treatment of fears and phobias (Price & Archbold, 1995). As originally conceived, SCT situates behavior change within the influences of the environment on the person and the resulting cognitive

processes that alter behavior (Bandura, 1977). Individuals learn behaviors through observation (i.e., modeling), prompting cognitive consideration, and resulting in the incorporation of new behavior through imitation (Bandura, 1986). An assumption of SCT is that it focuses on current behavior and the social influences to modify, change, extinguish, and develop new behavior. It is also assumed that behavior is learned and can be changed without exploration of early history as in psychodynamic theory. In 1997, Bandura continued the development of SCT with the publication of *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. In this seminal text, Bandura (1997) elucidates the role of human agency that is, perceived self-efficacy in human functioning. Bandura maintained that just as the larger environment influences behavioral change so does self-concept and beliefs of self-competence (Bandura, 1997). The cognitive learning of behaviors and the role of self-efficacy has direct implications not only for clinical use with clients but also in the professional teaching of practitioners.

Modeling and mastery modeling. Modeling is a fundamental concept of SCT. In modeling, “learning is assumed to occur through coding of representational processes based upon exposure to instructional, observational or imagined material” (Price & Archbold, 1995, p. 1266). Modeling of desired behaviors occurs initially in more simplistic forms demonstrated by the instructor, leader, or therapist and observed by the student, participant, or client and then practiced until achieved. Additional modeling continues gradually increasing approximation to final desired behavior. Modeling has been found to influence thought and affect in addition to just behavior. Behavior is changed through shaping, differential reinforcement, and successive approximations.

Mastery modeling is a concept that extends Bandura’s early work of modeling with a focus on professional behavioral learning. Bandura (1997) describes mastery modeling as a

process to develop “intellectual, social, and behavioral competencies” to fulfill occupational roles (p. 440). In mastery modeling students observe relevant occupational skills modeled by instructors to “convey the basic rules and strategies” (Bandura, 1997, p. 440); have opportunities for guided practice in simulated situations to develop proficiency with the skills.; and then have opportunities to apply newly learned skills with assistance. Modeling and mastery modeling techniques are uniquely applicable to the instruction of clinical skills.

Guided practice. Discussion about choices for actions needs to be made explicit to develop critical thinking and utilize reasoning skills based on professional knowledge and values. Bandura refers to this as guided practice. He observed that students benefitted from learning the thinking and reasoning behind the action. Bandura (1997) described the need to provide guided practice with simulated situations for mastery modeling, emphasizing that proficiency requires extensive practice structured in such a way that fear of making mistakes is minimized (p. 443). Use of role-plays has been established teaching practice (Swell, 1968). While role plays provide real-time opportunities for active learning, it has limitations due to variability in students doing client acting. This hindrance is remedied with standardized case vignettes as used in simulated situations within mastery modeling (Linsk & Tunney, 1997). Multiple opportunities for guided practice (i.e., role plays) with standardized case vignettes have the potential to deepen and broaden clinical practice skills.

Training for resiliency to difficulties. Perhaps most relevant to the training of social workers is the SCT concept of resiliency in the face of challenges. Given students will eventually be placed in settings with real clients with real issues, the importance of training resiliency to difficulties is essential (Bandura, 1997). Sample areas with this area of training include self-guidance, self-motivation, self-management when unforeseen stressors appear as they always do

in the work of helping professionals. This element of SCT maps well onto reflective practice, which will be discussed later.

Self-efficacy and motivation. Self-efficacy is also a significant influence in behavioral learning according to Bandura (1977). The participant through guided practice gains confidence or self-efficacy in being able to engage in desired behavior despite outside influences or internalized barriers (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is the belief that one can perform actions resulting in a desired outcome (Ashford & LeCroy, 2012). Bandura (1997) explained, “People’s level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than what is objectively true” (p. 2). Therefore *perceived* self-efficacy, the belief in one’s abilities to engage in actions to attain a desired outcome is central to achieving behavioral learning (Bandura, 1997).

Bandura (1995) describes two types of expectations connected to self-efficacy: outcome expectations (i.e., a particular behavior will lead to certain outcomes) and efficacy expectations (i.e., an individual's belief that if certain behaviors are engaged, they will successfully produce desired outcomes). The role of motivation is central to personal efficacy. Motivation is “how a behavior is activated and maintained” (Bandura, 1977, p.160) through choices and actions. If an individual believes for instance that they have no power to enact or influence change, they will not attempt to take action (Bandura, 1997). Thus a proposition in SCT is that through repeated modeling and gradually gained self-efficacy in practice behaviors; individuals can engage in learned behaviors in the real environment.

Schön’s Reflective Practice

Defined. Daniel Schön’s (1983) theory on reflective practice centers on professionals’ ability to reflect while engaging *in* action and retrospectively *on* action taken, to produce

knowledge immediately employed to strengthen practice. Specifically, reflective practice according to Schön is derived from the conception of an epistemology of practice (i.e., how we come to know or gain practice wisdom; Schön, 1983; Kinsella, 2009). This knowing, also termed as phronesis is defined as wise action (Kinsella, 2010). Unique to Schön's (1983) conception of reflective practice is the idea of embodied reflection, the process of reflecting while in the moment. The practitioner is viewed as an experienced professional capable of creating knowing-in-action, as termed by Schön (1987). The theory of reflective practice has been well received by health and social practitioners because it resonates with their on the ground experience (Kinsella, 2009). His work on reflective practice is applicable as both a theory to conceptualize the value of practice wisdom and as a method to improve practitioner skills.

Artistry of Practice. The fields of health and social care have drawn heavily upon Schön's work in their respective professional preparation (Kinsella, 2007; McCoyd & Kerson, 2013; Blatt, Plack, Maring, Mintz, & Simmens, 2007). Kinsella (2010) has summarized the legacy of Schön's theory and concepts as it relates to social and health practice, with the artistry of practice figuring prominently. She notes that in the quest of professionalization, the artistry of practice was replaced by systematic application of scientific knowledge. Both of Schön's books, *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) and *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (1987) were written to elucidate the value of artistry versus the singular focus on technical proficiency. The theory of reflective practice has much to offer to this larger discussion on adding artistry to evidenced-based practice.

Technical rationality. Schön's theory on reflective practice was in response to and critique of technical rationality. Schön (1987) maintained that science alone was inadequate to respond to the complexities of human experience. He defined technical rationality as the practice

approach in which professionals are seen as “instrumental problem solvers” (1987, p. 3) who draw from scientific theory. Technical rationality disregards the practice wisdom and competence of the practitioner in divergent situations. Schön (1983) went on to suggest, “Let us search instead for an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive process which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict (p. 49).” The continued growth and dominance of technical rationality in practice can be seen in the emphasis on evidenced-based practice and strivings toward implementation with fidelity.

Implications of Social Cognitive Theory and Reflective Practice for Social Work Education

SCT has been proposed as a comprehensive conceptual theory, to guide social work education and training (Thyer & Wodarski, 1990). Further, Thyer and Wodarski (1990) saw the potential of SCT to be employed pedagogically to teach advanced clinical practice skills. Schön’s theory of reflective practice also lends itself to and compliments SCT. Reflective practice generates wise action and knowledge wisdom which is additive to scientific knowledge.

Person in the environment focus. SCT and its assumptions are consistent with Social Work’s person in the environment focus. SCT in its essence focuses on the individual and the mutually influencing interactions between individuals their environment. Behaviors are learned and given meaning through cognition. Learned behavior and cognition about it, is situated within the context of the person and their environment. All systemic levels (i.e., individual, family, school, community, broad social climate, global) are involved in learning.

Self-efficacy and motivation. Another SCT assumption is that perceived self-efficacy influences motivation and therefore the capacity and drive for behavior change. Bandura (1997, 2004) examines the role of self–efficacy within the person (i.e., cognition, biological health,

psychological health and mental illness, physical capacity-athleticism), group (i.e., family, team) in the settings of school, organizations, and sociocultural changes. Therefore, if self-efficacy is a strong determinant of motivation for behavior change as Bandura theorizes, then teaching methods that build self-efficacy is important on all systemic levels.

A comprehensive conceptual theory for practice. Thyer and Wodarski (1990) observe that social learning theory (now referred to as SCT) has been used effectively with all ages of individuals to intervene upon systemic interactions. Further, the authors discuss the benefits of social learning theory in the process of assessment and intervention within groups, families, and organizations. Bandura (1997) began to apply SCT and concepts to the teaching and learning of new professional skills. The SCT theoretical concepts of mastery modeling, guided practice, resiliency to difficulties, and self-efficacy is especially relevant to the teaching and critical application of practice skills.

Instructive mastery modeling experiences. In constructing mastery or instructive modeling experiences, Bandura (1997) has specific recommendations that are very relevant for teaching social work practice skills. First, he suggests providing a modeling experience of the complete skill competency followed by the partializing of the complex skills into subskills. Breaking down multilayered skills into its smaller parts allows for increased attention and concentration. Once the subskills are mastered they can be combined back to the complete skill. Operationally defining elements of practice skills competencies can then be used for self-evaluation for example in the form of a checklist (Gleeson, 1990). Critical in this process, so as to avoid rote and scripted responses, is to provide rules and strategies to deal with variations and different situations that will arise. By providing rules and strategies, retention is improved as is greater applicability to a variety of situations.

The likelihood of students embracing skill practice will also depend on their motivation and linked perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). Therefore, exposure to similarly skilled peers experiencing success in solving practice problems could positively influence their self-efficacy. It should be noted that the correlative relationship between perceived self-efficacy and increased skill acquisition has not been proven (Rawlings, 2012). Rawlings (2012) hypothesized that with increased knowledge and skills, bachelor of social work (BSW) students rated themselves lower post skill education than in pre-skill education because they were more realistic.

Opportunities for practice with feedback. Proficiency requires extensive practice (Bandura, 1997) structured in such a way that fear of making mistakes is minimized. For example, using both cognitive rehearsals, (i.e., writing responses to practice vignettes) and behavioral rehearsal as in role plays for an active application could assist in the anchoring of skills. Within the step of skill perfection, Bandura stresses that feedback for improvement is essential. The use of taped skill practice, which is observed by the student, and instructor to highlight strengths and constructively areas of needed growth are invaluable. If done sensitively with confidence building in mind and use of corrective modeling, students benefit.

Training resiliency to difficulties. Finally, given students are in placements with real clients with real issues, the importance of training resiliency to difficulties is essential. Opportunities for multiple and varied practices combined with self-reflection, consultation, and feedback on such elements as case conceptualization and interventions used, can develop practitioner wisdom. The concepts of self-guidance, self-motivation, self-management when unforeseen stressors appear as they always do in the work of helping professionals concretize the social work value of the disciplined use of self.

This author is studying the use of SCT theory concepts as a 1) a pedagogical method to improve foundational social work skill teaching and training; 2) method to measure skill acquisition with fidelity to evidenced-based practice skills taught using designed rubrics. I am also examining 3) the use of a digital recorded skilled practice opportunities and structured reflection to improve accurately perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Bandura (1997) maintained that perceived self-efficacy impacts the degree to which one can fully benefit from modeling. BSW Students currently in the author's foundation practice course need support to decrease anxiety and feel safe to practice social work skills, digitally record those simulated practices, and view them with this instructor. As their confidence builds, it has been anecdotal observed by this instructor that their skill demonstration improves. Students also report greater ease and ability to cognitively access skills practiced consistently with Bandura's conception of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

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Evaluating Practice Skill Pedagogy:
Using Social Cognitive Theory, Technology, and Self-Reflection

Abstract

Competency-based education in social work and evidenced-based practice in the profession require the demonstration of practice skills with fidelity along with the development of critical thinking. Within a BSW micro practice course, teaching strategies informed by social cognitive theory and concepts (i.e., mastery modeling, behavioral rehearsal, resiliency to difficulties, and self-efficacy) combined with self-reflection aided by videotaping was found to have effectively trained social work students to use interviewing and problem-solving skills. Students significantly grew in their ability to demonstrate skills with fidelity as well as their development of self-efficacy. Findings also indicated that students were more likely to be receptive to evidence-based practice if intrinsically motivated and had an element of choice. Overall, pedagogical methods informed by social cognitive theory, using self-reflection with videotaping, produce confident, critical thinking, skilled social work students who are open to evidenced-based practice.

Keywords: Pedagogy of social work practice skills, evidenced-based practice, social cognitive theory, behavioral rehearsal, self-efficacy, reflective practice, technology, videotaping.

Social workers are educated from a competency-based approach (www.cswe.org) and increasingly once in the field, being called upon to engage in evidenced-based practice (Beidas & Kendall, 2010) with fidelity. Thus social work students must learn and demonstrate acquired practice skills initially in the classroom and then in the field. Given this deepening focus in education and practice on the attainment and performance of particular knowledge, skills, and techniques, research of methods that improve implementation is warranted. Teaching methods that train students to learn, retain, and monitor their ability to implement skills with fidelity have gained importance (Bennett-Levy & Lee, 2014). A pedagogical approach informed by both social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1977, 1986) and reflective practice (Schön, 1987; Kinsella, 2009) utilizing technology (Peterson, 2014) can provide a teaching method that produces skilled social workers who can access their self-assessment capacities (McCoyd & Kerson, 2013) to retain acquired skills over time.

The purpose of this pedagogical research was to examine whether the teaching of micro practice interviewing skills and the problem-solving model to BSW students utilizing SCT concepts (Bandura, 1977, 1986) in combination with videotaping and self-reflection resulted in significant skill attainment and increased self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Teaching strategies informed by SCT in a micro practice course offered simulated opportunities for students to observe instructor-led role-plays (i.e., mastery modeling) and rehearse skills (i.e., behavioral rehearsal). Mastery modeling (Bandura, 1997) and the related concepts of behavioral rehearsal (Beidas, Cross, & Dorsey, 2014; Cross et al., 2011), role-play (Swell, 1968), and simulation (Linsk & Tunney, 1997; Rawlings 2012) have a rich history of use as active learning strategies in various professional training programs. Additionally, the use of technology for videotaping students' skill practice in structured role-plays over the progression of a course has initially

proved to be a valuable tool (Peterson, 2014) by allowing for direct observation, review, feedback, and self-reflection.

The focus of this research was to illuminate a method to teach practice skills and critical thinking about their use in the context of competency-based education and evidence-based practice. Through the combination of instruction informed by SCT - especially modeling and behavioral rehearsal, the use of videotaping, and the practice of self-reflection, this research sought to evaluate whether student practice skill acquisition could significantly improve as well as students' sense of self-efficacy. Secondarily, this research sought to offer insights into the evidence to practice gap through testing the efficacy of a pedagogical model for implementation.

Literature Review

Competency-Based Education in Social Work

A competency-based educational approach was adopted by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 2008 and revised in 2015. Competencies for social work professional practice are articulated in CSWE's Educational Policies and Academic Standards (EPAS). This change represented a significant shift in focus from the prior input focused and curriculum driven model. Quoting from CSWE's 2015 Educational Policy and Academic Standards (EPAS) (www.cswe.org), "Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations^[1]_{SEP} in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being." Social work competency-based education emphasizes output (Holloway, Black, Hoffman, & Pierce, n.d.); that is, student attainment and successful demonstration of the elements contained in the 2015 EPAS nine competencies.

The 2015 EPAS contain nine competencies, four of which focus on practice skills, including the ability to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations (CSWE, 2015). Within each of these competencies are specific practice behaviors (Table 2.1). Thus, upon the completion of a social work practice course with individuals and families, students are expected to demonstrate the skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with competence.

Table 2.1

CSWE 2015 EPAS

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
 - apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
 - develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
 - select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.
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Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
 - apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
 - use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
 - negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and
 - facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.
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Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
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- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical [EBP] frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
 - critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
 - apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
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CSWE accredited social work programs design curricula to support students in achieving the competencies upon completion of their degrees. Social work courses and their corresponding learning objectives map across these competencies culminating in an integrated curricular whole. Practice courses are one piece of this curriculum matrix where students learn, master, and demonstrate knowledge and skill competence. Hence, methods of teaching that maximize students' abilities to learn and demonstrate practice skills are critical (Cross et al., 2011). The role of feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) and self-reflection (Bennett-Levy & Lee, 2014; Kinsella, 2010) furthers skill attainment.

Competency-based education calls for assessment methods targeting both students' acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as the program's ability to successfully deliver its curriculum. A culminating skill demonstration using video recorded simulated client situations within a micro practice course could potentially provide valuable and reliable data for students, instructors, and programs.

Evidenced-based Practice

Defined. Evidenced-based practice (EBP) has its origins within the medical field when first introduced as evidenced-based medicine (EBM) in 1997 by Sackett, Richardson, Rosenberg & Hayes (as cited in Schlosky & Stern, 2007). As originally conceived EBM draws upon the "integration of current best evidence, client clinical state, and circumstances, and client preferences and actions" (Schlosky & Stern, 2007, p. 603). In transitioning EBM to EBP,

differing interpretations emerged, some of which embodied a more reductionist view. For example, Singer & Greeno (2013) state EBP has been commonly understood as a term used for interventions that have been empirically tested through controlled trials and found to be effective. Interventions are well defined and controlled within the traditional scientific method. However, Kazdin (2008) made a distinction between evidenced-based treatment (EBT) and EBP. Evidenced-based treatment was viewed as the more narrowly defined testing of interventions through controlled trials. Evidence-based practice was a broader concept, which described “clinical practice that is informed by evidence about interventions, clinical expertise, and patient needs, values, and preferences, and their integration in decision-making about individual care” (p. 147). Evidenced-based practice while advancing the scientifically informed use of skills also incorporates the clinical context; taking into account the client’s ecology and practitioner wisdom.

Implementation. Evidence-based programs have gained prominence in a surge of treatment manuals, trainings, and models. For example, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA) maintains the National Registry of Evidenced-based Programs and Practices (NREPP; <http://www.samhsa.gov/nrepp>). NREPP both evaluates and maintains an online database of evidenced-based programs and practices for public information and use. Central to EBP is utilization with fidelity. Research within the domain of implementation science has begun to try to understand the complexities inherent in the transfer of knowledge and skill from one setting to another (Hershell, Kolko, Baumann, & Davis, 2010). Identification of elements of teaching, training, and supervision that increase and improve the use of evidenced-based practice (Beidas & Kendall, 2010) is central. Also, states have developed supports for implementation research including analysis of the gap between research and

practice. For example, the Washington State Department of Health and Human Services within its Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, studies and reports on the use of evidenced-based practice (<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/bha/division-behavioral-health-and-recovery/evidence-based-and-research-based-practices>). The increased understanding and testing of pedagogical methods that results in gained skills that can accurately be demonstrated and implemented in the field is central to dissemination of evidenced-based practice.

Social Work Education and Social Cognitive Theory

SCT as initially developed and titled by Albert Bandura (1986) as social learning theory is the conceptual framework informing this research. SCT provides a grounding theoretical lens upon which the teaching of social work practice skills can be situated. SCT has been proposed as a *comprehensive conceptual* theory, to guide social work education and training (Thyer & Wodarski, 1990). Thyer and Wodarski (1990) further noted the applicability of SCT to the instruction of higher-level practice skills.

Bandura's seminal social learning theory (SLT; 1977) maintained that behavior was learned within the context of the environment. Individuals can learn behaviors through observation, cognitive consideration, and imitation (Bandura, 1986). SLT and its concepts were initially developed as a treatment model. Over time, Bandura (1997) expanded social learning theory, renaming as SCT and sought to apply to professional training. Theoretical concepts from SCT, which are especially relevant in teaching and learning new professional skills include behavioral rehearsal, mastery modeling, guided practice, development of critical thinking, resiliency to difficulties, and self-efficacy.

Behavioral rehearsal and mastery modeling. The use of pedagogical strategies that actively engage the learner through the provision of simulated practice opportunities has evolved

over time with increasing specificity. Behavioral rehearsal (BR) is a concept used in the field of cognitive psychology to describe simulated skill practice (Beidas, Cross, & Dorsey, 2014).

Behavioral rehearsal is increasingly being used as a strategy for both the training and measuring fidelity of gained evidenced-based practices (EBP; Dorsey, et al., 2016). It is most similar to Bandura's (1997) concept of mastery modeling versus the commonly used term of role-playing. While role-playing is an established active learning technique (Swell, 1968; Kolb, 1984), the experiential aspect promoted a high degree of variability in what was acted out and hence what was learned. In contrast, behavioral rehearsal and mastery modeling have in common the use of case scenarios, which are carefully developed to target particular issues and skills.

Mastery modeling builds upon the earlier social learning core concept of modeling but with application to the sphere of professional skill development (Bandura, 1997). Modeling in its original form is the process of an individual demonstrating the desired behavior, which is observed, cognitively encoded, and then practiced until mastered by another individual. In this instance, students observe the modeling of occupational skills by instructors to learn the practice competencies of a given profession. Students then are provided multiple opportunities for simulated practice with developed scenarios accompanied with feedback to gain proficiency.

In constructing instructive modeling and guided practice, Bandura (1997) has specific recommendations that are very relevant for teaching social work practice skills. First, mastery modeling seeks to provide a modeling experience of the full skill competency followed by the partializing of the complex skills into subskills. Breaking down multilayered skills into its smaller parts allows for increased attention and concentration. During a process of guided practice, students use modeled subskills in simulated experiences with peer and instructor feedback. Once the subskills are mastered, they can be combined back to the complete skill.

Guided practice, development of critical thinking, and resiliency to difficulties.

Guided practice can serve to cultivate in students critical thinking and the use of reasoning when employing professionals' skills with clients. Through explicit discussions regarding the application of knowledge and decisions to use particular skills during mastery modeling and behavioral rehearsals, students are learning the reasoning behind the actions. Extensive guided practice with varying simulated situations builds proficiency in skill, depth in reasoning, and minimizes the fear of making mistakes, according to Bandura (1997).

Using both cognitive rehearsals, for example, writing responses to practice vignettes and skill rehearsal in simulated situations provide an active application (Beidas, Cross, & Dorsey, 2014). Within the step of skill perfection, feedback is essential for improvement (Sun, Merrill, & Peterson, 2001). Taped skill practice affords the opportunity of both students self-observation and instructor review to highlight strengths and constructively, areas of needed growth. Operationally defining indicators of practice skill competency can be used for self-evaluation and instructor review, for example in the form of a checklist (Gleeson, 1990) or rubric. If provided sensitively with confidence building in mind and use of corrective modeling, students benefit without sacrificing self-efficacy.

The training of students to possess a resiliency to difficulties (Bandura, 1997) is an essential concept of SCT. While behavioral rehearsal and mastery modeling provide structured, observable skill development to use evidenced-informed practice with fidelity, students also need guidance on the use of critical thinking. Essential in the feedback process, so as to avoid rote and scripted responses, is to provide rules and strategies to deal with variations and different situations that will inevitably arise. By providing rules and strategies, retention is improved, as is greater applicability to a variety of situations. Improving transferability of gained knowledge and

skills to the practice setting with actual clients and their difficulties serve to address the evidence to practice gap (Beidas, Cross, & Dorsey, 2014).

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an individual's personal belief and perception of competence to achieve a particular outcome. Bandura (1977) maintains that one's level of self-efficacy or confidence can improve with guided practice despite outside influences or internal barriers. Further, a person's perceived self-efficacy (i.e., their belief in their capacities) is central to their motivation, affective states, and ability to perform actions (Bandura 1997). Achieving behavioral learning then in part depends on one's perception of their own capacities to gain skills.

The likelihood of students embracing skill practice depends on their motivation and consequently perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). Therefore, exposure to similarly skilled peers experiencing success in solving practice problems could positively influence their self-efficacy. It should be noted that the correlative relationship between perceived self-efficacy and increased skill acquisition has not been proven (Rawlings, 2012). Rawlings (2012) hypothesized that with increased knowledge and skills, BSW students would gain in self-efficacy. However, the students rated themselves lower in self-efficacy post skill education than in pre-skill education. Rawlings (2012) observed that students might not have been realistic about their initial skill capacities.

Use of Technology: Video Taping Role Plays

Technology has had an extensive role with a variety of products in the delivery of course content (Wretman, 2016). Video taping to record student role-plays with simulated clients has had limited use in social work education (Shibusawa, Van Esselstyn, & Oppenheim, 2006). However, as an emerging technology, it has the potential to provide opportunities for self-

reflection and instructor feedback. Peterson (2014) found in an exploratory study with MSW students in a practice course, that role-plays significantly improved skill competencies. Taping was achieved through the use of FlipCams. However, a limitation was found in accessibility of taped sessions for student self-assessment and instructor feedback. Peterson's (2014) use of YouTube proved to be problematic for privacy reasons.

Carnegie Mellon University's School of Computer Science developed Panopto, a video platform product used in business and university settings (<https://www.panopto.com/panopto-for-education/>). Panopto can record video files, upload and store them to a course folder which can then be shared. The student and instructor can view recordings in this instance of students' behavioral rehearsals on or off campus. Students' review of the taped skill demonstration with simulated clients, supports the process of self-reflection. Instructors' review of the taped sessions can provide meaningful and accurate feedback through written comments within the recording.

Methods

Within an undergraduate social work program, a micro practice course titled, *Practice I: Social Work with Individuals and Families*, students gain the theoretical knowledge and micro-interviewing skills to implement a problem-solving model. SCT (Bandura, 1977, 1986) offers a conceptual framework for practice teaching methods. Instructor mastery modeling and student behavioral rehearsal in simulated situations (i.e., role-plays), followed by feedback and self-reflection was proposed in this research to improve student gained skill competency.

Videotaping provides a valuable tool to enhance the benefits of behavioral rehearsal by allowing for direct observation and self-reflection.

This research sought to answer the following questions:

1. Can BSW student acquisition of foundational social work practice skills (i.e., interviewing skills and problem-solving techniques) significantly improve given participation in a micro practice course that uses teaching techniques of mastery modeling and behavioral rehearsal in combination with self-reflection with the aid of videotaping?
2. Do BSW students' sense of adaptability, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward EBP improve given the instructional interventions (i.e., modeling, behavioral rehearsal, self-reflection) using an instructor administrated measure?

Design / Procedure

All procedures were reviewed by instructor's report to the university's Institutional Review Board and designated as exempt from IRB review based on exemption criteria in compliance with 45CFR46.101(b): (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.

Intervention. This research was a quantitative study using pre and post measures that evaluated the efficacy of an intervention. The intervention was a ten-week BSW micro practice course in which interviewing and problem-solving skills were taught through the use of mastery modeling, behavioral rehearsal, and self-reflection with the aid of videotaping. Interviewing skills included: engaging, assessing, attending, paraphrasing, reflecting feelings, asking open and closed ended questions, clarifying, summarizing, information giving, confronting and interpreting. Problem-solving skills included students assisting clients in developing a problem list, identifying a focal problem, goal setting, brainstorming and evaluating strategies, choosing a

strategy and partializing into small steps, agreeing on a plan, and evaluating effectiveness. The course met twice a week for the first three weeks in a traditional classroom. Commencing in week four and for the remainder of the course, students spent one class period in the classroom and one class period in the counseling lab. Thus skill practice occurred during six weekly, two-and-a-half hour lab sessions as part of the course. The counseling lab has eight furnished interview rooms. Each room is wired and equipped with a camera that feeds recordings into established student files via Panopto software.

Teaching methods. The teaching methods that were informed by SCT utilized a four-step process. First, students were assigned preparatory homework for each skill that entailed constructing possible responses. Second, the instructor mastery modeled the partialized interviewing and problem-solving skills with a student volunteer utilizing a role-play. The rest of the class observed and then along with the “client” discussed and highlighted components of the modeled skill. Third, students were divided into small groups of three and used behavioral rehearsal (BR) with a role-play to practice skills. The BR roles were that of a social worker, client, and observer. Each student created a file in Panopto of their taped session when they were the social worker. The observer completed a written feedback tool, which was reviewed along with “client” feedback with “social worker” at the end of the BR. Fourth, outside of class, students viewed their taped BR, reviewed feedback, and wrote a self-reflection on strengths and areas to be improved. Students received ongoing formational feedback from their course instructor who also examined BR tapes.

Sample and Population

The convenience sample included 28 undergraduate bachelor's of social work (BSW) juniors. Inclusion criteria for the project were BSW students enrolled in a practice-focused

course at a private university in the western United States, taught by this investigator during spring quarter 2016. Given the design, there was no need for recruitment. None of the students were under 18 years of age.

Data Collection

Assessment data were collected prior to and post intervention. Several days before the course started, students had individual appointments in the counseling lab during which they completed a demographic survey; and baseline measures of self-efficacy, attitude toward evidenced-based practice, and self-assessment of interviewing and problem-solving skills. Students then individually engaged in a skill demonstration utilizing a developed role-play with the instructor. Post intervention (i.e., at the completion of the course) students completed the same assessment measures and engaged in a skill demonstration with a student from their practice group. The pre and post-assessment measures that were administered include subscales from the Texas Christian University-Organizational Readiness for Change (TCU-ORC; Lehman, Greener, & Simpson, 2002) and the Evidence-Based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS; Aarons, 2004).

Measure: TCU-ORC. The TCU-ORC is a 125-item scale that assesses four domains of organizational functioning and readiness for change: motivation for change, adequacy of resources, staff attributes, and organizational climate. For the purposes of this project, the domain of staff attributes and within those eight items from the adaptability and efficacy subscales were used. The four adaptability items included: ease of learning and using new procedures, ability to adapt quickly to change, willingness to try new ideas, and cautious or slow to make a change. The four efficacy items included: having needed skills, being effective and confident in working with clients, having a sense of accomplishment, and experiencing an

accomplishment of plans. Item ratings ranged from *Strongly Disagree (1)*, *Disagree (2)*, *Uncertain (3)*, *Agree (4)*, to *Strongly Agree (5)*.

Measure: EBPAS. The EBPAS is a 15-item scale that assesses attitudes toward evidence-based practices. A total of six items were drawn from the scale, four items that focused on appeal, items 9-12 (i.e., "If you received training in a therapy or intervention that was new to you, how likely would you be to adopt it if it was intuitively appealing?") and two that focused on requirements, items 14 and 15 (i.e., "If you received training in a therapy or intervention that was new to you, how likely would you be to adopt it if it were required by your supervisor?"). The seventh item written by this researcher focused on behavioral rehearsal (i.e., "If you received training in a therapy or intervention that was new to you, how likely would you be to adopt it if you had the opportunity to role play and gained feedback?"). Item ratings include the following: *Not at All (0)*, *To a Slight Extent (1)*, *To a Moderate Extent (2)*, *To a Great Extent (3)*, and *To a Very Great Extent (4)*.

Measure: Self-assessment of Interviewing and Problem Solving Skills. The self-assessment scale, developed by the researcher included 14 items, five on interviewing skills and nine focusing on the steps of problem-solving. Students were asked to rate their "skills in working with clients in the following areas...." Item ratings include *Minimal (1)*, *Minimal to moderate (2)*, *Moderate (3)*, *Moderate to advanced (4)*, and *Advanced (5)*.

Measure: Taped Skill Demonstration and Coding. All skill demonstrations were conducted in the counseling lab and recorded using Panopto. The skill demonstrations were designed to provide an opportunity to pull together the partialized interviewing and problem-solving skills. The two role plays developed, one for the pre and one for the post skill demonstration were written by this researcher and a lab-support instructor, both licensed clinical

social workers with over twenty years of direct practice experience. Students were provided with a paragraph length case description, a list of four client-identified problems, one of which was chosen to work on by the "client." Students were instructed to 1) "Demonstrate how you would use a problem-solving approach to help client address her identified problem" and 2) "Help client identify a plan and one action step to try before next session." The pre-intervention skill demonstrations were saved in Panopto.

This researcher coded the 28 pre and 28 post video tapings of the students' skill demonstrations. The coding tool used was developed by the researcher. The interviewing skills and problem-solving steps were rated on whether they were present (yes/no) and if present, the quality of skill demonstration ranging from Not present (0), Minimal skill (1), Low skill (2), Medium skill (3) Skilled (4), or Very Skilled (5).

Data Analysis

The hypothesis of this analysis is that there will be major gains in adaptability, self-efficacy, attitudes toward EBP, and skill gains in interviewing and problem-solving. The data were calculated pre and post intervention yielding total mean scores for both self-administered surveys and their subscales and the coded video demonstrated values to test the hypotheses. The pre and post measure scores were then compared using a paired sample t-test to test any gains in adaptability, self-efficacy, attitudes toward EBP, interviewing and problem-solving skills. In addition to total mean scores, an item level comparison for interviewing and problem-solving skills in both the self-administered and coded data was conducted. A significant change alpha level of $p < 0.05$ was used. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 19.

Protection of Human Participants

The university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), where the researcher is a faculty member, found the project was exempt from IRB review in compliance with 45CFR46.101b. Potential risks for participants in this study were minimal given this study was embedded within an existing course and with content that has been part of the undergraduate social work curriculum. All information related to the behavioral rehearsals were kept confidential. Potential benefits for participants associated with this study include a sharper focus on learning practice skills and engaging in self-reflection for improving practice skills.

Data were de-identified, as students were given a study ID. Demographic data was reported as descriptive and not connected to responses. All surveys were labeled, scored, and recorded under study ID. All quantitative data was reported in aggregate form. The taped skill demonstrations on Panopto were deleted after they are viewed and coded by this researcher.

Strengths and Limitations

This research allowed for the particular measuring of student skill attainment pre and post intervention through instructor rating of videotaped skill demonstrations. Using developed client scenarios for the BR and a piloted rating tool strengthens the validity of the data collected. The aim of this research was to illuminate a way to deeply teach practice skills and critical thinking about their use in the context of evidence-based practice implementation.

This research is limited in several ways. First, the sample size is relatively small making generalizability difficult. However, the strength and magnitude of the findings are notable. Second, in the design of the study, the role of the "client" varied in the skill demonstration (i.e., pre was an instructor and post was a student).

Results

Demographics

There were 28 junior BSW students enrolled in the course. Of those, 27 students (96.4%) completed the demographic survey. The mean age of the students was 22.28 years old (SD=6.02), fairly representative of traditionally aged college students. Twenty-three (85.19%) students were under the age of 25, and four students were over the age of 25 (14.82%). Females comprised the majority of students (81.5 %, n=22) with males comprising 18.5% (n=5) of the students. A little over half of the students identified as Caucasian (51.85%, n=14), followed by Asian (37.04%, n=10), Hispanic / Latino (7.41%, n= 2); and Multi-Racial (3.7%, n=1, Asian and Caucasian). Students reported whether or not they had experience using counseling skills. Over half the students had no prior counseling experience (62.96%, n=17). Of the students who had counseling experience, about a quarter of them used skills as a volunteer or intern (25.93%, n=7); and fewer as a paid employee (11.1%, n=3). Table 2.2 below displays the demographic characteristics of the enrolled students who completed the survey.

Table 2.2

Demographic Characteristics of Students

Demographic Characteristics	Total Students (N=27)	
	N	%
Age (Mean 22.78; 6.02 SD)		
Age ≤ 25 years old	23	85.19
Age > 25 years old	4	14.82
Gender		
Female	22	81.5
Male	5	18.5
Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.00
Asian	10	37.04
Black/African American	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	2	7.41
Native Hawaiian/Asian Pacific Islander	0	0
White/Caucasian	14	51.85

Mixed race (Asian & Caucasian)	1	3.7
Experience using counseling skills		
Yes (volunteered or interned)	7	25.9%
Yes (Paid employment)	3	11.10
No	17	62.96

Texas Christian University — Organizational Readiness for Change (TCU-ORC)

Subscales: Adaptability and Efficacy

The adaptability subscale containing four items (i.e., ease of learning and using new procedures, adapt quickly to change, willingness to try new ideas, cautious or slow to make change) was not found to be significant pre to post intervention ($p= 0.340$) indicating that students' view of their sense of adaptability remained relatively constant pre and post intervention. The efficacy subscale which consisted of four items (i.e., having needed skills, effective and confident in working with clients, sense of accomplishment, and accomplishment of plans) was significant ($p< 0.001$) (Table 2.3).

Evidenced-based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS)

The four items measuring the appeal of a training or intervention resulting in the likelihood of use was significant ($p=0.017$) post-intervention. However, if the training or intervention was required as measured by two items, the possibility of use did not change post intervention ($p=1.0$). The final item developed specifically for this project, measuring the opportunity to role-play and receive feedback did not result in significant changes in attitudes toward adoption of a training or intervention ($p=0.467$) (Table 2.4).

Table 2.3

Survey Results

Measures	PRE			POST			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P*</i>
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
TCU-ORC									
Total Score	26	30.47	2.06	26	32.38	2.52	4.19	25	0.000
Self-Efficacy Subscale	26	15.27	1.66	26	16.88	1.53	5.60	25	0.000
Adaptability Subscale	26	15.20	1.06	26	15.50	1.50	0.97	25	0.340
EBPAS Measure (Attitude)									
EBPAS - Attitude Total Score	26	28.95	2.79	26	29.92	2.97	1.71	25	0.100
Appeal Subscale	26	16.27	1.89	26	17.19	1.96	2.57	25	0.017
Requirements Subscale	26	8.23	1.34	26	8.23	1.31	0.00	25	1.000
Role play item	26	4.40	0.53	26	4.50	0.76	0.74	25	0.467
Problem Solving Skills Measure									
Total Score	25	26.50	7.87	25	36.94	4.29	6.80	24	0.000
Problem-Solving Item Level									
Engaging in active counseling	25	2.72	0.94	25	4.08	0.64	7.49	24	0.000
Assessment	25	2.50	1.08	25	3.72	0.84	6.10	24	0.000
Develop Problem list	25	2.80	1.04	25	4.48	0.51	7.12	24	0.000
Problem identification and goal	25	3.16	0.99	25	4.40	0.58	5.89	24	0.000
Brainstorming strategies	25	3.44	1.00	25	4.38	0.70	4.34	24	0.000
Strategies for feasibility- barriers	25	2.88	0.93	25	4.10	0.65	5.45	24	0.000
Choosing strategy and break into mini-steps	25	2.80	1.12	25	4.06	0.62	5.10	24	0.000
Agree on plan for next steps	25	3.42	1.13	25	4.12	0.60	2.71	24	0.012
Follow-up & modify homework	25	2.78	1.00	25	3.60	0.82	4.06	24	0.000

Interviewing Skills Measure

Total Score	25	13.78	4.50	25	19.96	2.13	6.55	24	0.000
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Interviewing Skills Item Level

Attending, communicate role & scope of work	25	2.64	1.04	25	3.92	0.57	5.30	24	0.000
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Use paraphrasing & reflection of feeling	25	2.92	1.04	25	4.28	0.54	6.11	24	0.000
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Use open-ended questions, closed-ended questions, and clarification	25	2.76	1.16	25	4.32	0.48	6.54	24	0.000
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Use summarization and information-giving.	25	2.84	0.85	25	4.00	0.58	6.15	24	0.000
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Use confrontation & interpretation	25	2.62	1.11	25	3.44	0.82	3.47	24	0.002
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*Significant level at $p < 0.05$

Table 2.4

Skill Demonstration Results

Measures	PRE			POST			t	Df	P*
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Problem-Solving Skills Demonstration									
Total Score	28	13.96	5.80	28	33.36	6.34	15.45	27	0.000
Goal	28	1.50	0.79	28	4.32	0.61	17.30	27	0.000
Brainstorm	28	1.89	0.96	28	4.46	0.69	15.48	27	0.000
Evaluate	28	1.07	0.86	28	4.25	0.89	15.93	27	0.000
Choose	28	1.11	0.96	28	4.21	0.92	13.74	27	0.000
Mini-steps	28	0.57	0.79	28	4.11	0.88	20.29	27	0.000
Obstacles	28	0.39	0.83	28	4.18	0.86	18.78	27	0.000
Plan	28	1.00	1.22	28	4.07	0.81	11.96	27	0.000
Interviewing Skills Demonstration									
Total Score	28	6.46	3.61	28	25.38	4.47	23.31	27	0.000
Engage	28	2.86	0.93	28	4.50	0.64	11.15	27	0.000
Attend	28	2.89	0.88	28	4.50	0.64	9.72	27	0.000
Paraphrase	28	1.14	1.24	28	4.07	1.05	11.89	27	0.000
Reflect	28	1.61	1.29	28	3.71	1.18	6.37	27	0.000
Open-Questions	28	2.50	1.14	28	4.21	1.03	7.89	27	0.000
Closed-Questions	28	1.93	0.94	28	4.25	0.75	12.04	27	0.000
Clarify	28	0.39	0.79	28	3.93	1.05	13.89	27	0.000
Summarize	28	0.64	1.06	28	4.18	0.82	14.19	27	0.000

*Significant level at p<0.05

Interview and Problem-Solving Skills Survey

Interview Skill Items. All five items that measured interviewing skills as rated by the students improved and were individually significant post-intervention. These skills included: attending, communicating role and scope of work ($p < 0.001$); paraphrasing and reflection of feeling ($p < 0.001$); asking open and closed ended questions and clarifying ($p < 0.001$); summarizing and information-giving ($p < 0.001$) and confronting and interpreting ($p < 0.002$).

Problem Solving Skill Items. All nine problem solving skill items contained in the student-rated survey, had individual significant gains post intervention ($p < 0.001$) The skills included engagement, assessment, developing a problem list, problem identification and goal setting, brainstorming strategies to accomplish goal, feasibility of strategies, choosing strategy and mini-steps, planning for next steps, and following-up on plan.

Taped Skill Demonstration: Interviewing and Problem Solving Skills

The pre and post taped skill demonstrations were coded for problem-solving and interviewing skills. Each of the problem-solving skills significantly improved post-intervention ($p < 0.001$). The rated skills included: goal setting, brainstorming solutions; evaluating pros and cons of solutions; choosing a solution; identifying mini-steps of solution, identifying obstacles, and planning for homework. Each of the interviewing skills demonstrated by students post intervention significantly improved ($p < 0.001$). Specifically, the skills that improved included: engagement; attending; paraphrasing; reflection of feelings; open-ended questions; closed-ended questions; clarification and summarization.

Discussion

This research sought to examine whether teaching informed by SCT, in particular, mastery modeling and behavioral rehearsal when combined with videotaping for the purpose of

self-reflection resulted in significant practice skill growth. Findings indicate that significant growth occurred both in students' perception of their gained skill competency and their actual ability to demonstrate interviewing skills and problem-solving techniques. Also, the research sought to answer the question of whether students' self-efficacy improved as they gained skill proficiency. The findings suggest that both hypotheses were strongly supported and thus having implications for teaching practice skills and potentially informing of evidenced-based practice implementation strategies.

Within the TCU-ORC survey domain of staff attributes, there were mixed findings. Students' self-rating of their adaptability within an organization remained relatively constant pre and post intervention. This subscale was designed to measure openness to change or conversely, resistance to change sometimes found when adopting evidenced-based practice by seasoned practitioners. (Aarons, 2004; Gambrill, 2003). Students are being exposed to practice skills and the problem-solving treatment model for the first time; all is new, and therefore the adoption does not require a change from previously acquired skills and methods. While the aspect of adaptability would appear not influential with students in this study, it may be a harbinger to the value of teaching EBP early and often in higher education settings to develop adaptable practitioners.

The other TCU-ORC subscale focused on self-efficacy. Students' sense of self-confidence in their accomplishment and having the needed skills to work with clients, significantly improved by the end of the course. The belief in one's competency according to Bandura (1997) influences motivation in behavioral learning and the likelihood of skill adoption. The use of mastery modeling of partialized skills with multiple student opportunities for extensive practice appears to have limited the worry students may have about making mistakes at

the expense of confidence. Also, given the established importance of feedback for growth (Sun, Merrill, & Peterson, 2001) it would also indicate that the methods used (i.e., peer observation, self-review of taped session, 1:1 instructor review of taped session with a student) remained confidence building.

The Evidenced-Based Practice Attitude Scale (EBPAS) contained two subscales, measuring attitudes regarding: 1) the likelihood of use of a training or intervention based on appeal and 2) the likelihood of use of a training or intervention if it was required. Post course, students indicated with a high degree of significance, that they would be more likely to use a training or intervention if it appealed to them. However, if the training or intervention was required, the likelihood of adoption did not change pre to post for the students. It would seem something about students' development and use of critical thinking (Bandura, 1997) to inform practice intervention choices is at odds with requiring an EBP. Bandura (1997) maintained that student exposure to the reasoning that lay behind therapeutic action developed practice wisdom that would lead to effectively responding to the myriad of client difficulties (i.e., resiliency to difficulties). Within the scale given to students, a seventh item developed by the researcher inquired about the likelihood of adoption of an intervention if given the opportunity to role play and receive feedback. The student responses did not significantly change from pre or post intervention. In retrospect, a stronger response may have been received if the item referenced the combination of behavioral rehearsal, taping, and self-reflection.

The self-assessment survey of interviewing and problem-solving skills completed by the students pre and post course contained 14 elements, all of which were individually significant. Students' self-assessment of skill acquisition as measured by the survey was consistent with instructor-coded assessment of observed skill demonstrations. The pre and post taped skill

demonstrations by the students displayed the integrative use of interviewing and problem-solving skills in a simulated session. Given students' individual skills significantly improved pre to post intervention, the method of instruction would appear to be supported. The components of education included: instructor mastery modeling of partialized skills, multiple opportunities for behavioral rehearsal of skill by students, provision of immediate feedback by peers and instructor, and self-reflection of taped BR by the student.

Behavioral rehearsal was the key to this practice pedagogy, as an active learning strategy and as a valid method to assess fidelity to a taught skill, confirming Dorsey and colleagues (2016) work. When BR is combined with self-reflection over multiple opportunities to practice, it seems to serve to anchor the acquired skill within a students' repertoire of interventions. This solidity of skill proficiency allows for skills to be flexibly drawn upon when in a simulated session while moving a client towards problem-solving.

The research findings have several limitations and strengths. The relatively small number of participants limits the generalizability of the findings. Also, the "client" was different in pre and post skills demonstrations (i.e., pre was instructor and post was a student). While the written role play scenarios were detailed for both "client" and "social worker" to strength consistency, the difference in who played the "client" could have impacted student comfort and performance. In the future, the use of trained graduate assistants for example to play the role of a client could increase the consistency within the pre and post simulations. A strength of the research design was the use of an external rater observing student skill demonstrations pre and post with a tool identifying skill indicators.

Future directions to build upon these initial promising results include continuing the refinement of teaching and methods of evaluation. The literature on the use of self-reflection

(Schön, 1987; Kinsella 2009, 2010) in the development of professional skills could serve to deepen critical thinking and agility in the practice moment. The developed, disciplined use of self as a reflective practitioner could assist in moving the profession toward evidenced-informed practice while maintaining fidelity. While the findings inform the epistemology of practice, it may also serve to speak to implementation research on EBP, that being building evidence for BR valid analogue tool (Dorsey, et al., 2016). Finally, the use of a videotaping learning platform (i.e., Panopto) advanced the current research in use of technology in practice skill development.

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Practice Skill Pedagogy:

Evaluating Use of Social Cognitive Theory, Taping, and Self-Reflection

Abstract

Competency-based social work education prompts instructors to prepare students to gain and demonstrate acquired practice skills. This research evaluated the use of social cognitive theory concepts (i.e., mastery modeling, behavioral rehearsal, and self-efficacy); in combination with digital taping; and self-reflection, in a BSW micro practice course. This paper provides an overview of the presentation, entitled “Practice Skill Pedagogy: Evaluating Use of Social Cognitive Theory, Taping, and Self-Reflection” presented on March 3, 2017, at The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors 34th Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA. Attendees’ feedback and a critical analysis of the learning process is provided.

Keywords: Social Cognitive theory, behavioral rehearsal, digital taping, self-reflection, micro practice skills

The research paper presented at the 34th Annual Baccalaureate Program Directors' (BPD) Conference is drawn from a quantitative research project that evaluated the use of social cognitive theory (SCT) concepts and self-reflection aided by digital taping to teach micro practice skills to BSW students. Also tested was the importance of self-efficacy in the learning of skills. A critical analysis of the presentation and its contribution to the overarching hypothesis of the potential contribution of SCT is provided incorporating attendees' feedback. Documentation of presentation acceptance and actual presentation are contained in appendices.

Overview of Presentation

The conference presentation entitled, "Practice Skill Pedagogy: Evaluating Use of Social Cognitive Theory, Taping, and Self-Reflection" was presented on March 3, 2017, at the 34th Annual Baccalaureate Program Directors' (BPD) Conference (see Appendix A), entitled, "BPD for the Future: Social Work Educators, Allied Professionals, and Students." The conference was held March 1-5, 2017, in New Orleans, LA. The conference proposal was accepted in the "Paper" format in which two separate presenters shared 75 minutes, (37 minutes each; See Appendix B). The session track was "Research," and the target audience was "Intermediate." Elements of the submitted conference proposal are provided including the presentation abstract, learning objectives and key words; and presentation proposal. The presentation with accompanying references is discussed guided by included PowerPoint slides (Figures 3.1-3.5).

Presentation Abstract, Learning Objectives, and Key Words

Competency-based social work education prompts instructors to prepare students to gain and demonstrate acquired practice skills. This research evaluated the use of SCT concepts (i.e. mastery modeling, behavioral rehearsal, and self-efficacy); in combination with digital taping; and self-reflection, in a BSW micro practice course.

Participants will gain knowledge on the:

1. Application of Bandura's SCT and its concepts (i.e., self-efficacy, mastery modeling, and behavioral rehearsal) as it relates to social work education and training.
2. Pedagogical efficacy of the use of SCT, reflective practice combined with digital taping in an undergraduate social work, micro practice course to improve skill attainment, self-efficacy, and self-reflection.

Presentation Proposal

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) adopted a competency-based approach to foundation and specialized social work education at the BSW and MSW levels in 2008 as articulated in the Educational Policies and Academic Standards (EPAS) (www.cswe.org). This adoption represented a significant shift in focus from the prior input focused and curriculum driven model. Social work competency-based education emphasizes output (Holloway, Black, Hoffman, & Pierce, n.d.), that is, student attainment and successful demonstration of the elements contained in the 2015 EPAS nine competencies (CSWE 2015).

Within the 2015 EPAS, four of the nine competencies address practice skills, including the ability to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations (CSWE, 2015). Thus, upon the completion of a social work practice course with individuals and families, students are expected to demonstrate the skills of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation with competence.

The purpose of this pedagogical research is to examine whether the teaching of micro practice skills to BSW students utilizing SCT (Bandura, 1977, 1986) in combination with digital taping and self-reflection result in significant skill attainment and increased self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). SCT guiding the teaching strategies in a micro practice course would offer

simulated opportunities for students to observe and rehearse skills (i.e., mastery modeling and behavioral rehearsal). Mastery modeling (Bandura, 1997) and the related concepts of behavioral rehearsal (Beidas, Cross, & Dorsey, 2014; Cross et al., 2011), role-play (Swell, 1968), and simulation (Linsk & Tunney, 1997; Rawlings 2012) have a rich history of use in various professional training programs. Digital taping provides a valuable instructional tool to enhance the benefits of behavioral rehearsal by allowing for direct self and instructor observation, and purposeful self-reflection. Through the combination of teaching informed by SCT, the use of digital taping, and the use of self-reflection, the aim of the research is to evaluate the level of gained skilled competency and self-efficacy.

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Can BSW student acquisition of foundational social work practice skills (i.e., interviewing skills and problem-solving techniques) significantly improve given participation in a micro practice course that uses teaching techniques of mastery modeling and behavioral rehearsal in combination with self-reflection with the aid of digital taping?
2. Do BSW students' sense of adaptability, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward EBP improve given the instructional interventions (i.e., modeling, behavioral rehearsal, self-reflection)?

Also, competency-based education calls for assessment methods targeting both students' acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as the program's ability to successfully deliver its curriculum. A culminating skill demonstration using digitally recorded simulated client situations within a micro and mezzo practice course could potentially provide valuable and reliable data for students, instructors, and programs.

Discussion of Presentation and Key References

The paper presentation provided the conference attendees an overview of research conducted evaluating the use of SCT, digital taping, and self-reflection in teaching social work skills. The presenter touched significant points from 18 PowerPoint slides during the 37-minute presentation including the informing scholarly references. An annotation of those key presentation points follows. In addition, key references used to inform the original research and included in the presentation are annotated in this section for coherence.

Introduction and theoretical stance: Slides 1-6 (Figure 3.1). Slides 1 - 4 provided introductory information to attendees including the title of the presentation, the author's contact information, learning objectives and the submitted abstract. Slides 5 and 6 grounded the research in two key theoretical constructs, evidenced-based practice (EBP) and SCT. EBP's original definition as offered by Kazdin (2008) was highlighted to remind the attendees that EBP in its seminal conceptualization, included clinician wisdom and contextual elements of the client (Slide 5). It has since evolved to be more narrowly and scientifically focused as described by Singer and Greeno (2013). The role of implementation science in the studying of replicating an EBP with fidelity was highlighted citing Hershell, Kolko, Baumann, and Davis (2010) and Beidas and Kendall (2010). In slide 6, an overview of SCT, originally titled social learning theory as developed by Bandura (1977, 1986) was provided. SCT has been described by Thyer and Wodarski (1990) as potentially a comprehensive organizing construct for social work practice. SCT key concepts for professional education and training (Bandura, 1997) including: mastery modeling of partialized skills, behavioral rehearsal, development of critical thinking for skill choice, development of resiliency to difficulties, and self-efficacy were highlighted.

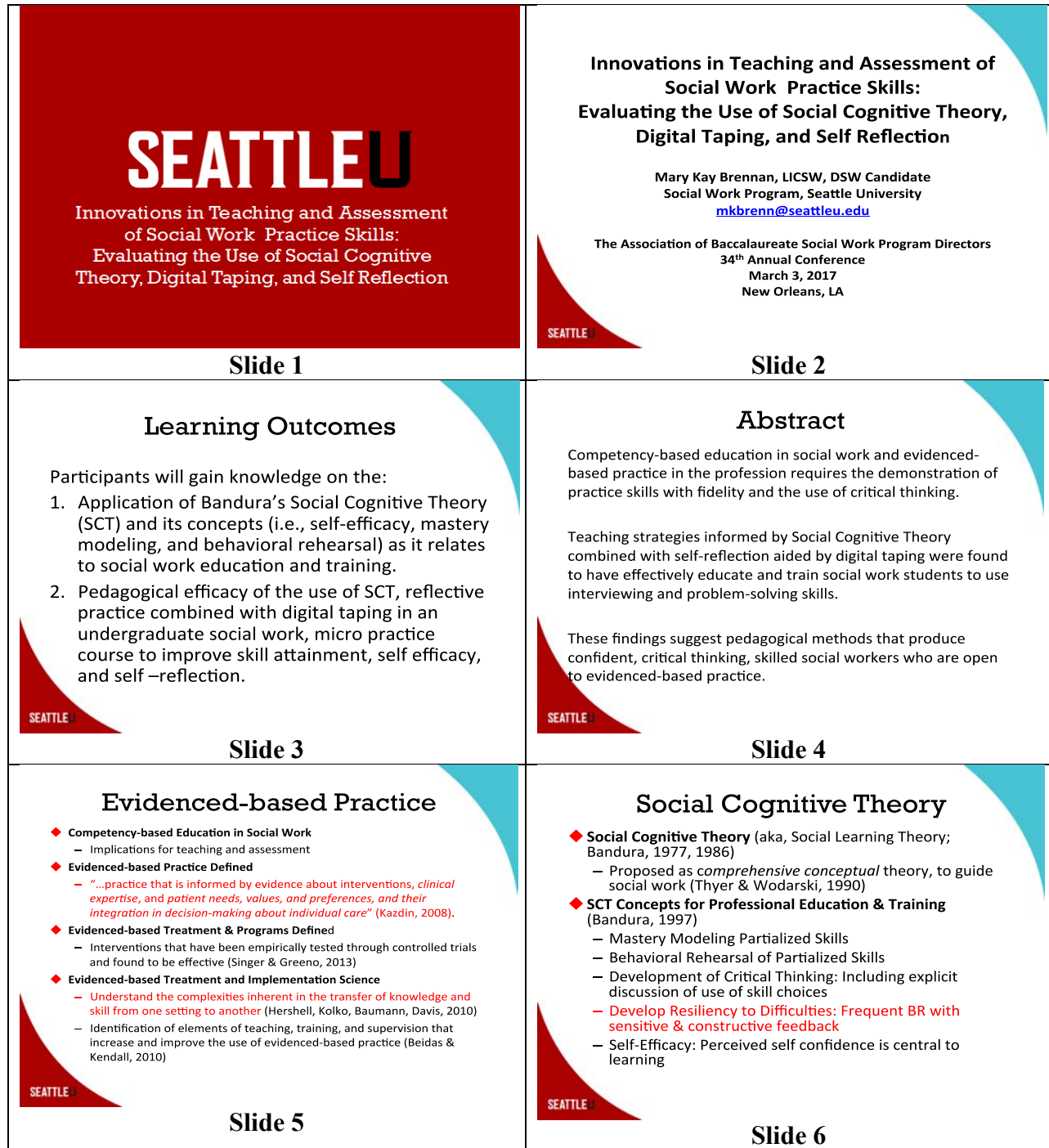


Figure 3.1. Slides 1-6

Research methods: Slides 7 – 11 (Figure 3.2). An overview of the research methods used including the research questions, intervention description, sample, data collection, measures used, and data analysis are provided in slides 7-11. The two research questions (slide 7) focused

on the growth of acquired student micro practice skills given the use of the SCT concepts mastery modeling, behavioral rehearsal, digital taping, and self-reflection and secondarily whether students' sense of adaptability, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward EBP change as a result of the intervention. A brief overview of the intervention was introduced in slide 8 & 9. The intervention was the ten-week micro practice course, which included eight 2.5-hour lab sessions (slide 8). The lab counseling rooms were outfitted with digital cameras utilizing Panopto recording software. The skill instruction content covered basic eight interviewing skills and ten problem-solving skills (slide 9). Teaching methods used in the weekly practice included instructor mastery modeling of partialized skills, taped student behavioral rehearsal of partialized skills with a simulated client played by a student while in triads, immediate feedback from peers and post-tape review feedback from the instructor, and written self-reflection by the student after receiving feedback and reviewing taped session.

The sample, data collection, and measures were detailed in slide 10. There were 28 BSW students enrolled in the study. Five measures were collected, four of which pre and post intervention. The measures included a demographic survey; two scientific surveys measuring adaptability, efficacy, and attitudes toward EBP; a self-assessment on interviewing and problem solving skills; and taped and coded skill demonstrations. Slide 11 described the analysis. The working hypothesis was that major gains in adaptability, self-efficacy, attitudes toward EBP would be seen, and significant skill gains in interviewing and problem-solving would be found. The analysis involved calculating the total mean scores for surveys and coded video pre/post intervention. The pre/ post measure mean scores were compared using paired sample t-test to test any gains. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used. SPSS version 19 was used for all statistical analyses.

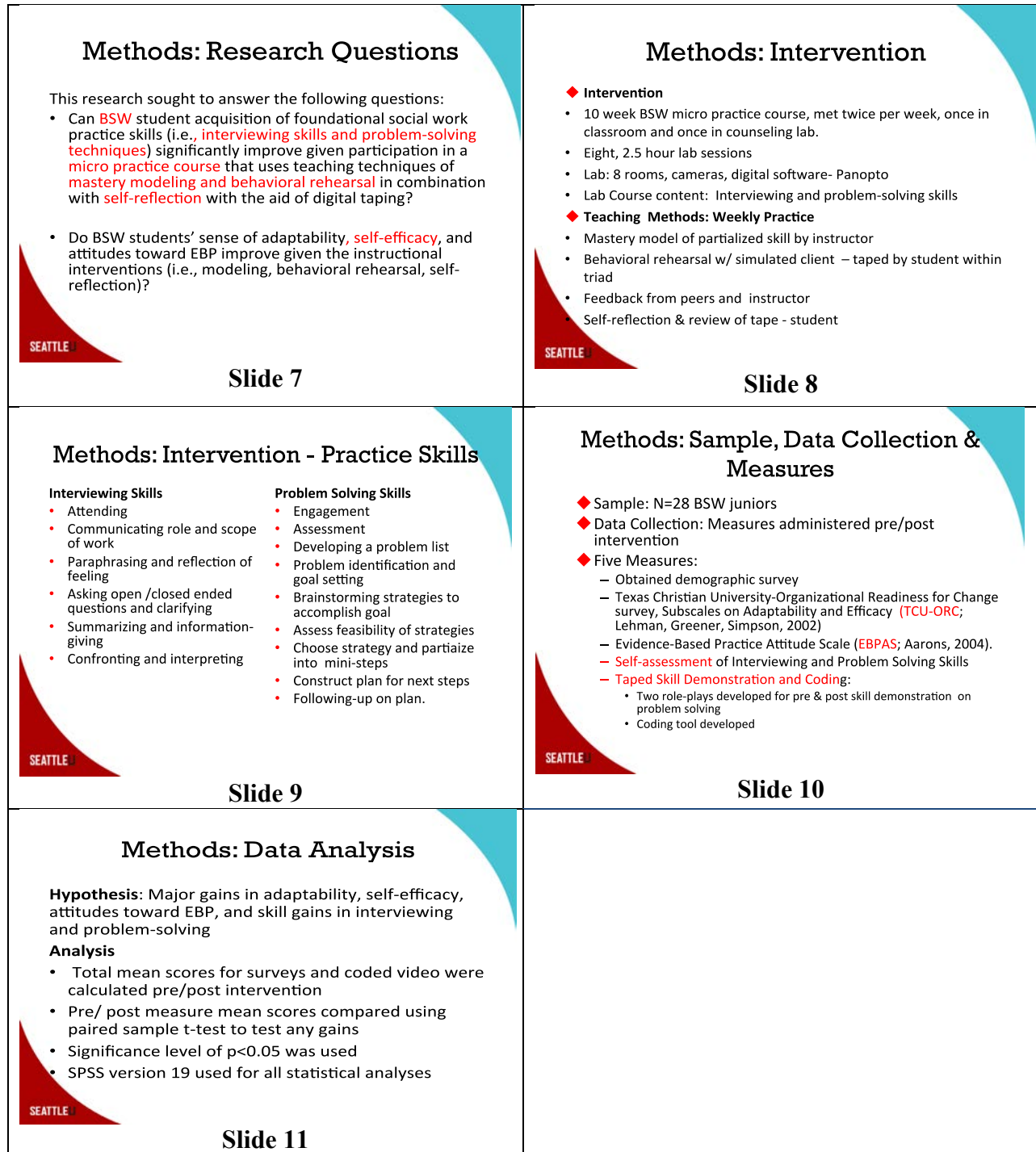


Figure 3.2. Slides 7-11

Results and discussion: Slides 12 – 14 (Figure 3.3). Key results (slides 12 and 13) were presented highlighting a significant improvement in students’ sense of self-efficacy ($p < 0.001$), appeal of EBP training significantly influenced the likelihood of use ($p < 0.017$) and notably if the

EBP training was required the likelihood of its use did not change post intervention. Students' rating of each of the gained five interviewing and nine problem solving skills improved and were individually significant post-intervention ($p < 0.001$). The pre and post taped skill demonstrations were coded by the instructor for problem solving and interview skills. Both set of skills demonstrated by the students significantly improved ($p < 0.001$) post intervention. Key discussion points (slide 14) highlighted that significant growth occurred both in students' perception of their gained skill competency and their actual ability to demonstrate interviewing skills and problem-solving techniques. Also, the research sought to answer the question of whether students' self-efficacy improved as they gained skill proficiency, which was proven.

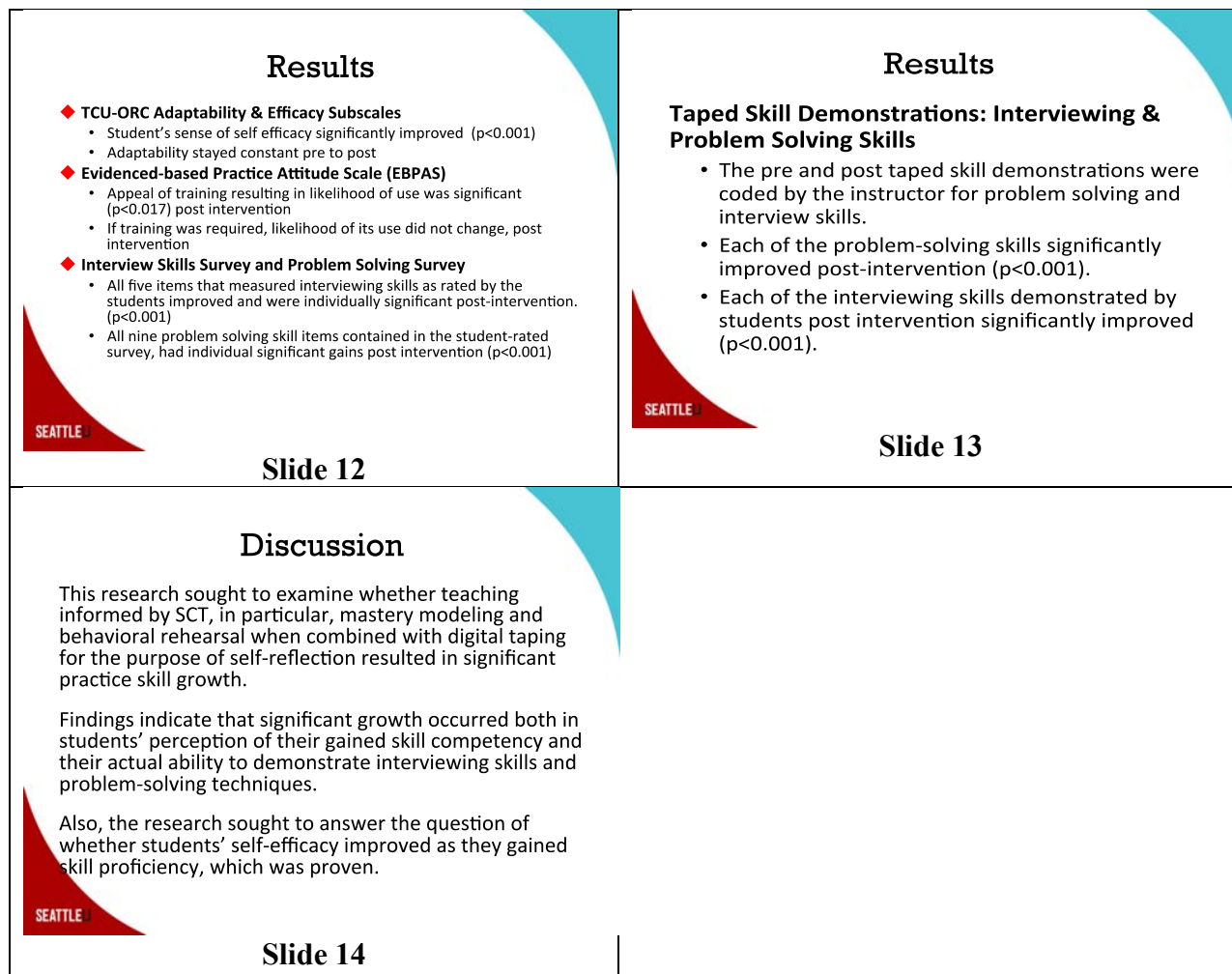


Figure 3.3. Slides 12-14

Implications: Slides 15 and 16 (Figure 3.4). Implications relevant for the teaching and assessing practice skills were reviewed along with the contributing scholarly references with attendees. Self-efficacy understood as the confidence to work with clients, significantly improved (slide 15). This finding is significant to educators because according to Bandura (1997) trainees with strong sense of self-efficacy were more likely to increase motivation to learn and adopt skills. Also, underscoring the benefits of using CST concepts in teaching, extensive practice by students appears to have limited practice anxiety – that is the fear of making mistakes

(Bandura, 1997). Finally, the constant incorporation of feedback and self-reflection in the service of skill growth remained confidence building (Sun, Merrill, & Peterson, 2001).

Central to this presentation and audience, was the overall finding that the method of instruction would appear to be supported (slide 16). The SCT concepts developed by Bandura’s (1997) for professional training and used to craft the instruction of micro practice skills in this study were again reviewed for participants. Components included: instructor mastery modeling of partialized skills, multiple opportunities for behavioral rehearsal of skill by students, provision of immediate feedback by peers and instructor, and self-reflection of taped behavioral rehearsal by the student.

A secondary but very significant implication relates to the use of behavioral rehearsal as an analogue fidelity tool. The findings established behavioral rehearsal as a viable method to assess acquired skill competencies thru culminating skill demonstrations for measuring student growth and program effectiveness. Therefore, the results lend strength and confirm the work of Beidas, Cross, and Dorsey, (2014) who use behavioral rehearsal as a tool to assist in the accurate implementation of EBP strategies.

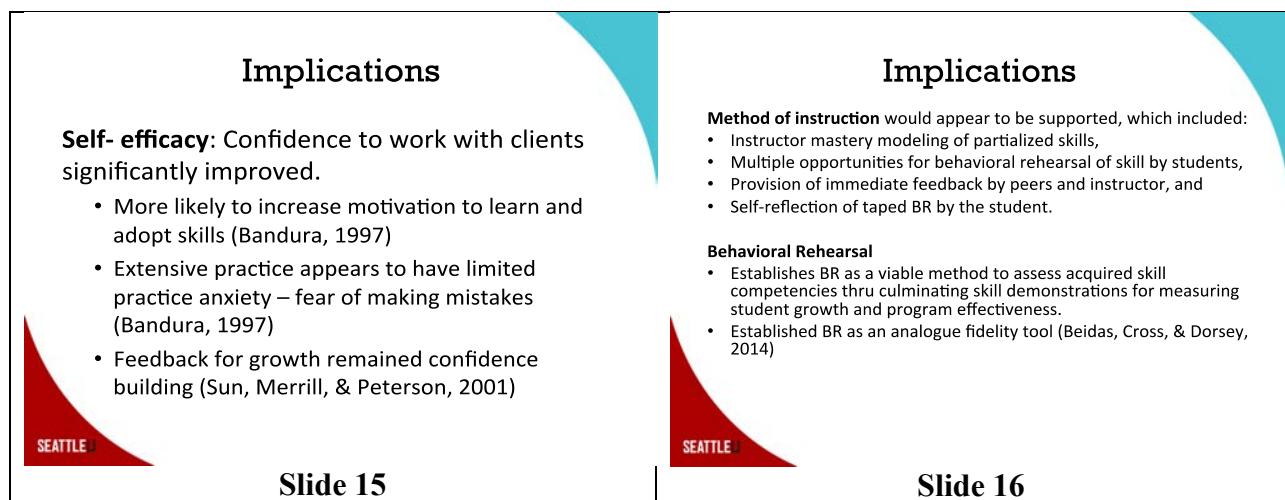


Figure 3.4. Slides 15 and 16

Questions and references: Slides 17 and 18 (Figure 3.5). There were about five to eight minutes left for questions after the formal presentation. Lively comments that prompted a brief cross-conversation focused on EBP. Attendees noted the original focus of EBP, the role of funding to influence the use of EBP, resistance with the adoption of EBP, and the emerging use of the term “evidenced-influenced practice.” An audience member inquired about the process of taped skill demonstrations (i.e., Did I design the role-plays?; Did I develop a coding tool?; Curiosity about the software used to record). Another person inquired about the development of interview skills and the textbook used. The reference slide was presented noting the sources integrated into the presentation. Evaluations of the presentation were distributed.

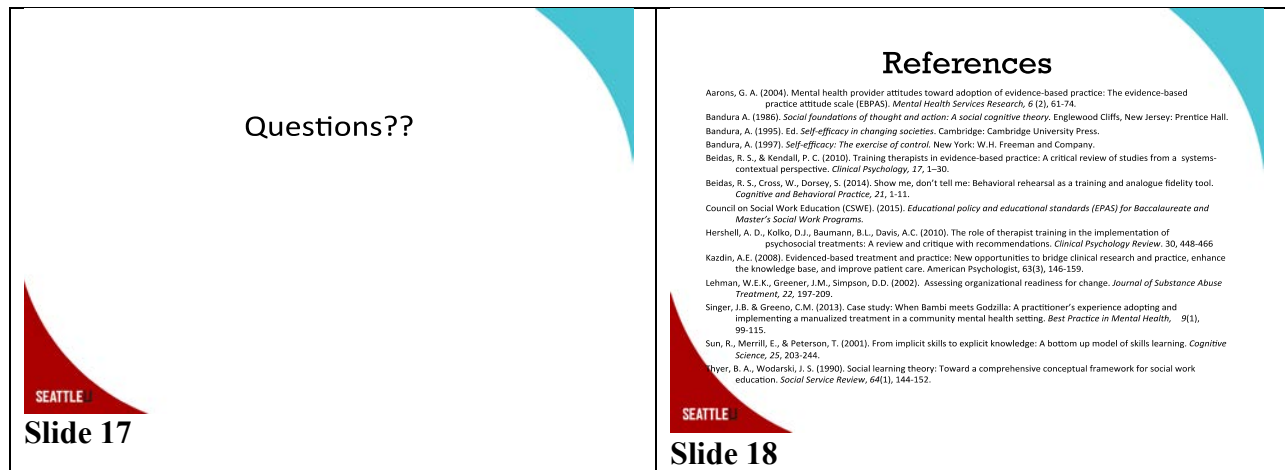


Figure 3.5. Slides 17 and 18

Summary of Feedback by Attendees

Thirteen (n=13) attendees completed the presenter designed evaluation form. There were four-presentation skill areas quantitatively rated by a Likert scale (1= significantly below average, 2= below average, 3=average, 4=above average, 5=significantly above average). The presentation skill areas and the mean ratings included: 1) relevance of area of research to social work education, mean= 4.62; 2) clarity of focus of inquiry, mean=4.23; 3) appropriateness of

research methods and conceptual foundation, mean = 4.39; and 4) significance of findings for social work education, practice, or research, mean =4.39. Two prompts following the rating asked for “strengths” and “areas to improve” soliciting qualitative comments. Strengths focused on the clear definition of SCT concepts and EBP, evaluation of interviewing skills seen as very applicable to field, and clarity of and detailed nature of presentation. Areas to improve tended to focus on my presentation skills, noting a soft voice and fast rate of speech. Two comments mentioned the need to sound more confident in my presentation style especially given how strong the findings and implications for social work education. One comment noted the denseness of the content (i.e., use of five measures) and wondered about alternate ways to present or parcel out research.

Critical Analysis

Presenting this paper to peers provided the valuable opportunity for feedback on both the research project and process chosen to communicate about it. Given the presentation format was a research paper and not a workshop, the content was organized accordingly. Colleagues, however, seemed very interested in the SCT concepts that were used to teach micro practice skills. The origin and intent of EBP also attracted a high level of attention and discussion.

Given this conference was primarily for social work educators, focus also quickly migrated to the intervention design (i.e., course structure within classroom and lab) and choice of interviewing and problem solving skills. The type and number of measures (i.e., adaptability, attitudes toward EBP, coding of skill demonstrations) seemed too much to meaningfully cover. Attendees were curious about the process of taping and coding the skill demonstrations. I found myself thinking that if I led with the findings, the “so what” of the research, my message about

the steps for teaching skills would have been clearer. Highlighting the sequential and looping steps of:

1. Mastery modeling of each partialized skill by instructor
2. Behavior rehearsal in simulated, taped role plays with a small group of peers.
3. Peer in-the-moment feedback and instructor feedback based on review of tapes.
4. Student consideration of feedback, review of each of their taped sessions, and then a written self-reflection annotated the tape.
5. Repeat steps 1-4, six to eight times so that students can gain trust and sense of safety learning group, grow in self-efficacy, and gain skill improvement.

I found that there was not time to delve deeper into the teaching pedagogies of the behavioral rehearsal component, use of Panopto software, and the development of a reflective practitioner who can flexibly employ practice wisdom when needed. The development of the capacities of the practitioner is the element of the research that was and is most interesting to me, that is, how to develop disciplined, skilled practitioners who can also demonstrate a “resiliency to difficulties” (Bandura, 1997).

The underlying conceptual hypothesis of the contributing value of SCT concepts for professional training especially in light of EBP seemed to resonate with the audience. Within the field of implementation science, the research to practice gap is frequently noted with regards to the adoption of EBP intervention with fidelity (Beidas & Kendall, 2010). However, in the conceptualization and development of this work, the basic training of EBP skills and development of habits of reflection, needed to come prior to training for the variations. Once these skills are mastered, the emergent capacities of the practitioner to respond to the complex, contextual challenges of real clients can be fostered.

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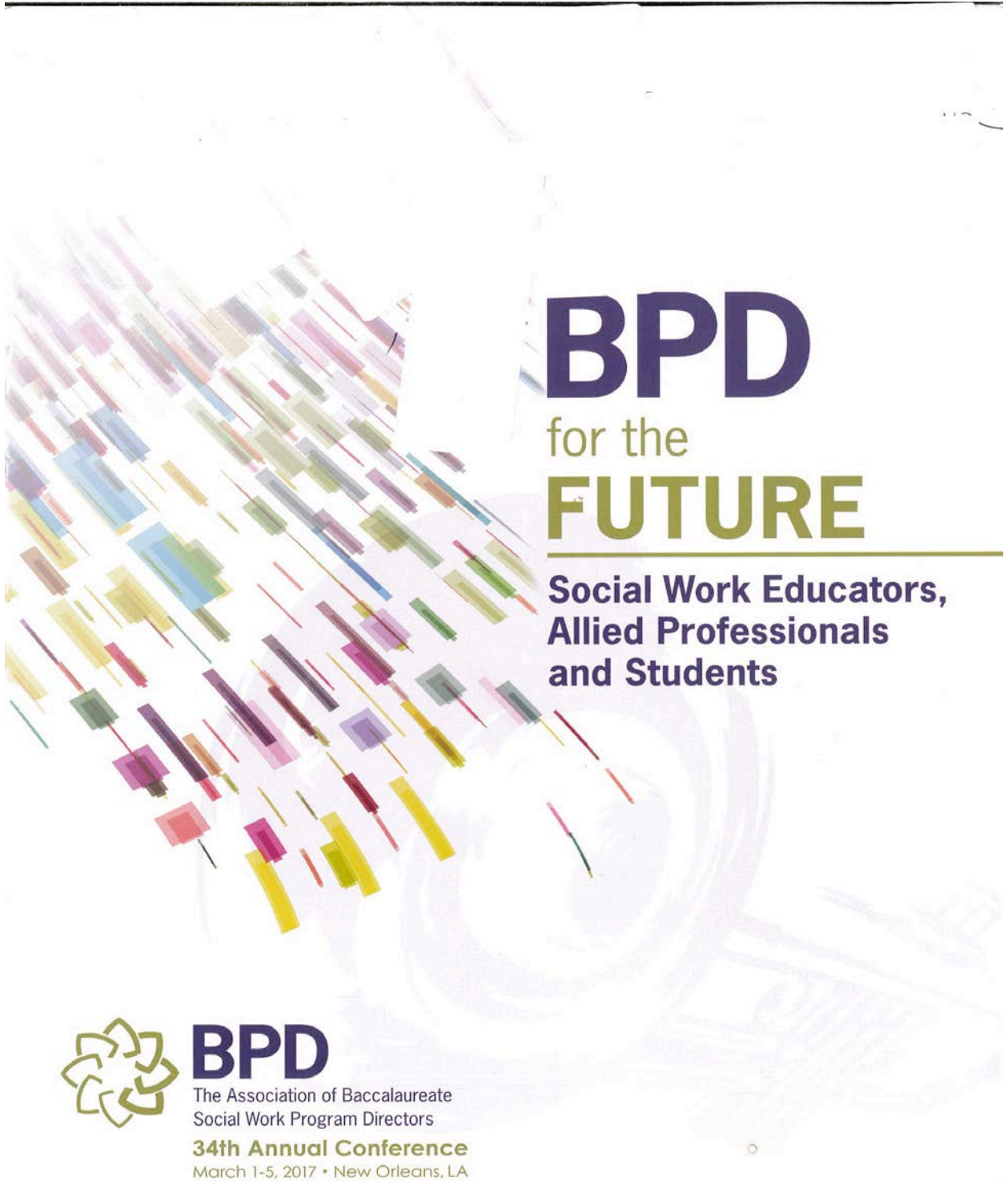
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Appendix A

Conference Program Cover and Presentation Schedule



BPD

for the

FUTURE

**Social Work Educators,
Allied Professionals
and Students**



BPD

The Association of Baccalaureate
Social Work Program Directors

34th Annual Conference

March 1-5, 2017 • New Orleans, LA

FRIDAY SESSIONS *CONTINUED*

▪ **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WORKSHOP**
Faculty Development

Borgne
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Characteristics of Effective Policy Instructors in Social Work

Presenters:
Lynn Amerman Goerd
University of Wisconsin-Superior
Susan E. Elswick
The University of Memphis (TN)
David H. Johnson
Millersville University (PA)

▪ **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WORKSHOP**
Core Competencies

Edgewood
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Pre-requisites ≠ Foundations: Essential HBSE Content Necessary for Generalist Social Work Practice

Presenters:
Kathleen L. Woehrle
Central Michigan University
Denise Dedman
Saginaw Valley State University (MI)

▪ **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL PAIRED PAPERS**

Research
Estherwood
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Perceptions of Poverty among Undergraduate Social Work Majors

Presenters:
Jennifer M. Frank
Millersville University (PA)
Karen Rice
Millersville University (PA)

Practice Skill Pedagogy: Evaluating Use of Social Cognitive Theory, Taping, and Self-Reflection

Presenter:
Mary Kay Brennan
Seattle University (WA)

▪ **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WORKSHOP**
Core Competencies

Evergreen
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Using Curriculum Mapping for Continuous Improvement: Transitioning to EPAS 2015

Presenters:
Elizabeth Twining Blue
University of Wisconsin-Superior
Frances Bernard Kominkiewicz
Saint Mary's College (IN)

▪ **BEGINNER/ADVANCED LEVEL PAIRED PAPERS**
Field Education & Instruction

Gallier
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Safety – Making Safety an Ongoing Conversation in Field Education

Presenters:
Elisa M. Martin
Siena College (NY)
Toni-Marie Ciarfella
University of Albany (NY)

Preparing BSW Students for Practicum: Reducing Anxiety through Bridge to Practicum Course

Presenters:
Pam Clary
Missouri Western State University
Ali Kamali
Missouri Western University
Jana Frye
Missouri Western University

▪ **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WORKSHOP**
Human Rights & Social Justice

Napoleon D1
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Art and Social Justice: Giving Voice to Social Change

Presenter:
Paul Urbanski
Monmouth University (NJ)

▪ **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL WORKSHOP**
Social Work Values & Ethics

Napoleon D2
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

The A, B, Cs of Effective Advising

Presenter:
Carol Renee Amendola
West Virginia University

▪ **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE BOARD SPONSORED SESSION**

Faculty Development
Napoleon D3
1:45 PM – 3:00 PM

6th Annual Emerging Leaders Forum: Use of Transformational Leadership for Mentoring Relationships

Presenters:
Yarneckia D. Dyson
The University of North Carolina Greensboro
Karen Myers
James Madison University (VA)
Laura Hunt Trull
James Madison University (VA)

▪ **BEGINNER LEVEL WORKSHOP**
Core Competencies

Bayside A
3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

Insights and Connections: Integrating CSWE Core Competencies Into Cultural Immersion Service-Learning Experiences

Presenters:
Kelly R. Joplin
Campbellsville University (KY)
Paige N. Pickerl
Campbellsville University (KY)
Helen K. Mudd
Campbellsville University (KY)



Appendix B

BPD Annual Conference Acceptance Notification

ply@precismail.com>



Tue 9/20/2016 3:19 PM

To: Brennan, Mary Kay

