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Development of Professional Identity in Social Work Education

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Development of Professional Identity in Social Work Education

by

Janet L. Holter

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

May 2018

Abstract

The development of social work professional identity is characterized by internalization of the knowledge, skills, values, and mission of social work, and begins with and is shaped by the content, and interactions, as well as student experiences within the context of the social work education curricula. This Banded Dissertation comprising three products centers on the development of professional identity within undergraduate social work education. The first product is a qualitative study in which the author examined student perceptions of professional identity, student definitions and perceptions of how social work education shapes students' professional identity. Findings showed that intentional development of professional identity is essential for social work education; as such, field education has a significant role in professional identity development. The second product is a conceptual paper focusing on professional identity development in the context of field education. Utilizing symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework, the paper examined factors affecting student professional identity development within the context of social work field education and discusses implications for field instructors and field education curricula. The third product is a presentation of product 2 at the Council on Social Work Education's 63rd Annual Program Meeting in October of 2017. This presentation outlined current research on professional identity development through the lens of symbolic interactionism, focusing on field education. The three products of this Banded Dissertation emphasize professional identity development as an essential function of social work education. This work has implications for social work educators seeking to develop curricula to assist students in their development of a strong professional identity.

Keywords: professional identity, professionalism, symbolic interactionism, social work education, field education, signature pedagogy

Acknowledgements/Dedication

I would first like to thank the faculty and staff of the DSW program for their guidance and support over the course of this program. I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Kingsley Chigbu for your positivity, and for continually challenging me to develop as an educator and scholar. I thank the members of Cohort 2 for your humor, support, and your friendship. I also thank Debra Daehn-Zellmer, Dr. Connie Fossen, and Dr. Jennifer Anderson-Meger; my colleagues, who supported this endeavor with their humor, and unending kindness. I finally thank my parents, who planted the seed of possibility at an early age.

I dedicate this work to my family: Jarrod, Carsey, and Cailyn, whose love and patience were my calm center throughout- this would not have been possible without you.

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Development of Professional Identity in Social Work Education

The development of professional identity is an essential function of social work education. Social work professional identity is defined as the internalization of knowledge, skills, professional norms, behaviors, values and the mission of social work, and the development of a commitment to work at micro, mezzo and macro levels of practice with a focus on social justice (Adams, Hean, Sturgis, & Macleod, 2006; Bogo, Raphael, & Roberts, 1993). The process of professional development in social work begins with the acquisition and development of knowledge and skills, then moving to understanding the profession in terms of one's own values and beliefs, before finally incorporating these with the values of the profession in creation of their own professional identity (Tseng, 2011).

Divergence in relation to social work professional identity is historical, and dates to settlement houses and charity organizations as we debated the role of social work in society; the professions' lack of ability to agree on and articulate our role impacted the development of professional identity in social work students (Pullen, Sansfacon & Crete, 2016). Social work is a diverse profession, serving varied populations at multiple levels of practice, and while this is considered a strength of the profession, this diversity contributes to a lack of direction or "lack of commonly recognized symbols" (Loseke & Cahill, 1986, p. 255). These issues in addition to the fact that social work often utilizes research and theory from other professions have interfered with the ability of the profession to cultivate a common identity, impacting professional identity development (Gilbert, 1977; Loseke & Cahill, 1986; Higgins, 2016).

Studies on professional identity have largely focused on professional preferences of students and new practitioners indicating preferences for micro level clinical work rather than

work with varied populations at multiple levels of practice (Bogo et al., 1993; Loseke & Cahill, 1986; Sha, Wong, Lou, Pearson, & Gu, 2012; Weiss, Gal, & Cnann, 2004). Bogo et al., (1993) maintained that these preferences were due the inability of social work education programs to develop a strong professional identity in social work students. Subsequent research, however, indicated that these preferences were less to do with a lack of professional identity development than the influence of national, social, and political contexts such as threats of professional dysregulation, job markets, and poor public perception (Sha, Wong, Lou, Pearson, & Gu, 2012; Weiss, Gal, & Cnann, 2004; Wiles, 2017). Students faced similar issues in field education and were identified as ill equipped to reconcile their positive notions with poor public perceptions of the profession, and varying social and political challenges resulting in professional preferences that may not align with the values and mission of social work (Loseke & Cahill, 1986).

The work completed for this Banded Dissertation adds to the literature on the development of professional identity in social work education. This Banded Dissertation includes a conceptual paper focusing on current research on professional identity through the lens of symbolic interactionism, a qualitative study exploring student understanding and perceptions of professional identity development and a discussion of a peer-reviewed presentation on the conceptual paper, focusing on professional identity within the context of field education.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this Banded Dissertation is grounded in the 2015 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and symbolic interactionism. Utilizing a “competency based education framework” (Council on Social Work Education, 2015, p. 6), the EPAS guide social work education in the administration of social work educational programs to help students develop as knowledgeable, competent, ethical social workers, capable of social work practice (CSWE, 2015). The concept of professionalism and professional identity is interwoven throughout the 2015 (EPAS), most noticeably in Competency one:

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgement and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. (CSWE, 2015, p. 7)

Professional identity is addressed again, in Educational Policy (EP) 2.2, Signature Pedagogy: Field Education:

Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline-to think, to preform, and to act ethically and with integrity. Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting.

It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice.

(CSWE, 2015, p. 12)

The elements of professional identity as discussed in the literature are not explicitly discussed as such in the EPAS; however, these elements are integrated into the EPAS competencies, behaviors and standards. These standards guide the development of curricula in social work education programs, and as such, are a lens, through which this Banded Dissertation is constructed.

As a theoretical framework for this Banded Dissertation, symbolic interactionism posits that identity is created through language, symbols and interactions in one's environment. Language and symbols are interpreted and assigned meanings, resulting in individual behavior (Carter & Fuller, 2016; Forte, 2004b; Stryker, 1987). In relation to the process of professional identity development, Tseng (2011) maintains that this process begins with the development of knowledge, however as students begin to process the information they receive through the social work education curricula, including field education, they integrate these symbols with their own values, creating meaning, then their own professional identity. Stryker's (1987) view of symbolic interactionism assists in further explaining roles and identity, explaining how individuals utilize social context and their perceptions of how others view them as they create their own identity (Carter & Fuller, 2016; Stryker, 1987). Similarly, symbolic interactionism assumes that symbols are not only received from other individuals, but from an individual's environment, and this environmental influence also influences behavior (Forte, 2004b; Stryker, 1987; Wagner, 1974).

The tenets and assumptions of symbolic interactionism served as the theoretical lens of this Banded Dissertation examining the symbols, language, interactions and context that contribute to the development of professional identity within the context of social work education.

Summary of Banded Dissertation Products

This Banded Dissertation consists of three products:

Product 1: “Feeling Like a Professional”- Undergraduate Perceptions on the Development of Social Work Professional Identity

Product 2: Development of Professional Identity through Social Work Field Education

Product 3: Presentation- Development of Professional Identity through Social Work Field Education

This Banded Dissertation examines the development of professional identity in social work education. Intentional focus on the development of professional identity in social work education curricula is essential to ensure students are not only able to develop the skills necessary for social work practice, but they also internalize the mission and values of the social work profession.

The first product of this Banded Dissertation is a qualitative study which examined student perceptions of their identity development as a professional social worker. The author study utilized focus groups to explore students’ definitions of professional identity, and examined their perceptions of how their professional identity was developed through the social work professional curriculum, including focus on the impact of field education. The author found that student perceptions were largely consistent with recommendations and findings in the

literature on professional identity development, supporting focused, intentional development on professional identity development in undergraduate social work education.

The second product of this Banded Dissertation consists of a conceptual paper focusing on the development of professional identity in field education. While the literature discussed professional identity development within the context of social work education, little exists on the impact of field education on this process. Using symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework, the author discussed the literature and outlined implications for field education curricula, including intentional focus on professional development in field education, and training for field instructors.

Product three of this Banded Dissertation is a presentation titled the *Development of Professional Identity through Social Work Field Education* at the Council on Social Work Education 63rd Annual Program Meeting (APM) in Dallas, Texas on October 20, 2017. The Conference provided an opportunity to present the paper written for product 2 of this Banded Dissertation - professional identity development in field education using the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. Current literature was outlined, and implications for field education were discussed. The author paid specific attention to the role of field instructors on the process of identity development.

This Banded Dissertation adds to the literature and discussion of professional identity development within the context of social work education. While much of the literature focuses on factors contributing to and influencing professional identity development, this work focuses

on student perceptions and understanding of professional development, the impact of field education, and implications for social work curricula.

While much of the literature on professional identity development focuses on factors contributing to professional identity development, few examine student perceptions of professional identity, nor discuss implications for curricula. Overall findings of this Banded Dissertation support explicit inclusion of professional identity development in social work curricula. In the research study, students had difficulty creating a concrete definition of professional identity, however were able to discuss the elements of professional identity as indicated in the literature. Curricula elements such as role play/simulation activities and service opportunities are essential to facilitating skill development and helping students understand the unique aspects of the profession. Field education is similarly critical in assisting students in socializing students to the profession, and understanding the diversity of the profession. Field education also helps students understand the impacts of social, political, and organizational contexts is critical; and reconcile these with their own values and beliefs as they internalize the mission and values of the social work profession in creation of a professional identity.

Through language, symbols, and interactions received during their education, students assign meaning and create their professional identity. This process is often treated as implicit rather than explicit, without intentional focus within the curriculum. Field instructors must not only be educated on the mission and objectives of field education, but also on the process of professional identity development for inclusion in the field education curriculum.

Implications for Social Work Education

The discussions and findings contained in this this Banded Dissertation support intentional focus on the development of professional identity within social work curricula. The research conducted examining student definitions and perceptions of professional identity development highlighted the developmental nature of social work education, with students identifying the importance of scaffolding in building their identity as a professional. This is supported by Tseng's (2011) discussion of the process of professional identity development, beginning with acquisition of knowledge and skills, moving to identification and integration of one's own values and beliefs with those of the profession, resulting in a professional identity. The provision of experiential activities such as case studies, service learning, and role play/simulation were also identified as not only developing skill, but assisting students in building their identity as a professional social worker.

Consistent with Wiles (2017) findings regarding the definition of professional identity, students had difficulty developing a concrete definition of professional identity, although their discussions included elements of professional identity as described in the literature. Of particular interest, were students' discussions on generalist social work practice. Students identified "baseline skills" necessary for practice, and identified these skills as contributing to their identity as a professional social worker. Students also identified the importance of the unique elements and perspective of social work as contributing to their professional identity. However, when speaking about their identity as social workers, students largely discussed this in terms of their agency field experiences rather than as a generalist. The impact of diversity in practice has also been noted as impacting professional identity; these variations influence how social workers

identify themselves as social workers, with concerns that the focus of generalist practice is lost (Gilbert, 1977; Higgins, 2016). The socialization process was also identified as essential in assisting students to internalize the norms, values, and identity of their profession (Barretti, 2004; Moorhead, 2014). The elements of the socialization process, as discussed by Barretti (2004), were identified discussed by students as essential to the development of professional identity, particularly when discussing the impact of field education on professional identity development.

Field education facilitates the development of a strong professional identity through experiences that challenge students' early perceptions of social work practice, allowing them to address and reconcile any challenge to their perceptions through work with field instructors and faculty in the social work program. Self-assessment, reflective supervision and a strong relationship between student and field instructor help ensure a meaningful field experience. Ben Shlomo, Levy, and Itzhaky, (2012) and Ornstein and Moses (2010) also stress the importance of these strong relationships, as well as a collaborative, reflective supervision process as essential to the development of a strong professional identity. Social work education programs must recognize the impact of field education, in assisting students to understand their identity as a generalist through varied content, and experiential activities at all levels of practice while helping students understand the nature of specialization. Intentional focus on this, particularly through field education will assist students in developing their identity as a generalist, while understanding diverse practice in agency settings.

While the creation of a professional identity requires one to assign meaning to symbols, interactions and relationships, students require the guidance of a field instructor to help them understand these symbols through a supportive positive relationship which is reflective in nature.

Field instructors ought to be specifically trained and prepared to work with students to develop their professional identity rather than treating this as an implicit process. Knight's (2000) findings indicated student perceptions of a successful field experience included field instructors who were educated on the mission and goals of field education, program expectation for learning, supervision, and on the process of professional identity development within the context of field. Field instructors must additionally be educated on how to help students address issues related to political and social contexts, and assists students in reconciling these sometimes-difficult contexts with reconcile these with student differing or idealized notions of the profession.

Implications for Future Research

Development of a strong professional identity is essential for the proliferation of the social work profession, and as such, future research in this area is warranted. A larger sample examining student understanding and perceptions of professional identity development at undergraduate and graduate levels might provide additional clarity, and details for development of social work curricula in relation to professional identity development at various levels of practice. In addition, examining faculty and field instructor perceptions in contrast with student perceptions may provide insights on similarities and contradictions to assist in building curricula related to professional identity development. Additional research on student understanding of generalist practice in relation to professional identity is warranted, as is examination of mechanisms to assist students in developing their identity as a generalist especially within the context of undergraduate field education. Finally, future research should focus on professional identity development within the context of Interprofessional education, occurring throughout the social work education curriculum.

Conclusion

The development of a strong professional identity is essential for the advancement and proliferation of the social work profession. The research in this Banded Dissertation explored student perceptions with clear implications for intentional focus in all areas of social work curricula on professional identity development, while the conceptual article focused on field education, and the need for training for field instructors. Students who leave their social work education programs with a strong professional identity are able to practice as generalists, navigating the political and social challenges of the day, and serving society at multiple levels with a clear focus on social justice, congruent with the mission of social work.

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10.1080/026154706049883

**“Feeling Like a Professional”- Undergraduate Student Perceptions on the Development of
Social Work Professional Identity**

Janet L. Holter

St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas

UNAVAILABLE UNTIL JUNE 1, 2019

Development of Professional Identity through Social Work Field Education

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jlholter@viterbo.edu This paper was written to fulfill one of the Banded Dissertation requirements of the Doctorate in Social Work Program at the St. Catherine University-University of St. Thomas School of Social Work.

Abstract

The development of social work professional identity is characterized by internalization of the knowledge, skills, values, and mission of social work, and begins with and is shaped by the content, and interactions, as well as student experiences within the context of the social work education curricula. This Banded Dissertation comprising three products centers on the development of professional identity within undergraduate social work education. The first product is a qualitative study in which the author examined student perceptions of professional identity, student definitions and perceptions of how social work education shapes students' professional identity. Findings showed that intentional development of professional identity is essential for social work education; as such, field education has a significant role in professional identity development. The second product is a conceptual paper focusing on professional identity development in the context of field education. Utilizing symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework, the paper examined factors affecting student professional identity development within the context of social work field education and discusses implications for field instructors and field education curricula. The third product is a presentation of product 2 at the Council on Social Work Education's 63rd Annual Program Meeting in October of 2017. This presentation outlined current research on professional identity development through the lens of symbolic interactionism, focusing on field education. The three products of this Banded Dissertation emphasize professional identity development as an essential function of social work education. This work has implications for social work educators seeking to develop curricula to assist students in their development of a strong professional identity.

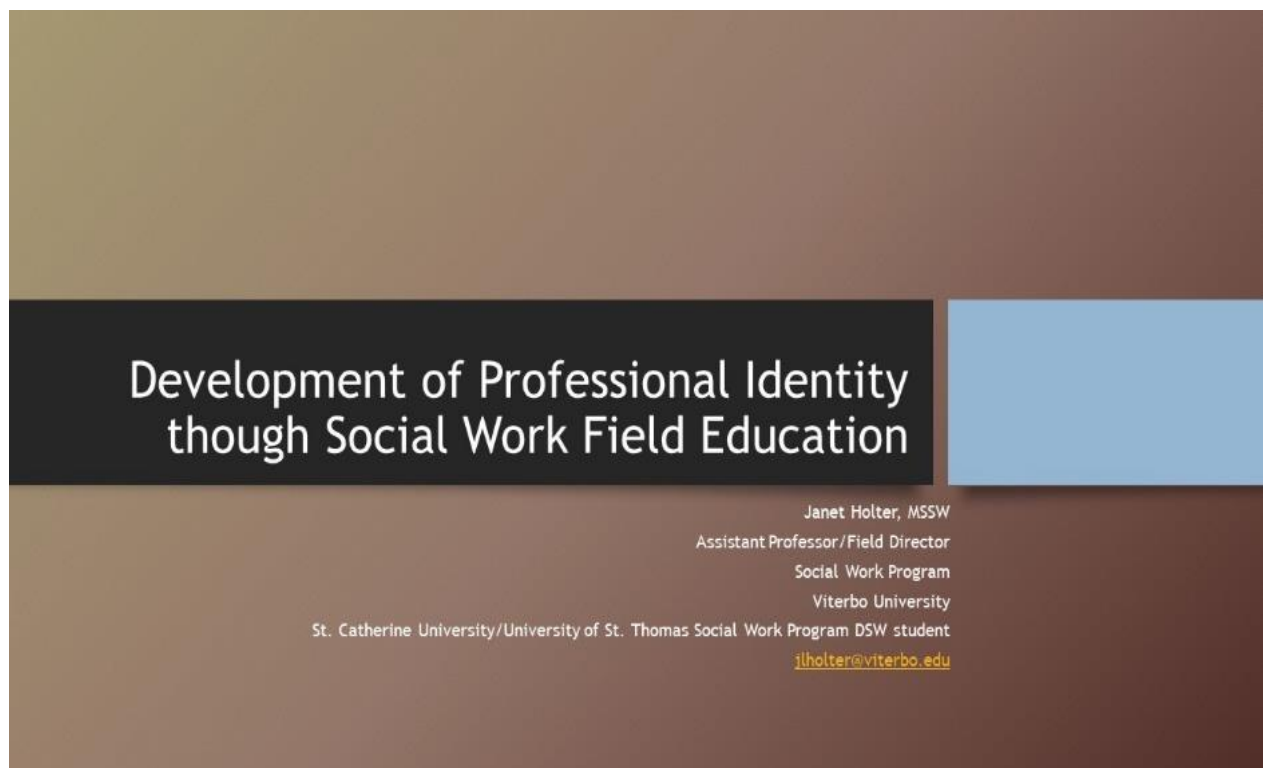
Keywords: professional identity, professionalism, symbolic interactionism, social work education, field education, signature pedagogy

Presentation Abstract

The development of professional identity in social work students is characterized by internalization of the mission, values, and skills of the profession. In this presentation, the author discussed current literature on professional identity development, focusing on social work field education, and the role of social work field instructors in the process. Implications for social work education were discussed, including explicit focus on identity development in curricula, and training for field instructors on the development of professional identity within field education. Inserted below are annotated PowerPoint slides of the presentation

The author presented this work titled the *Development of Professional Identity through Social Work Field Education* at the Council on Social Work Education 63rd Annual Program Meeting (APM) in Dallas, Texas on October 20, 2017. The Conference provided an opportunity to present the paper written for product 2 of this Banded Dissertation - professional identity development in field education using the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. Current literature was outlined, and implications for field education were discussed. The author paid specific attention to the role of field instructors on the process of identity development. Each slide is numbered in the order of the presentation, followed by the original slide presented at the Conference, and a brief descriptive text summarizing the content thereof.

Slide 1

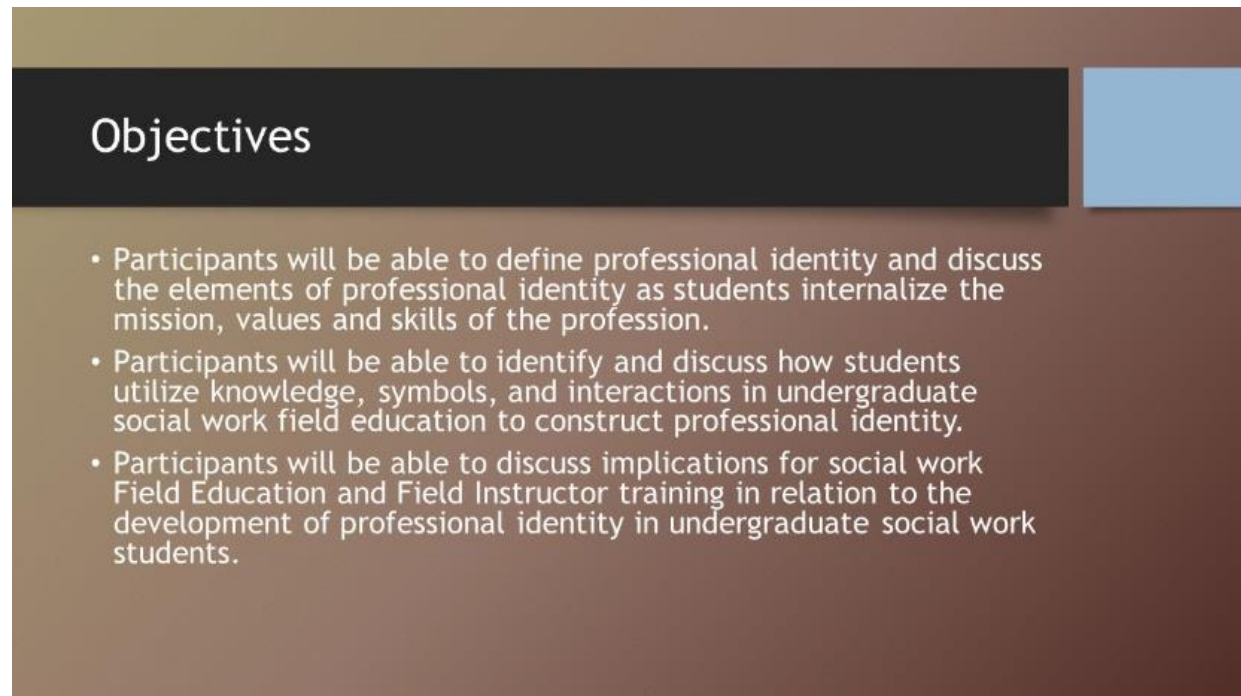


Development of Professional Identity
through Social Work Field Education

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This is the cover page for this author's presentation at the Council on Social Work Education 63rd Annual Program Meeting. This slide lists the title, and presenter's contact information.

Slide 2

The slide features a dark brown background with a black header bar on the left containing the word "Objectives" in white. A light blue square is positioned on the right side of the header bar. Below the header, three bullet points are listed in a light beige color.

Objectives

- Participants will be able to define professional identity and discuss the elements of professional identity as students internalize the mission, values and skills of the profession.
- Participants will be able to identify and discuss how students utilize knowledge, symbols, and interactions in undergraduate social work field education to construct professional identity.
- Participants will be able to discuss implications for social work Field Education and Field Instructor training in relation to the development of professional identity in undergraduate social work students.

Three learning objectives guided the presentation, with a focus on implications for the development of professional identity within the context of social work field education.

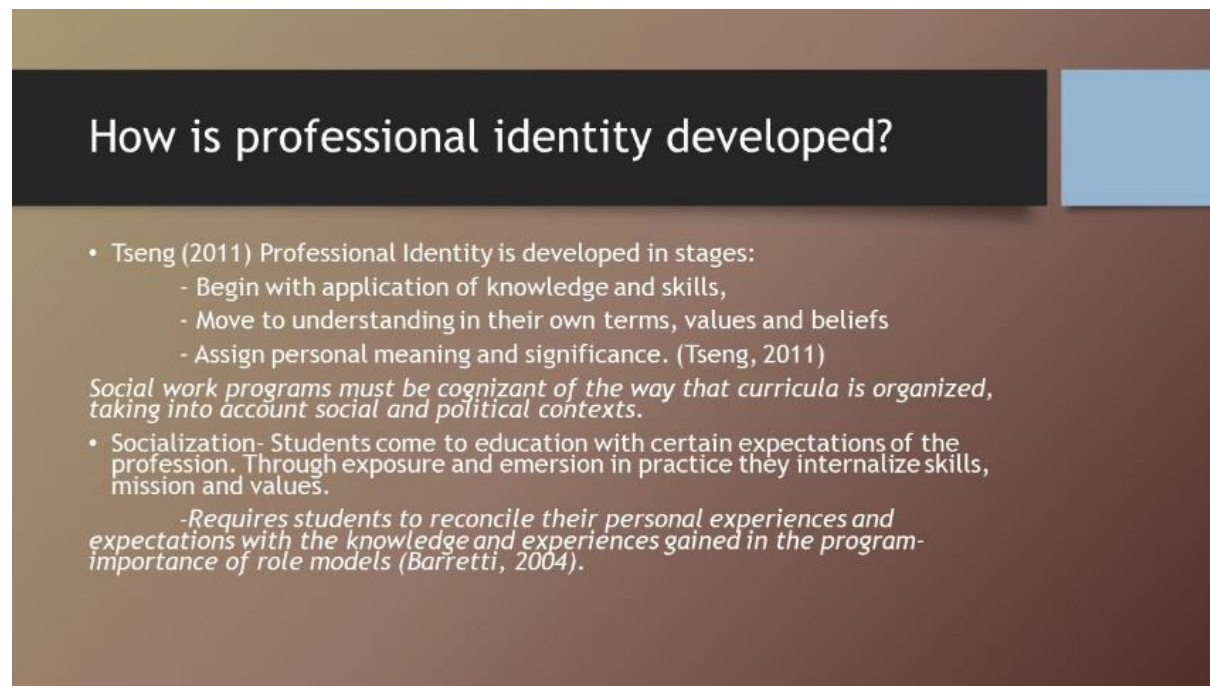
Slide 3

What is professional identity?

- Development and internalization of professional values, skills, norms, and behaviors for application in professional practice (Adams, Hean, Sturgis, & Macleod, 2006)
- Adopting values and beliefs, and developing a commitment to the mission of social work, as indicated by willingness to work with and on behalf of disadvantaged populations for social justice (Bogo, Raphael, & Roberts, 1993).
- Common themes: Internalization of a shared identity-characteristics a social worker should possess, how identify profession, and how identify themselves as a social worker. (Loseke & Cahill, 1986; Wiles, 2013)

Professional identity is characterized as the development and internalization of professional values, skills, norms, and behaviors for application in professional practice (Adams, Hean, Sturgis, & Macleod, 2006). Social work professional identity is characterized by the development of a commitment to the mission of social work, (Bogo, Raphael, & Roberts, 1993) and is developed through internalization of shared identity, incorporating the unique aspects of the profession (Loseke, & Cahill; Wiles, 2013).

Slide 4

The slide features a dark blue header with the title "How is professional identity developed?" in white. Below the header, the main content is on a light blue background. It includes a bulleted list of stages from Tseng (2011), a quote about social work programs, and a section on socialization with a sub-quote from Barrett (2004).

How is professional identity developed?

- Tseng (2011) Professional Identity is developed in stages:
 - Begin with application of knowledge and skills,
 - Move to understanding in their own terms, values and beliefs
 - Assign personal meaning and significance. (Tseng, 2011)

Social work programs must be cognizant of the way that curricula is organized, taking into account social and political contexts.

- Socialization- Students come to education with certain expectations of the profession. Through exposure and emersion in practice they internalize skills, mission and values.
 - Requires students to reconcile their personal experiences and expectations with the knowledge and experiences gained in the program- importance of role models (Barretti, 2004).

The process of professional identity as outlined by Tseng (2011). Professional identity development begins with acquisition of knowledge and skills, moving to understanding in terms of one's own terms and beliefs, then assigning meaning and significance. This process must be taken into account and incorporated in to social work education curricula.

Slide 5

Theoretical framework

- Symbolic Interactionism
 - Through interpretation of language and symbols gathered through these interactions, individuals assign meaning to their world resulting in individual behavior. Symbols are received through communication with other individuals and social contexts (Carter & Fuller, 2016; Forte, 2004; Stryker, 1987).
 - Individuals utilize social context and their perceptions of how others view them as they create their own identity, eventually internalizing these views as roles (Stryker, 1987).

Professional identity development may be viewed through the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism posits that identity is developed through the language and symbols received through interactions in their environments. Individuals assign meaning to these symbols, creating their own identity (Carter & Fuller, 2016; Forte, 2004; Stryker, 1987).

Slide 6

Barriers to development

- Bogo et al. (1993) raised concerns that social work students were failing to internalize the mission and values?
- Studies found social work students have difficulty developing a strong social work identity (Bogo et al., 1993; Sha et al., 2012; Weiss, 2004)
- How was this measured?
 - Preferences for working with vulnerable populations
 - Preferred work settings
 - Preferred level of practice
- Student preferences indicate preferences for micro settings, and work in clinical or government agencies. Job market, pay, and prestige influence preferences.

Current research has explored barriers to professional identity development, primarily through professional identity as indicated by student professional preferences. Student preferences indicated preferences for micro settings, and work in clinical or government agencies (Bogo et al., 1993; Sha, Wong, Lou, Pearson, & Gu, 2012; Weiss, 2004).

Slide 7

Barriers to development

- Political and social contexts impact student professional identity development
- Professional identity is also impacted by student experiences with low professional status and lack of respect for the social work profession.
- These realities conflict with their idealized perceptions of the profession.
- Our diversity as a profession makes it difficult for students: lack of direction, definition, and commonly recognized symbols (Loseke & Cahill, 1986).

Professional identity development is impacted by political and social contexts, including low professional status, sometimes poor public perception, which conflict with often idealized notion of the perception. In addition, the diversity of social work practice, and lack of clarity in regards to the role of social work in society creates additional barriers (Loseke & Cahill, 1986).

Slide 8

Student perceptions of a successful field experience

- A successful field experience is:
 - Flexible in meeting students' changing needs
 - Field Instructors understand mission and purpose of field education
 - Utilizes collaborative supervision (Knight, 2000)
 - Repeated skill practice and reflection is critical for development
- Relationship between field instructor and student is essential
 - Within this relationship, strengths and weaknesses of student are assessed, student is provided with focused feedback (Fortune, Lee, & Cavazos, 2007).

A successful field experience is characterized by flexible learning environments, repeated practice for skill development, collaborative supervision, and a strong relationship between field instructor and student with focused feedback. Field instructors must also understand and support the mission and developmental nature of field education (Fortune, Lee, & Cavazos, 2007; Knight, 2000).

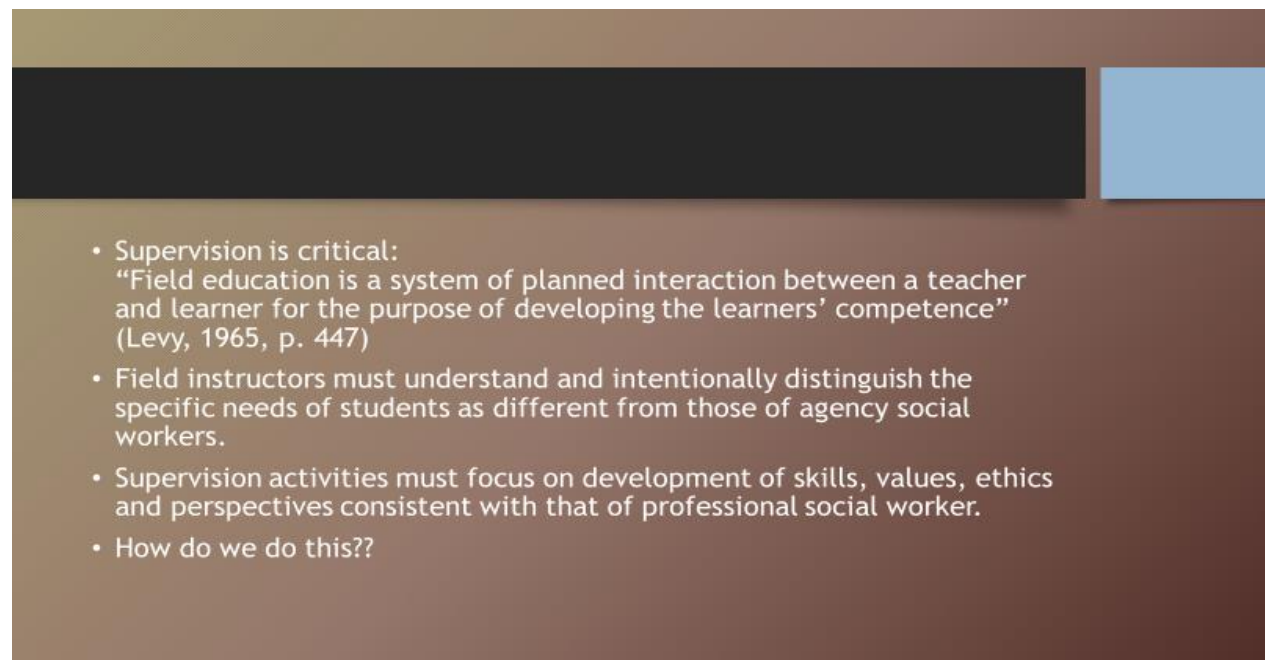
Slide 9

Essential role of Field instructor

- Environment in which field instructor and student participate in the learning process, the learning environment is co-created.
- Students must learn to accept and give feedback regarding their needs
- Field Instructor must assess and determine their use of self, and help students develop skills, and personal and professional use of self, resulting in the development of social work professional identity.

Field instructor is essential to a successful field placement. A collaborative relationship between field instructor and student in which a student must be able to give and receive feedback. Field instructors must help students develop skills, and understand personal and professional use of self in development of their professional identity.

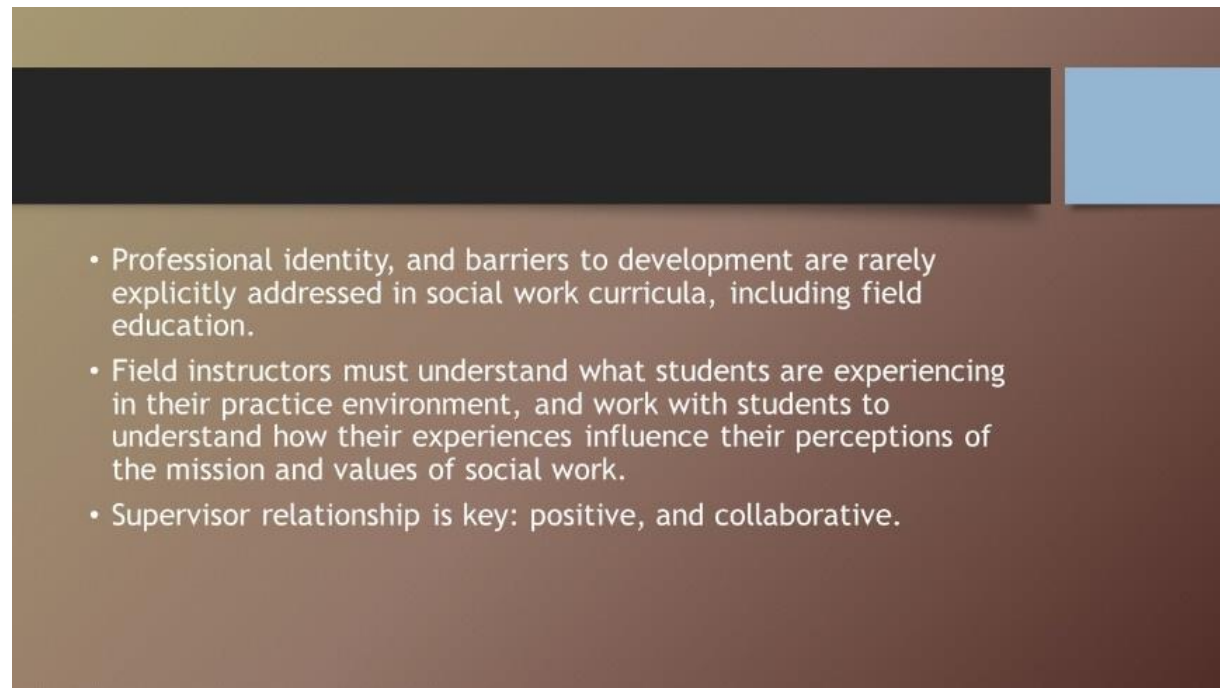
Slide 10



- Supervision is critical:
“Field education is a system of planned interaction between a teacher and learner for the purpose of developing the learners’ competence”
(Levy, 1965, p. 447)
- Field instructors must understand and intentionally distinguish the specific needs of students as different from those of agency social workers.
- Supervision activities must focus on development of skills, values, ethics and perspectives consistent with that of professional social worker.
- How do we do this??

Supervision is a formalized, collaborative process through which students develop skills, values and ethics, internalizing the mission of social work practice (Levy, 1965). Collaborative relationships are focused on learning, and acknowledge the developmental nature of field education; making this supervisory relationship different from that of an employee.

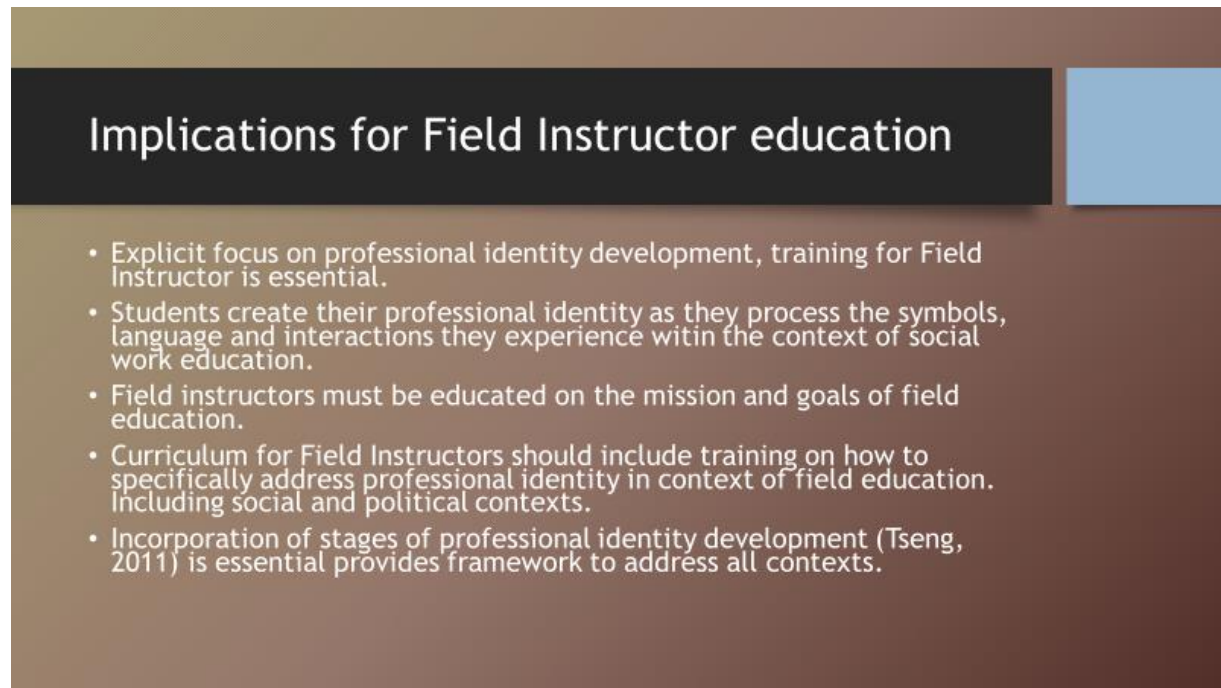
Slide 11



- Professional identity, and barriers to development are rarely explicitly addressed in social work curricula, including field education.
- Field instructors must understand what students are experiencing in their practice environment, and work with students to understand how their experiences influence their perceptions of the mission and values of social work.
- Supervisor relationship is key: positive, and collaborative.

The process of professional identity development must be made explicit, particularly in field education. Field instructors must collaborate with students to understand how their experiences influence their perceptions of the mission and values of social work.

Slide 12

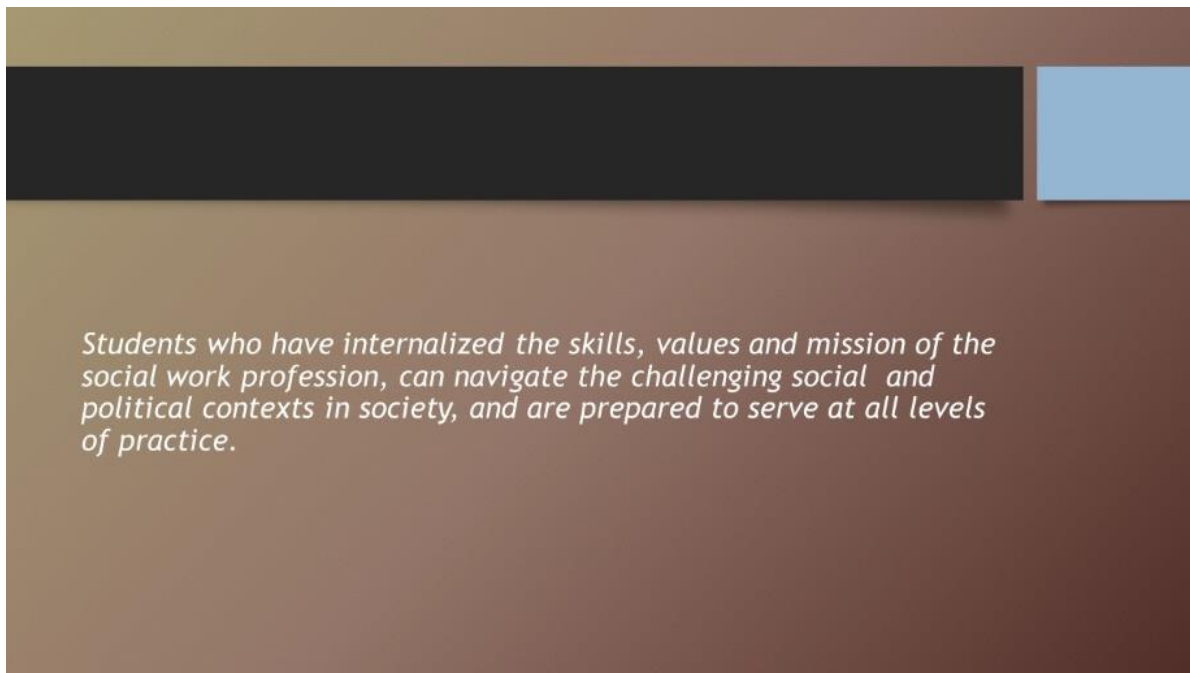


Implications for Field Instructor education

- Explicit focus on professional identity development, training for Field Instructor is essential.
- Students create their professional identity as they process the symbols, language and interactions they experience within the context of social work education.
- Field instructors must be educated on the mission and goals of field education.
- Curriculum for Field Instructors should include training on how to specifically address professional identity in context of field education. Including social and political contexts.
- Incorporation of stages of professional identity development (Tseng, 2011) is essential provides framework to address all contexts.

Professional identity development must be intentionally included as part of the field education curriculum. As students process the symbols, language and interactions they experience in field education, they continue to build their identity. Field instructors must assist students in processing these symbols. Curricula should include training for field instructors to make this process explicit.

Slide 13



This slide serves as a conclusion to the presentation; a summary statement stressing the importance of the development of a strong social work professional identity.

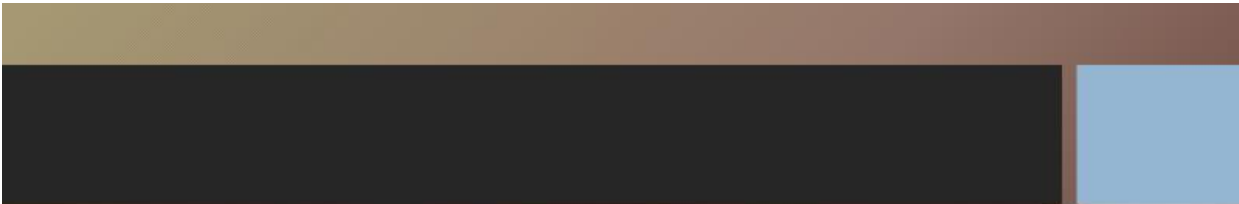
Slide 14

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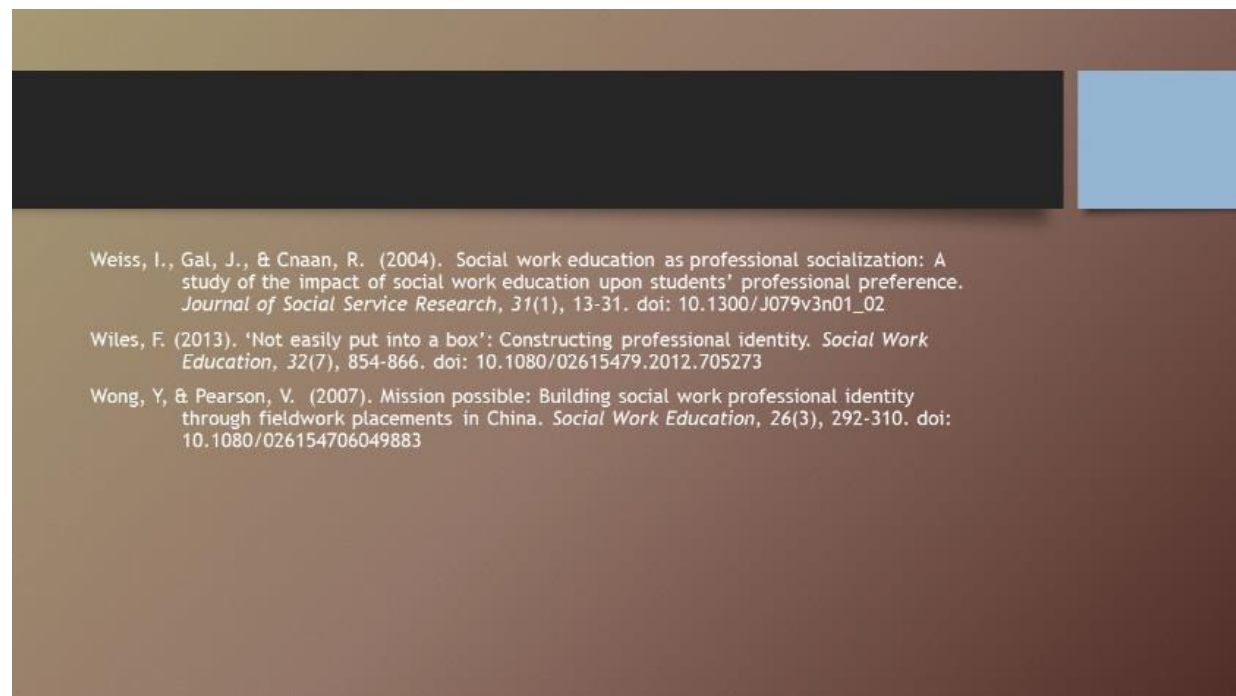
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Slide 16



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