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The Training and Mentoring of Social Work Field Directors within the Academy: An Ethical Dilemma or Not?

Sibyl Renée Beaulieu
University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

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The Training and Mentoring of Social Work Field Directors within the Academy:

An Ethical Dilemma or Not?

By

Sibyl Renée Beaulieu

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Abstract

Field education is lauded as the signature pedagogy of social work education. However it is unclear how new field directors, charged with administering this aspect of social work education, are prepared for leadership of field education. This banded dissertation examines how new field directors assuming field administrative responsibilities, are trained and mentored for the position within the academy.

Three distinct scholarly products make up the banded dissertation. A conceptual paper highlighting the writer's own experience through a scholarly personal narrative is the first product. A scholarly personal narrative is valuable because it provides perspective drawn from a non-traditional but scholarly approach to traditional research content (Nash, 2004).

The second product is a national quantitative research study of field directors, examining respondent's experiences with mentoring and training when first starting as a field administrator. The study looked at the experiences of training and mentoring field directors had when first beginning within the academy, using the lens of two ethical standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, standards 104(b) and 3.08.

The final product is a scholarly presentation of the research findings at the Council on Social Work Educations Annual Program Meeting. Another purpose of this scholarly presentation was to present the preliminary research finding utilizing quantitative descriptive analysis of the dependent and independent variables of the study. Recommendations included the use of a training framework to consistency in training all new field directors.

Keywords: Field Directors, field administrators, field education, signature pedagogy, training, mentoring, the Academy, NASW, code of ethics

Dedication

First, I must thank God almighty for giving me the opportunity and strength to complete my post-graduate degree. I dedicate this banded dissertation to the glory of His name for helping me find this program and guiding me through it.

Thank you to my mother, Doris G. Beaulieu, who taught by living example the meaning of perseverance, fidelity and spirituality. I have learned so much by observing your strength, grace and spiritual determination in times of difficulty. Finally, to the memory of my late father Leon N. Beaulieu, Jr., who taught me that fear was never to be the marker by which I made difficult decisions; and that gaining knowledge and learning is personal power. He never let circumstances diminish the brilliance that shone within him and he believed that I had the same brilliance to contribute to this world. In your honor Daddy, till we meet again…

Acknowledgements

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I especially want to my banded dissertation advisor Dr. Robin Whitebird, who helped keep me focused and encouraged me every step of the way. I appreciate it more than I can say. Thank you, Dr. Kingsley Chigbu for your technical support and belief in my abilities and the faculty at University of St. Thomas School of Social Work.

Finally, to Cohort 4 – you have been the solid ground to stand on when all other things seemed to be unstable. I am grateful for your friendship, honest peer review, helpful feedback, fun times together and deep connections. I will always be here for you.

Table of Contents

List of Figures,Tables and Powerpoint Slides

The Training and Mentoring of Social Work Field Directors within the Academy:

An Ethical Dilemma or Not?

Field Education is the culminating educational process in social work education and considered the signature pedagogy of social work education (CSWE, 2008). Social work education is the standards of teaching that are structured and organized for those seeking to enter a chosen profession (CSWE, 2015, Shulman, 2005). Bogo, (2015) posits that field education is the key component of social work education towards preparing ethically and clinically effective social workers. With field education viewed as a vitally integral aspect of social work education, how field administrators are prepared to lead is an important area of focus.

The impetus for this banded dissertation was the writer's own experience as a field director for the past twelve years. Literature review findings suggest that mentoring within academia is a well-supported idea (Bigelow & Johnson, 2001; Johnson, 2002; de Janasz & Sullivan, 2001; Johnson, 2007; Blue & Kominkiewica, 2013 in Ellison, Johnson & Moore, 2014). Ellison & Raskin (2014), note the benefits of mentoring which produce positive outcomes improving faculty satisfaction. Gelman (2014) found mentoring within the academy is a critical component of increasing professional growth and career enhancement. Although research data shows mentoring is a vital component for faculty preparedness, one study regarding mentoring in social work found that only 45% of respondents received or were receiving mentoring in their role as field directors and 55% received no mentoring at all (Ellison & Raskin, 2014).

This scholarly work analyzes the occurrences of training and mentoring field directors receive when first hired as a field administrator by the academy. It questions whether intentional

mentoring and training of field directors that is position-specific occurs regularly within the academy. Ellison and Raskin (2014) discuss how non-mentored field educators learned their administrative roles. Their research data found a significant portion of respondents (78%) did not receive formal mentoring, and utilized self-initiated training to gain an understanding of how to be a field administrator. Respondents in that study noted that the most prevalent type of self-initiated learning was speaking with their peers to learn their position tasks and responsibilities. This data suggests that intentional training and mentoring within the academy is an enhancement area that would benefit new field administrators, rather than current reliance on self-initiated training. The writer discovered that while research exists regarding mentoring in general within the academy, there is limited research specific to mentoring and training of new field directors once hired for their position. Therefore, a significant aspect of this scholarly work was conducting research on this specific topic.

Studies that do exist find field faculty enter the administrative role with little to no position-specific training or mentoring on administering field education. Field Directors report utilizing self-directed learning or "trial and error" efforts as their predominant experiences when entering this administrative position (Dalton, Stevens & Mass-Brady, 2011, Ellison and Raskin, 2014). A study conducted by the Council on Social Work Education/Council on Field Education or CSWE/COFE, examined the field experience of students or highlighted demographics variances among field administrative respondents, but did not address training or mentoring of field administrators (CSWE/COFE State of Field Education Survey, 2015). Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kinzer (2012) note that field education is experiencing a metamorphosis, including increased complexity of student needs, diminishing placement resources, increased need for interdisciplinary placement options and the changing practice landscape of digital practice. In

addition, their research also found limited data exists on how well field administrators are prepared to engage in dynamically changing field administrative responsibilities (Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kinzer, 2012).

This topic is important to examine for several reasons. Hunter, Moen & Raskin (2016) note that implementation of field education requires substantial knowledge and skills, is a significantly challenging position and requires a wide variety of areas to engage in. These areas include placement resource competition, inadequate finances, student demography changes, student placement preferences, university priorities that are incongruent with social work priorities; and funding priorities that differ from the pedagogical focus of social work education.

Field administrators have multiple priorities and demands that are required to facilitate effective field education. Our changing society is reflected in how social work education and thus field education is shaped (Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kinzer, 2012). The complexities that field administrators must effectively facilitate involve university, department, state and federal guidelines that can often shift. Of significance is engaging in gatekeeping for the profession, which speaks to the need for effective preparation of a field administrator when entering as a new field education leader. Robertson (2013) states that field directors often find themselves addressing concerns, both among students and agencies that fall under the gatekeeping milieu. Adequate and intentional training and mentoring prepares new field administrators for effective engagement in field education leadership and ethical gatekeeping.

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this banded dissertation involves examining two ethical standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (NASW, 2019), specifically standard 1.04(b) Competence and standard 3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development. These two

standards are the construct from which the banded dissertation scrutinized how new field

administrators received mentoring and training within the academy.

Standard 1.04(b) Competence states that social workers should have substantial

experience in the areas in which they are providing professional services or engage in doing so

after they have received training, additional study or supervision from a competent practitioner in

that area of practice. Standard 3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development focuses on

social worker administrators and supervisors taking plausible steps to ensure continuing

education and professional development for those they supervise or are responsible for that

addresses current and developing practice knowledge, skills and values (NASW, 2019).

Students enrolled in field practicum receive professional socialization through an

assignment at an agency internship, with the focus of entering as practitioners (CSWE 2015).

Field practicum is viewed as the signature pedagogy of social work education, so examination of

whether the academy is providing intentional training and mentoring to new field directors is the

focus of this banded dissertation. Moreover, an examination of field director's experience of

training and mentoring when first taking this administrative position is reviewed to determine if

participants view the experience as adhering to the two ethical standards was a primary focus of

the banded dissertation.

Some social workers can assume the role of field director without hesitation about

administrative implementation due to their practice experience, transferable skills acquired or

natural ability as a practitioner. Some of those skills include assertiveness, collaborating with

multiple-levels of partners, community engagement, effective problem resolution, advocacy at a

three-tiered level, persistence, political perceptiveness and effective application of professional

judgment, etc… The two ethical standards highlighted, seem to indicate as required, purposeful training and mentoring is needed to produce effective field education leadership.

Summary of Banded Dissertation Products

Product Number One

The first product is a conceptual paper in the form of a scholarly personal narrative (SPN) entitled "The Mis-education of a Field Director." A scholarly personal narrative utilizes the writer's own story as part of the narrative, with the focus of allowing the reader insights into the issue that is non-traditional in approach (Nash, 2004). This form of scholarly writing uses a constructivist lens. Nash notes that all narratives whether research or in writings more non-traditional form - are as much about the writer as they are by the writer. "Each of us is both constructivist and constructed" (pg. 36).

This SPN discusses the self-initiated process of training that was engaged in to help the writer formulate into an effective field educator and those incidents that qualified as "miseducation," which would have been offset by intentional training and mentoring from the University of hire. The retrospective account examines the events that transpired and incorporates current thought on the benefits of purposeful training and mentoring within the academy. It includes aspects of practice that were preparatory to take on administrative responsibilities, the meaning of mentoring to a woman of color administering field education in a predominantly white institution and key recommendations for training and mentoring, along with those characteristics needed by anyone first entering the field administrative position.

Product Number Two

This product consisted of a research study entitled "The Training and Mentoring of Field Directors within the Academy, an Ethical Dilemma or Not?" This was a national research study

of field directors examining how they were prepared to administer field education within their institutions when first becoming a field director.

The research questionnaire presented to field directors within the Council on Social Work Education's Field Directors Listserv examined five research questions that explored the experience of respondents when they first took the position as a field administrator. A premise of this study is that field directors when entering the administrative position, often rely on self-directed and initiated learning and mentoring. Study results indicate a significant amount of respondents received no mentoring or training when they began as a field director. Coincidentally, a majority of respondents received no position-specific training regarding field administration within the academy. However, just under half of respondents reported that position-specific training for the field director position was part of their orientation within the academy when they first began as a field administrator.

Of significant import is that respondents utilized self-directed training and learning when first hired as a field director to navigate their role as field administrator. Respondents identified that personal efforts, personal research, and solicitation of experienced colleagues were the primary methods used to familiarize themselves with their role as field administrator. The results of this study support use of a unified training framework for field directors by the academy to ensure efficacious training and mentoring of field administrators.

Product Number Three

The final product was a presentation on the research study, at the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting, held in Denver, Colorado in November 2019. This peer-reviewed presentation on the preliminary findings of the research rounds out the products for the

banded dissertation and provides answers on whether respondents in the research study identified their experience as reflective of the two NASW ethical values.

Discussion

Field education represents the culminating process that student engage in prior to entering the social work profession. As the defined signature pedagogy of social work education – it is imperative that those administering field education have specific and purposeful training to ensure effective application of the pedagogy towards the benefit of students enrolled. Doing so ensure that those entering the profession adhere to the knowledge, skills and values of social work practice. Thus, the mentoring and training of field directors who administer field education has important significance to the profession of social work overall.

The products of the banded dissertation answer the question of whether intentional address of effective mentoring and training of new field administrators occurs within the academy. Additionally, these scholarly products provide added research-informed evidence supportive of standardized internal training and mentoring within the academy.

The importance of this dissertation is that it provides new information that adds to the limited research that exists on training and mentoring experiences of field administrators within the academy. The research data suggests that the position of field director, while responsible for implementing the signature pedagogy of the social work education – does not seem to warrant intentional focus by the academy on this aspect of professional development by new field administrators. Mentoring and training has already been shown to be beneficial to both students and faculty (Gee, K. & Popper, A., 2017; Fountain, J. & Newcomer, K, 2016; Baker, V., Pifer, M. & Griffin, K, 2014)). However, as a primary method of training and mentoring for field administrators within the academy, this method is underutilized.

This scholarly work examines current training and mentoring of new field administrators within the academy and how this reflects two NASW ethical standards (standards 1.04b and 3.08), currently taught to students as part of social works ethical perspective. The premise of the dissertation asserts a lack of effective, intentional training that new field directors experience within the academy and this lack represents an ethical dilemma regarding the demonstration of the two ethical standards highlighted, towards new field directors. The products of the banded dissertation utilize both a research study, a presentation on the findings of the study and a scholarly personal narrative conceptual paper to examine how field directors perceive adherence to the two ethical standards. The findings support significant inconsistencies in how field administrators experience training and mentoring within their universities. This is important evidence that is relevant to social work education and leadership within the academy.

The focus of the banded dissertation's study examined how new field administrators are mentored and trained, and do these experiences present a dilemma regarding current social work ethical standards? The academy creates the environment in which social work educators engage in demonstrating ethical behavior within academia. Thus, it is imperative that the same ethical practice taught by the academy, is practice within the academy by its faculty and academic administrators.

The conceptual paper and research study reveal that training and mentoring of field directors within the academy lacks standardization and often does not occur regarding specifics to the administrative field position. In the conceptual paper, which was a scholarly personal narrative, the writer describes her own experience of utilizing self-directed and initiated mentoring and training to learn the varied responsibilities of a new field director. These experiences mirror the findings within the study that a large percentage of field administrators as

new directors (63%), engage in self-directed training and mentoring. This number alone

warrants development of purposeful and unified protocols and procedures toward the mentoring

and training of field administrators that is standard within the academy. Field administration is

part of social work educational leadership. However, as some have noted, there exists much

emphasis on social work leadership development in social work practice, but little emphasis or

research exists on leadership practices within social work education (Call, Owns & Vincent,

2013).

   Of significant note is that while the research study revealed that a significant portion of

first-time field directors do not receive position specific-training within their host universities,

40.5% of the dissertation study respondents report that their training experience did align with

the two NASW Code of Ethics standards used as the study's conceptual framework. This creates

additional curiosity for the writer, as the findings on this variable seem incongruent with the

reported number of respondents engaging in self-initiated mentoring and self-directed training.

There appears reliance by the academy to allow new field administrators to engage in these self-

directed methods to gain competency in administering the signature pedagogy of social work

education. Again, the scholarly personal narrative in this dissertation, examined the writer's own

experience where no provision of formal, purposeful orientation, training or mentoring occurred,

aiding her learning the position or the complexities involved in being a field administrator.

   Of importance as well, is the examination of social work ethics versus academic

professional practice incongruence. The dissertation research study had a smaller, but significant

number of respondents who did not view their experience as adhering to the two ethical

standards focused on in this research (37%). This number is large enough to warrant concern

that consistent training and mentoring experienced by some, is not occurring for all who begin in

the position of field educator. This incongruence of professional ethical beliefs against actual practices within the academy, suggests a dilemma regarding how we prepare those who enter administration of social work field education. Is the academy "practicing what it teaches" is the salient question that this scholarly work sought to answer. The response appears to be that the academy inadvertently is not doing so for a significant portion of those entering as field education administrators.

Implications for Social Work

This banded dissertation asserts a clear implication for standardizing a method of training and mentoring of new field administrators as needed within the academy. This will ensure meeting their professional needs and gain adherence to the two highlighted ethical standards in a more uniform manner. One way facilitate this is to utilize the Field Administrators Training Framework developed by the writer. This framework examines four domains that the academy can address to ensure that new field administrators have competent training and mentoring when they start the position. Explanation of the framework exists in the conceptual paper that is part of this dissertation.

Implications for Future Research

Finally, future research is encouraged to expand the findings of this dissertation. A qualitative study, where respondents can provide narrative examples that reveal trends and themes of how new field director's experience training and mentoring within the academy is a future research focus. Additional research will benefit the profession by providing additional evidence based data on ways to mentor and train new field administrators. Respondents who did not receive training or mentoring, but identified their experience as adhering to the two NASW Code of Ethics standards, presents a significant incongruence that justifies additional scholarly

scrutiny. Further exploration of what respondents mean regarding their experience juxtaposed to their perspective of adherence may flesh out the true meaning of how respondents answered. Finally, the application of the Field Administrator's Training Framework and subsequent data analysis would be of scholarly interest to determine if the framework provided increased incidences of training and mentoring within the Academy - and whether new field directors saw this as helpful and beneficial.

Conclusion

Field Education requires competent, knowledgeable, experienced and nuanced administration to address some of its many components. This dissertation provides the academy with additional information about how those who administer the signature pedagogy are prepared to assume leadership in field education. It also highlights what areas of improvement are required to ensure that new field directors can engage in effective and competent field education administration when beginning this career path. The information provided will allow the academy to implement necessary changes to improve and strengthen how new field directors are prepared to administer the signature pedagogy of social work education in an efficacious manner, while upholding the ethical standards that guide the practice of social work educators as well as practitioners.

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The Mis-education of a Field Director

Sibyl R. Beaulieu

University of St. Thomas

Author Note

Abstract

Field education is the signature pedagogy of social work education. Training/mentoring of field administrators does not occur frequently within the academy. There is scant research on the topic of mentoring/training of field administrators. The author's field administration experience is highlighted through a scholarly person narrative (SPN), focusing on the writer's personal story. A SPN provides insights gained from less traditional approaches to traditional research (Nash, 2004). The author identifies mis-education as occurring from the lack of training/mentoring within the academy. A recommendation for a structured training approach is provided.

   Keywords: Field education, field directors/administrators, mentoring, training, signature pedagogy.

The Miseducation of a Field Director

Field education leadership is a vital part of social work education. With field practicum as the signature pedagogy of social work education, it seems evident that field education administrators require intentional and purposeful training and mentoring for field administration. However, based on the writer's own experience and anecdotal stories from peer field administrators, the academy has limited focus on the training and mentoring of field education leadership. There is a dependence on field directors educating themselves about the field education process. The writer sees this lack of purposeful and intentional training and mentoring of field administrators within the academy as antithetical to social work education's affirmation of field practicum as the signature pedagogy.

There is significant information regarding the changing milieu of field education and its impact on field faculty, but very little written on how field directors are trained or mentored to administrate a field education program (Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kizner 2012; Ellison, Posada & Richardson, 2014; Ellison & Raskin, 2014). Additionally, findings from these studies suggest that mentoring of field directors is not adequate and recommend further research. Ellison and Raskin (2014) found less than 50% of field directors experienced mentoring, and for those that did, it was primarily through informal means. Despite evidence supporting the mentoring of faculty, the same study found that only 45% of respondents received or were receiving mentoring in their role as field director and 55% received no mentoring at all. Ellison and Raskin (2014), further described how non-mentored field directors learn their roles and what they desire from mentoring if attainable. Seventy-eight percent of respondents not mentored, stated that talking to other field faculty was their preferred method of mentoring (Ellison & Raskin, 2014). This statistic supports other studies that found a majority of new

faculty are mentored informally and that the academy has depended on this method as a

significant approach to training new faculty (Noe, Greenberger & Wang, 2002; Ellison &

Raskin, 2014).

Training and preparation that does exist outside of the university setting is limited in

scope and supports the idea of self-initiated training by field administrators. Currently, new field

administrators can participate in the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) field

education training program or the Baccalaureate Program Director's (BPD) annual pre-

conference training for first time BSW field directors.   New field administrators can also access

the CSWE online 4-6 hour training that covers three areas of field education administration: a)

Policy and procedure development; b) Field education integration with coursework and c)

common responsibilities of a director (CSWE Learning Academy, 2019). The existing training

focuses on necessary field education areas and can provide an initial framework for beginning

field administrators. Despite the efforts made by CSWE and BPD to provide effective training,

both of these trainings only introduce field education administration to new directors and is a

general overview of the administrative role. These pre-conference and online trainings lack on-

going mentoring, coaching and guidance required to develop field administrative long-term skills

and prowess, and not all new directors are able to access the CSWE and BPD conferences or

online training due to limited or no budget to pay for these resources as was my own experience.

There are text dedicated to field education that focus specifically on social work field

educators (Bogo, 2010; Hunter, Moen & Raskin. 2017). These are excellent resources, but

again, rely on the new field director engaging in self-initiated training.

The expectation that a social work degree is the sole preparation needed for this

administrative role is misguided. Field administration requires multiple skills, to produce

positive outcomes for both students and agencies. It requires taking on multiple roles of marketing, salesperson, public relations person, problem resolver, anxiety manager, professional trainer, mentor, and practice expert simultaneously with both agencies and students. When the university fails to provide adequate training of a field director without prior experience in administrating a complex program, coupled with a lack of mentoring, this constitutes miseducation.

The Framework: NASW Code of Ethics

The NASW Code of Ethics is the focal point of social work ethical thought. All social work practitioners, especially those within the sphere of social work education, must adhere to these accepted ethical guideposts. Two main principles of the NASW Code of Ethics are used as part of the conceptual framework in this article. Ethical Standard 1.04(b) Competence, states "Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques." (The National Association of Social Worker [NASW], 2017). This standard requires that new field education administrators must also have specific training, consultation and mentoring from those who have practice expertise in social work education and administration.

The second standard is located under section 3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development and states, "Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for which they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics" (National

Association of Social Worker [NASW], 2017). University administrators and specifically, program directors, program deans and chairs of social work departments have a responsibility to ensure that field directors have ample training and mentoring opportunities that focus on gaining field administrative competency.

Scholarly Personal Narrative

Scholarly personal narrative (SPN) is an evolving method of inquiry that utilizes the writer's own life story, their own experience and own "voice" to explore the topic of interest being examined (Nash, 2004). SPN is an acknowledgment that each of our lives has significant meaning and that each person has a story to tell about a subject which can be used to bring others to greater understanding (Nash, 2004). SPN allows for the weaving together of an individual's personal story and how that story has significance to what is being examined. It is in this context that the writer tells her own story of miseducation as a field director to examine how field directors within the academy are mentored and trained to engage as field administrators.

Focus of my personal narrative

In this article, I described my experiences as a new field administrator and the challenges and areas of growth faced within the university.   I examined the aspects of social work practice that prepared me for field administration and those that did not. I also focused on what I have learned are key elements and characteristics needed to be an effective field administrator. Finally, I discuss thematic recommendations for training and mentoring that any university or social work department can utilize in developing an effective field administrator.   Addressing these areas of needed growth using the NASW Code of Ethics as a framework, demonstrates how the signature pedagogy of social work education should ensure appropriate preparation of field directors and that we as social work educators practice what we teach.

Examining the Process

Part of my own experience as a new field administrator was navigating the variances of roles, responsibilities, and tasks without position-specific mentoring or training from within my department or university. Social work education was a new area of practice for me. I had no access to an experienced field administrator to guide and mentor me about the implicit and explicit areas of field education administration. This lack of training/mentoring is not supported by the ethical standards of the social work profession.

Existing research finds that formal mentoring and training does not occur at a high rate when social work professionals take academic positions and these findings are applicable to social work field administrators (Ellison & Raskin, 2014). Many field directors learn the aspects of administering a field education program through their own efforts.

The Retrospective View

I characterize my introduction into field administration as "miseducation" for several important reasons. First, due to the lack of position specific training and mentoring that did not occur. Second, avoidable mistakes regarding student placements, handling student issues and cultivating community partners that occurred due to lack of guidance. These mistakes could have been offset had I been mentored and coached by an experienced field administrator as I learned the position. Finally, the self-initiated training I engaged in to prepare for the role of field administrator was limited compared to the roles and responsibilities the position required. Buck, Bradley, Robb and Kinzer (2012) note that while there are significant changes occurring in the environment for field education, there is scant research on how field administrators are trained or mentored.

No arrangements for mentoring occurred within the department or from the person who was leaving the position. I was unprepared for the level of student mentoring, coaching and anxiety management that being a field administrator required. I lacked knowledge or experience regarding acquiring and maintaining agency partners, which takes a great deal of sales acumen and business savvy. I had to learn the politics of balancing student and agency needs independent of an experienced administrator who had a prior connection with existing agency community partners.

Mentoring was not available to me regarding the components of daily field administration or the macro perspective of how field fits into the broader social work education program of the university. I received no training or mentoring on navigating the university political climate, complex macro-level problem resolution development, or gatekeeping knowledge, skills or application. Navigating these areas independent of guidance and mentoring by an experienced field administrator is part of the miseducation I experienced, creating a conflict with the two ethical principles noted above.

Literature Review

Mentoring/Training in the Academy

There exists an abundance of literature regarding the benefits of mentoring within the academy, supporting its usefulness among new faculty - though not specifically focused on social work (Baker, Pifer & Griffin, 2004; Fountain & Newcomer, 2018; Gee, 2017; Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Kahle-Piasecki, 2011; Pololi, Knight, Dennis & Frankel, 2002)..

There is existing research on mentoring within the Academy that focuses on formal and informal mentoring (Fountain & Newcomer, 2018). This particular research examined occurrences of mentoring and mentoring approaches, finding that each is ubiquitous in the

mentoring processes that exist within academia (Fountain & Newcomer, 2018). Several studies

on mentoring within the academy note benefits received by faculty including improved job

success, job contentment, increased job performance, competency development, promotion of

leadership, increased income and commitment to the professoriate (Ellison & Raskin, 2014;

Sambunjak, Straus, & Marusic, 2006; Pololi et al., 2002; Wilson, Valentine & Pereira, 2002).

Benson, Morahan, Sachdeva and Richman (2002) found that faculty who took part in mentoring

felt they were more productive, engaged in more projects, and had better clarity on their tasks.

Examples of Mentoring as a Faculty Member

A prime example from my own experience of formal and informal mentoring exists in the

types of mentoring I experienced in the institutions I have been employed. At a former

institution, no formal mentoring occurred to orient me to the long-term expectations for tenure

and promotion or administration of field education. I had no guidance, direction, examples or

benchmarks to assist me in developing a portfolio for the tenure and promotion process. I was

able to seek the assistance of senior faculty and the chair of my department to aide me in the

process. Unfortunately, the chair was seeking tenure as well and also had no assigned mentor to

assist them. The informal mentors I sought out were emotionally supportive but were unable to

provide the level of guidance needed to navigate the tenure process. Ultimately, the pressure of

tenure expectations became overly-stressful without needed guidance. Although I had loyalty to

the department I worked in, support from the chair of the department and a senior faculty

member in another department, the resulting impact on my morale diminished my loyalty to the

university.

In contrast to my former experience, is my experience at the current institution where I

am faculty. Upon hire, I was assigned two senior faculty mentors. They welcomed me to the

new environment, oriented me to online teaching and set up a regular meeting schedule to

process questions or concerns I had, and provide coaching for responsibilities and expectations

the university required. In addition to this, the university required and provided formal training

on the various online teaching platforms, the university's curriculum development training, and

enrolled me in the university teaching philosophy seminar focusing on adult learning theory and

online teaching methods. One of my mentors provided internship oversight for the behavioral

health program they taught in and was instrumental in helping me transition from a traditional to

an on-line field administrator. It was expected that I would attend conferences and focus on

seminars that would enhance my own expertise in administering field education. My mentors

also coached me regarding preparation for the annual review process and provided on-going

coaching and mentoring regarding the promotion process (my current university does not have a

tenure process).

The formal mentoring I received was most important in preparing me to fulfill and

demonstrate competency regarding the university's formal requirements of teaching, mentoring

and service. The informal mentoring was secondary but an important factor in giving me

confidence, a feeling of well-being and the enthusiasm to engage in various projects and

activities that supported my success in the required areas for promotion.

Kahle-Piasecki (2011) conducted a historical review of the literature on mentoring and

found that formal mentoring, and those mentoring relationships that are intentional, structured

and planned, showed increased benefit to the companies that employ these mentoring tactics.

The same study also noted that mentee's of formal mentoring receive significant benefit from the

formal mentoring process in the areas of psycho-social support and career enhancements (Kahle-

Piasecki, 2011). Existing literature also highlights problems that occur in the mentoring process

(Ellison & Raskin, 2014). Mentors who are unavailable, poorly matched, unethical in interactions, or inactive or non-protective are identified as problematic (Johnson, 2007). When coupled with those mentors who demonstrate personality issues, boundary violations, use the mentee's work as their own, or interfere with the mentee's ability to promote or achieve within the department, there is significant negative impact to the mentor/mentee relationship (Johnson, 2007; Ellison, Moore & Johnson, 2014).

Ellison, Moore and Johnson (2014) further state that mentoring is a commonly used method in academia to foster assimilation of new and junior faculty members, which helps them adapt and integrate into their role in the university, promoting their success in the task fulfillment of tenure-track expectations. Wilson, Valentine and Pereira (2002) in their study of new faculty and mentoring experiences, highlight mentoring has more of a positive outcome than negative, there is a mutual benefit to the mentor as well as the mentee, and that mentees found informal mentor/mentee relationships were often viewed more positively. This view exists even though formal mentor relationships have more positive outcomes for the mentee's career trajectory.

Mentoring in Social Work Academia

Existing literature suggests mentoring of field directors is not adequate and recommend further research is needed in this area (Gillespie & Roberson, 2010; Ellison, Posada & Richardson, 2014). Findings from these studies convey that the focus of new faculty is to learn the processes of the institution to gain skills in teaching and knowledge of higher education, which is broader than their specific position (Gillespie & Roberson, 2010; Ellison, Posada & Richardson, 2014). Although studies exist showing the efficacy of mentoring in higher education, literature that exists specifically to field administrators is limited and reinforces the need for substantive and continued research on how field directors are mentored and trained

(Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kizner, 2012; Ellison, Posada & Richardson, 2014; Ellison & Raskin, 2014).

Mentoring and Field Administrators

The most recent study on mentoring field directors was conducted by Ellison and Raskin (2014), who found that the understanding of how field directors are mentored is mostly "anecdotal." There is a dearth of research specifically on field directors, including how they are mentored or trained (Ellison & Raskin, 2014; Wilson, Valentine & Pereira, 2002). Much of the research on field education has a specific focus on student experiences and the training of field instructors within the placement agency itself (Bogo, 2008; Dettlaff & Dietz, 2004; Dill, 2017; Ketner, Cooper-Bolinskey, & VanCleave, 2017). One study on field directors focused on the role of leadership within the university and how field director's roles should expand beyond the field program as a juncture for leadership across the university, community and social work curricula (Wertheimer & Sodhi (2014). However, this study did not focus on the training or mentoring of field directors specifically.

In 2015, the Council on Field Education (COFE), under the umbrella of CSWE, conducted a national study on the state of field education (COFE, 2015). This study did not include a focus on the training or mentoring of field administrators and lacked any questions pertaining to the same.

Dill (2017) conducted a field education literature review and the results yielded information about several areas of field education. These areas include best practices and theory-to-practice knowledge transference (Beddoe, Ackroyd, Bogo, 2015; Chinnery & Appleton, 2011; Dalton, Stevens & Maas-Brady, 2011; Dettlaff & Deitz, 2004; Wilson &

Campbell, 2013). The literature review did not produce information on field administrative training.

Examples from My Own Experience as a Field Director

I accepted the position of Director of Field Education in 2008 after a colleague announced they were leaving the position. I entered field administration in the same year that field was designated as the signature pedagogy for social work education. At the time, I didn't know what this change meant regarding field administration.

Training/Mentoring that Did Occur

Initially, I did not want the position as Director of Field Education, as I didn't want to give up the courses I taught, and I was unsure what the position entailed beyond my understanding as a former social work intern. It was fortunate that I knew most of the students who were entering field practicum at that point, which helped with formulating strong relationships with those senior students entering field practicum.

I did have the support of my chair. While field education was not her area of expertise, and we learned the components of field administration together, the chair gave me great latitude to discover pathways to aid in my understanding of the position. She gave counsel regarding obstacles that I encountered and provided significant moral support as I learned how to be a field administrator. When mistakes were made, she would provide direction and counsel on how to address a solution that best met the student's needs and preserved my reputation as an administrator for the social work program. Finally, the chair fostered my creative ideas about field education, as I researched and implemented approaches that had not been in existence prior to my appointment. This support was important, although it was not field administrator specific mentoring or training.

What was missing?

What was lacking in my orientation to field administration was an intentional, structured training process and on-going mentoring by an experienced field faculty. Training that addressed both areas of the daily functioning of a field director and the broader knowledge and skills required to administer a field education program would have demonstrated better protocol for supporting my position by the Department and University. My orientation to the field director position was very brief and incomplete. My training was limited to location of field files, a list of currently placed students and an agency list. What I did not receive was an understanding of the field administrative process. I did not receive mentoring or training on how to engage with and secure placement agencies, nor coaching on how to balance between advocating for students and maintaining agencies as community partners. No one explained my role as a social work education leader, the higher-level problem solving required when working with an increasingly diverse and complex student population, or the importance of knowing federal regulations and guidelines regarding students with special needs while in field.

Funding for training was also inadequate. For many programs, the outgoing field director is not available to provide mentoring or guidance. In my case, the outgoing field director took another position and was not available for on-going mentoring, shadowing or training. A prime example of how adequate funding could have augmented my mentoring and training relates to resources I was unable to access. A former field director who worked for the university years prior to my accepting the position, was employed part time at a local agency. Had the school been willing to provide the funding, this former field director could have been contracted to provide me with mentoring and training in the dynamics of field education administration. But funding for mentoring was almost non-existent and access to this former field director did not

occur. I had worked several years in the position before I discovered this colleague's willingness

to provide mentoring, had funding been available.

A significant under-funding of resources for professional development was my

experience. The University relied on my ability to self-fund participation at nationally

recognized trainings for field directors. This inadvertent reliance inhibited my attendance at the

field director specific pre-conference trainings hosted by CSWE and BPD at their annual

meetings when I first became a field administrator.

What I Did That Worked

Although I had a difficult start with no specific mentoring or training specific to the field

director's role, I utilized my prior social work experience and my social work education to help

me acclimate to this position. A social work degree is a vital foundation for the position of field

director for many reasons. The ability to be flexible and work productively with unknown factors

was a strength I was able to demonstrate as I entered this position. Assessment and analytical

skills from being a Child Protective Services worker aided in being able to recognize the

strengths and areas of needed growth in the existing program. Planning and implementation

skills developed in child welfare practice allowed me to develop a strategic plan for learning and

enhancing the field education program. Negotiating, bargaining and advocacy skills learned

from years of program administration as a Family Services Program Director were invaluable as

I learned effective ways of working with existing agency partners, anxious students, and

university stakeholders.

Much of my field training was self-directed. I made numerous connections with other

university field administrators regarding my roles and responsibilities for the field position. This

was a valuable resource as I sought to learn what field administration looked like. I joined the

CSWE Field Director's Listserv, a national forum involving all accredited schools of social worker field directors. I was able to utilize the listserv to explore what other field directors were doing regarding specific issues or solicit policy examples to formulate field policy for my field program. This resource helped augment my learning the role of field administrator.

Areas of Needed Mentoring and Training

Although I brought specific positive attributes with me to my first position as a field director, I would have acclimated to the position more quickly had I had initial and on-going access to an experienced mentor. I was unprepared for the level of interpersonal engagement required by the field administrative position. It became apparent that my interactions with students, colleagues and agency partners often required a therapeutic approach when dealing with sensitive issues, philosophical differences in teaching approaches, and even territorial conflicts/concerns that arose due to limited space and resources available for shared space between differing departments. These conflicts/concerns created situations where I was suddenly exposed to university administration. The political ramifications of micro-level issues and decisions I encountered, often led to needed macro-level interventions, advocacy, education and problem resolution directed at the University administration level. These situations caused me to recognize a need for greater understanding of the political climate within the University. I had to learn to interact successfully with university administrators (e.g. dean of the school, the office of the provost, special project administrators and the chief officer of finance, the chief administrator for the Office of Accessibility, etc…) to address concerns and dilemmas at a level I had not been exposed to before. The guidance of an experienced field administrator would have made doing so more productive and possibly increased successful outcomes more frequently.

The level of student concerns, problems, obstacles and at times student irresponsibility, was beyond anything I had envisioned for the position and I found myself navigating circumstances that were unexpected. This was coupled with significant instances of questionable professionalism and ethics concerns that I encountered community partners was another area where an experienced field education mentor would have been beneficial. Having an experienced field faculty available to process these concerns with, would have been inestimable in offsetting mistakes I made while piloting through these issues and situations.

Finally, one of the most significant areas where mentoring would have been highly desired is that of gatekeeping. Prior to entering social work education, the concept of gatekeeping was not something that I faced frequently. It was something that I had never discussed, nor did me know what importance it held for me as a practitioner or educator. However, as a field administrator, the concept of gatekeeping was suddenly at the forefront of my awareness. Learning to hold students accountable, while still trying to support their goals and honor their self-determination to enter the social work profession, is an ongoing dilemma for many field directors, worsened by a consistent lack of uniform policy on gatekeeping criteria in the United States and internationally (Younes, 1998). Having a field director with field education experience to help me address the gatekeeping I initially exposed to, would have been a significant source of support and education as a new field administrator. All of these factors contributed to my miseducation as a field director.

Discussion

In retrospect, I assert that a lack of uniform standards for training and mentoring of the field administrator's position promotes reliance on learning the position through trial and error. As stated earlier, existing research shows that within the Academy, limited mentoring and

training occurs with social work educators after their accepting academic positions, (Ellison &

Raskin, 2014), and this fact applies to field education.   Training and mentoring of field

administrators needs intentional planning and implementation in order for the Academy to fully

demonstrate ethical integrity regarding the signature pedagogy.

My goal in writing this SPN was to examine my own experience as an illustration of what

some field educators are experiencing within the Academy and the anecdotal feedback I've

received from peer field directors over the years.   The literature supports the fact that limited

mentoring of social work faculty occurs (Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kizner, 2012; Ellison, Posada

& Richardson, 2014). One study states "information concerning field directors' mentoring is

non-existent." (Ellison and Raskin, 2015, pg. 72). Thus, this type of examination is useful in

encouraging the Academy and us as teachers and scholars within the social work professoriate,

to assess how ethically sound mentoring and training is demonstrated when hiring new field

administrators.

Ellison and Raskin (2014) found that 70% of their study respondents utilized field faculty

outside of their university as informal mentors. Additional studies stated a majority of new

faculty within the academy are mentored through informal networking with other faculty as a

primary training approach (Noe, Greenberger & Want, 2002).

In light of limited research on how field administrators are prepared or mentored to lead

out in field education (Buck, Bradley, Robb & Kizner, 2012; Ellison, Posada & Richardson,

2014; Ellison & Raskin, 2014), further research on this subject will help build existing

knowledge and promote the implementation of effective solutions that meet the training and

mentoring needs of field directors within the Academy.

Some questions that research regarding examining this topic would address are:

What position specific training do new field administrators receive when hired? What level of orientation do new field administrators receive from the former field director when hired? What aspects of training are needed when a new field director takes a position regarding their roles and responsibilities (e.g. placement development, student/agency orientation development and implementation, leadership and supervisory skills needed; field course development, policy and procedure development, and accreditation/reaffirmation processes). What level of support is provided by the university/department of hire that addresses building and enhancing a field director's administrative skills? How would current field directors characterize the university/department of hire's adherence to the two ethical standards highlighted in this writing?

Recommendations

Future research focusing specifically on field director training and mentorship will add important data that can likely broaden the Academy's current understanding of field education dynamics, and ultimately benefit field education administrators.

Recommendations that came from this SPN examination focus on standardizing effective training and mentoring within the Academy through a field education training framework in development by the author.   The framework illustrates a four level thematic focus:

1) The pre-hiring process: Contract with the out-going field director to engage in adequate orientation and training time with the incoming director when feasible. If not the next category is a vital consideration.

2. Funding: Earmark funds to provide a training stipend to engage an experienced field administrator to provide training and mentoring. This could be a part-time field administrator from a local University, a retired field administrator or an assistant field director from another University, who can provide contracted mentoring and on-going

training to the new field director. Also, ensure that provision of adequate funding exists for

the new field director to access existing training through CSWE or BPD to build a network

with other experienced field directors at the annual meetings.

3. Hiring practices: Hire social workers as field administrators who have significant practice

experience including direct practice, program administration, policy development, and

implementation, and macro-level negotiation and advocacy experience;

4. Leadership and Supervision: Hire field administrators with demonstrated leadership abilities

with staff and practitioner level supervisory experience.

Limitations

Further research is needed and is pending regarding the outcomes of what field directors

actually experience in terms of training within the Academy. My current research study focuses

on ascertaining what those experiences are and utilizing the data to either support or modify the

framework suggested. This framework is untested and based on my own anecdotal experiences.

As such, the framework should be viewed through the context of my personal experiences until

further empirical data supports the themes identified in the framework.

Another limitation is the lack of data on training of field directors and supporting

research that addresses current training of social work faculty within the academy. Inclusion of

this information and existing research will strengthen the author's position regarding the lack of

adequate training that field administrators are experiencing.

Future Research

The author's current research involves a quantitative study that gives a more salient

picture of how field administrators are mentored and trained within the Academy. Additional

research on implementation and the impact of the framework is also needed and will foster my

on-going research in this area. A qualitative study, using focused interviews will also provide

increased understanding of what is being trained regarding field education. The goal of future

research is to augment existing research regarding the training and mentoring of field directors,

providing additional data on how administrators of the signature pedagogy experience training

upon entering field education.

Conclusion

Practice Implications

This research is important to social work because field education is the doorway to

practice entry. The same level of scrutiny is needed regarding who are gatekeepers of the

doorway, as it occurs to those who walk through the doorway. With additional research, it is

possible to ensure that equitable importance is placed on the process for training significant

gatekeepers of our profession more ethically and effectively. The NASW Code of Ethics

admonishes the practice of ethical behavior by social workers resulting from a personal

obligation to uphold the ethical standards of our profession (The National Association of Social

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EXAMINING THE MENTORING AND PREPARATION OF FIELD DIRECTORS: AN
ETHICAL DILEMMA OR NOT?

Sibyl Beaulieu
Doctorate of Social Work Program
The University of St. Thomas
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Author's Note

Sibyl Beaulieu is doctoral candidate in the Doctorate of Social Work Program at the

School of Social Work, University of St. Thomas. Correspondence regarding this paper should

be sent to Sibyl Beaulieu, Department of Social Work, Brandman University, Irvine, CA 92618.

Contact: sbeaulie@brandman.edu.

Abstract

Newly hired field education administrators require specific training, consultation and mentoring from those who have practice expertise in social work education and field administration. The purpose of this quantitative study examines the preparation and mentoring of field directors within the academy through the lens of two ethical standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, standards 104(b) and 3.08. The aim is to purposely highlight that those charged with field education leadership, should have the means, training, and preparation required to support the signature pedagogy of social work education

Field education is the culminating educational process in social work academics and long considered the signature pedagogy of social work education within the academy. Field administration is a complex process that requires a multiplicity of knowledge and skills coalesced together (CSWE, 2017). This study examines how mentoring and training of field directors within the academy occurs and how these align with two specific NASW code of ethics standards.

A thematic framework on structured training and mentoring needed for all field administrators is recommended to host universities to incorporate as standard protocol for preparing and mentoring newly hired field directors and enhancing current field directors in their variable responsibilities.

Keywords: Field Directors, field administrators, field education, signature pedagogy, training, mentoring, the Academy, NASW, code of ethics

Field Education is the culminating educational process in social work academics and considered the signature pedagogy of social work education. One definition of social work education is that it is the standards of teaching that are structured and organized for those seeking to enter this chosen profession (CSWE, 2016, Shulman, 2005).

Ellison & Raskin (2014) highlight that mentoring helps guide new educators through the ways and culture of the academy, socializing new faculty to their roles and improving their success as professional educators.   Research supports the benefits of mentoring, which can have beneficial impact results in positive work outcomes and faculty satisfaction (Ellison & Raskin, 2014). Gelman (2014) found that effective mentoring is a critical aspect of creating professional growth and future career development within the academy. Despite evidence supporting the importance of and value in mentoring of faculty, one study suggests that only 45% of respondents received or were receiving mentoring in their role as field directors and 55% received no mentoring at all. (Ellison & Raskin, 2014).

This study examines the occurrences of training and mentoring received by field directors when first hired within the academy. The writer suggests that position-specific formal mentoring and training for new field directors, does not occur at a regular rate within the academy. Rather, there is a reliance within the academy on field administrators' engaging in self-directed training, initiating informal mentoring, and learning the position through individual on-the-job trial and error. This seeming paradox may present a dilemma regarding what social work teaches as ethical practice, in contrast to how the academy engages in mentoring and training new field directors to administer competent field education.

A second focus of this study examines whether mentoring and training of field administrators that exists within the academy adheres to professional ethical standards held as

sacrosanct within social work education and the profession. Much research exists regarding

mentoring and training as useful among new faculty, however, there is limited research

examining the same among social work faculty. More specifically, how new field administrators

receive mentoring and training within the academy once hired to implement effective field

education (Baker, Pifer & Griffin, 2004; Fountain & Newcomer, 2018; Gee, 2017; Inzer &

Crawford, 2005; Kahle-Piasecki, 2011; Pololi, Knight, Dennis & Frankel, 2002).

The Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) final report of a 2015 survey on field

education, notes the significant complexity of administering field education which includes

"changing student demographics, the state of the economy, agency environments and staff

turnover, students as consumers, students' competing obligations and students' economic status"

(CSWE, 2015b, p.4). These findings are in addition to studies that found field directors also

reported a lack of institutional support and dedicated resources for field instruction (Bedard,

1998 in COFE Final Report 2016; Skolnick, 1989; McChesney, 1999; and Kilpatrick & Holland,

1993). The administration of field is complex, dynamic and requires the director to take on a

multiplicity of roles and tasks. However, there is an apparent lack of intentional preparation and

mentoring of those entering the role of field administrator within the academy as a whole. The

result is not much empirical data exists on how new field directors are prepared for administering

field education.

Bogo & Sewell (2019) note that field education holds an essential, even crucial role in

preparing social work professionals for meaningful and competent practice to vulnerable

populations served. When coupled with field education being held as the "heart of social work

education" (NANFED, n.d.), it becomes more imperative that those who administer field

education have effective and purposeful mentoring and training when taking on the role of field director.

More examination of how those charged with implementing the signature pedagogy of social work education is desirable, to ensure that as a body of academic professionals, the academy adhere in practice and philosophy to social work ethical standards. The study recommends implementation of a training framework for the academy to adopt; making certain that the academic environment is uniform in preparing field administrators.

Literature Review

Defining Mentoring

Mentoring is described as a bi-directional learning relationship involving mutual trust respect and commitment, where the mentor guides and supports the development of another by sharing their own professional experiences (Zellers, Howard & Barcie, 2008, Ellison, Moore & Johnson 2014). Mentoring by definition means "a trusted counselor or guide" (Merriam/Webster, 2017). Ellison and Raskin (2014) suggest that within social work education, mentoring has positive benefits regarding work outcomes and faculty satisfaction.   Specific definitions of mentoring vary widely but all definitions address the value of the relational construction of mentoring for development and professional networking relationships within the professoriate and vital to career advancement (Columbia University Office of the Provost, 2016).

Definition of Training

Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner (2017) describe training in terms of structured professional development and learning to improve professional practice. Another definition states training focuses on improving and increasing capabilities of staff through education,

workplace instruction, outside organization education or through job modeling by others

(Business Dictionary, n.d)

Mentoring/Training within the Academy

An abundance of literature exists regarding the positive use of mentoring within the

academy supporting its usefulness among new faculty – though not specific to social work

education (Baker, Pifer & Griffin, 2004, Boyle & Boice, 1998; Fountain & New Comer, 2018;

Gee & Popper, 2017; Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Kahle-Piaseck, 2011; Pololi, Knight, Dennis &

Frankel, 2002). Existing literature tends to examine mentoring through the disciplines of

medicine, business, education, leadership, doctoral student mentoring and diversity mentoring

within higher education academia. A significant amount of research on the benefits of mentoring

among the professoriate spans the last ten to twenty years.

In contrast, there is limited research on the training of professionals specifically in social

work education. In reference to social work, articles found were narrow in scope and

anachronous, focusing more on the role development of professionals, (Reisman, 1949;

Wilensky, 1956; Blau & Scot, 1962; and Billingsley, 1964). While no less outdated, more recent

studies from a variety of occupational fields, including social work - focused on professional

employee development, orienting new educators, educational preparedness, preparation for

administrative roles; role expectations and the impact of role orientation on job performance

(Corwin, 1961; Kuhlman & Hoy, 1974; Scurfield, 1980; Lister, 1980 and Brownstein, 1985).

The most recent studies focused on components of future social education including growth of

student populations, trends in technology; in addition to faculty and student demographics; field

instructor concerns, workload conflicts with interns, limited knowledge of academic curriculum

by agencies, quality learning experience provision and isolation from the placing university

(Robbins, Regan, Williams, Smyth & Bogo, 2016; Domakin, 2015).

Formal vs Informal Mentoring

Kahle-Piasecki (2011) found that formal mentoring increased benefit to the companies

that implemented mentoring strategies. The study suggests that intentional and structured

mentoring resulted in the mentee receiving significant benefit in the areas of psycho-social

support and career enhancement. However, in contrast, the same study found that informal

mentoring - which often formulates spontaneously and independent of intentional approaches,

resulted in mentee's receiving less benefit from mentoring, along with a lack of psycho-social

support and less opportunity for career enhancements (Kahle-Piasecki, 2011).

Kiel (2019) suggests that informal mentoring is not as effective or results driven as

formal mentoring. The negatives highlighted included mentees inadvertently "falling through

the cracks." Minority faculty were at greatest risk of being overlooked resulting from informal

mentoring. Kiel's findings seem to support the idea that formal mentoring, where a structured

approach is utilized - is superior to informal mentoring, which can be random, intermittent and

unresponsive to new faculty member's needs.

Juxtaposed to this view, some studies suggest that informal mentoring has significant

benefits such as psycho-social supportive activities (e.g. positive counseling, modeling,

friendship, and career and personal counseling), increased career development activities (e.g.

coaching, mentee exposure, assigning desire and challenging assignments, etc…), along with

increased levels of satisfaction of the mentees with their mentor (Cotton & Ragins, 1999; Inzer &

Crawford, 2005). Ellison, et al. (2008) in a national study of BSW educators, found that 56% of

respondents engaged in informal mentoring and had greater satisfaction with their mentors than 38% of those who received formal mentoring.

There are studies that indicate significant differences in perspectives on mentoring regarding gender and ethnicity. (Griffin & Reddick 2011, Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000, Turner & Myres, 2000). These studies explored gender and ethnicity differences and found that racism and sexism played a significant role in how faculty of color engaged in mentoring, with faculty of color taking on heavier service loads and participating in racially specific peer uplift with both colleagues and students. This suggests that faculty of color view mentoring as a weightier matter, with perceived responsibilities not focused on by White new faculty counter-parts; and that female faculty often experience significant differences in expected behavior regarding mentoring activities.

Mentoring in Academia

Literature suggests that mentoring may buffer the challenges faced by employees within an organization (Viator, 2001). Carmel & Paul (2015) in examining mentoring in higher education, suggest that the mentoring process is most beneficial through a self-selected mentoring relationship with specific benefits for the mentee (e.g. career advancement; broader thinking; scholarly confidence; collaborative work production; and purposeful goal and action step development). These benefits increase the mentees ability to problem solve, navigate complex career situations and develop relevant competitive skills in higher education (Carmel & Paul, 2015).

Mentoring is significant in building and advancing the careers of new faculty in the academy, especially faculty of color and women (Perna & Lerner, 1995). In their study on psychosocial and career mentoring of women of color, Simon, Perry and Roff (2008) note the

need for additional research examining the efficacy of mentoring relationships, specifically to understand how "psychosocial and career mentoring behaviors contribute to successful career outcomes in social work academia" is needed in the future (pg. 20). In their literature review, Ellison & Raskin (2014) note that mentoring impacts faculty socialization, mental adjustment and preparedness for leadership roles (pg. 70). This highlighting of informal mentoring is impactful in the context of self-reported satisfaction with informal mentors that half the respondents in the Ellison & Raskin (2014) study noted.

Mentoring in Social Work

Wilson, Pereira & Valentine (2002) state there is abundant literature on the mentor-mentee relationship in business and academia historically and considered a significant aspect of preparation for professional practice. However, the social work profession has not focused on mentoring in academia. These authors state "little is known… about the mentoring of new faculty in social work" (Wilson, Pereira & Valentine, 2002, pg. 318).

Mentoring does exist within the social work context. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW, n.d.) has state chapters, some of which address mentoring as a significant aspect of professional development. NASW-MA states that the purpose of their mentoring program is to provide mentoring access to early career social workers or those returning to practice after time off. (NASW-MA, n.d.). NASW-MD highlights that their mentoring program is voluntary, noting the mentor is someone who gives back to the profession through sharing their knowledge to the profession (NASW-MD, n.d.). These examples demonstrates that within the social work profession, mentoring exists in purposeful ways outside of the academy. A literature review of another recent study revealed a limited number of publications about

mentoring in social work education (Ellison & Raskin, 2014). This study found only seven published articles about mentoring in social work.

Mentoring and Field Administration

Ellison & Raskin (2014) conducted the most recent study on mentoring and field directors, finding several trends. These authors note that mentoring is under-utilized in field education. Additional, the study found demographically that 45% of respondents reported receiving mentoring specifically related to their position as field directors. Only 9% reported formal mentoring within the Academy and 67% reported receiving mentoring that was self-initiated (Ellison & Raskin, 2014). This information suggests that less than half of field directors receive formal mentoring as part of their orientation and that less than half of field directors obtain position specific formal mentoring within the Academy.

The same study went on to examine field directors identified as non-mentored and how they learned their job specific roles. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents in this category noted they connected with other field faculty, 82% noted they read books about field education, 70% noted they learned their position through trial and error, 65% served previously as field instructors at agencies, 61% engaged in workshops or seminars on field education and 47% belonged to a field consortium (Ellison & Raskin, 2014). These statistics suggest that self-directed training may be the most significant method relied upon by the academy to provide training and orientation to new field directors, rather than an intentional, more structured and formal mentoring approach.

These finding have a direct impact on whether social work education within the academy utilizes the same ethical approach to training and mentoring field educators, as is taught to students seeking social work degrees. What begins to emerge from this information is the

recognition that mentoring in social work education is limited and specifically under-utilized in preparing and training new field administrators. Evidence specific to field education extrapolates that mentoring for field education administrators follows the same pattern found in the broader arena of social work education.

The Ethical Lens

The National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics under Ethical Standard 1.04(b) Competence states "Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques" (NASW Code of Ethics, 2017). The code also states under section 3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development "Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for which they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics" (NASW Code of Ethics, 2017).

These ethical standards are an effective lens with which to examine whether the existing approaches utilized by the academy to mentoring and training new field directors, meet the ethical standards which are taught as essential ethical practice in social work education. This study explores training and mentoring within the academy to determine how parallel the academy's training and mentoring of field administrators, aligns with the two highlighted ethical standards taught in accredited social work program within the United States. If social work education professionals are invested in, believe and support the NASW Code of Ethics, but

overlook gaps in how we train and mentor field directors in their responsibilities and roles – does that behavior demonstrate integrity according to our own professional beliefs?

Bhattarai (2015) suggests that within education, ethical behavior is essential "because an ethically rich educational system assists in maintaining peace, justice and freedom in the society at large" (pg. 2). The author goes on to emphasize that if educational leadership is based on robust ethics, it produces a higher degree of professional expertise, responsibility to students, increased collaboration with colleagues and improved teaching engagement, all of which promotes effective operation of the academy (Bhattarai, 2015).

In their study of education school administrators, Güngör & Özakara (2017) note that school administrators who are true to ethical principles, utilize ethical decision-making and shun unethical behaviors through the adherence to a code of ethics, help create ethical behavioral norms within the academic body. These studies recognize the need for application of a code of ethics and ethical adherence by administrators as vital to creating a community of ethics minded students and faculty. This paper invited a sample of current field directors, to identify their experiences in relation to (1) training and mentoring received when first beginning as a field director and (2) was the mentoring and training something they identify as adhering to the two NASW ethical standards focused upon in the study. All of this is with the goal of understanding how academic settings with social work programs might better support field education administrators when entering a new and demanding role.

Methods

There are five research questions addressed by this study.

1. When first taking a position as a field administrator, was training and mentoring received by the respondent through the host institution?

2. When first taking a position as a field administrator, was position specific training and mentoring received by the respondent through the host institution?

3. When first taking the position as a field director, did the respondent engage in self-directed training or self-initiated mentoring?

4. When examining their initial position as a field administrator, did respondents view their training and mentoring as adhering to the two NASW Code of Ethics standards?

5. How do the independent variables (e.g. gender, program level, years of social work experience and years of field experience) influence the prior four domains?

A survey was developed and utilized to examine the training and mentoring experienced by field directors when first taking the position within the academy. When using the term field administrator, it includes the terms field directors, field coordinator, assistant or associate dean of field education), and refers to those who complete the survey examining their experience with training and mentoring when they first started as a field administrator.

Participants/Sample

Participants were field administrators from social work programs from across the country. Respondents discussed their training and mentoring experience when first entering the position as a field administrator. Assistant field directors and non-field administrative directors were asked to self-exclude from participating in the study.

Recruitment Method

The Council on Social Work Education Field Directors Listserv served as the vehicle to engage respondents. An e-mail describing the study and inviting participation went out to the CSWE field director's listserv in March 2019 asking for voluntary participation from all field educators who held the position of Director, Coordinator, or Assistant/Associate Dean of Field.

A second e-mail went out in April, asking for those who had not responded to participate. The survey closed in May 2019. The study received approval through Brandman University's IRB on March 11, 2019 – IRB #103.

Research Instrument

The writer developed a Qualtrics survey using a structured online questionnaire survey. Respondents answered twenty-six questions revolving around the following domains:

- Mentoring and training that occurred within the academy when first hired as a field administrator

- Position specific training that occurred

- Use of self-directed training and self-initiated mentoring

- Perception of whether training and mentoring received reflected two NASW ethical standards

Data Collection:

The CSWE Field Director's List-serv was the vehicle used to invite participate. The list-serv includes both field directors and assistant field directors, as well as non-field faculty administrators.   All members of the list-serv (some of which may not have been in the position of field administrators), received the invitation to participate. The survey announcement requested that those who did not have the title "Field Director, Dean of Field Education, Field Coordinator or who were a non-field administrator" refrain from participating in the study.

The total time that the survey was available for respondents to participate was seventy-nine days (from March 11, 2019 through May 31, 2019). The survey was open and participants accessed it through a link embedded in the e-mail sent out to the listserv. An e-mail letter provided details about the research and noted that the survey was anonymous, ensuring

confidentiality. Participants received notification that clicking on the link indicated consent to participate, and that participants were free to discontinue participation at any time. Respondents were all professional social workers in the position of Director of Field and presented a low risk of harm for this study. The e-mail letter sent out noted that a benefit of participation was respondents adding to the limited research done on field directors and that there were no foreseeable drawback. The Qualtrics survey platform allowed for anonymous participation of respondents when they accessed the study. The results were stored on a separate portable computer hard drive and on a password protected computer used solely by the researcher. Three retired field directors piloted the survey prior to submitting the final Qualtrics survey to Brandman University's IRB, to identify any unexpected concerns or problems.

Data Analysis

There are four primary domains corresponding to the research questions and are the foci of analysis. Analysis examined the dependent and independent variable, as well as linkages and relationships. Four areas operationalized field directors' perception of their initial training and mentoring. 1. Assignment of mentor; 2. The university's awareness of training/mentoring need; 3. The university provisions to address training and mentoring needs, and 4. How did Field directors perceive the university's effectiveness in three areas: (a) actions to provide field administration; (b) mentoring and (c) response to field director's training? Analyses investigated the associations and connections among them. Gender, program type, years of social work experience and years of field educational experience are the independent variables examined. These were primary and remained constant throughout the analysis. However, there were other variables within the survey used to understand the research areas and those moved between dependent and independent variables.

The Qualtrics platform allowed for descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency and dispersion. The researcher utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for inferential data analysis. Analysis unfolded at a three-pronged level. Univariate analysis described and found patterns that existed within the data and determined the response rates and missing data. Bivariate analysis allowed the researcher to understand linkages or relationships between two variables. For example, chi-square test of independence examined associations between variables within and across research domains. Additionally, the Man-Whitney U test sought to understand group differences and effects. Multivariate analysis investigated three or more variables. The researcher conducted ordinal regression analysis to evaluate the independent variables predictive ability of determining the odds of field directors being in category two or higher of the ordinal responses compared to category one, or odds of being in category five compared to four and below.

Results

There were five research questions asked in this study. To recapitulate, the questions asked were (1) was training and mentoring received? (2) Was training and mentoring position specific to field administration? (3) Did respondents initiate self-training/learning and mentoring to orientate to the position? (4) Did respondents view the training and mentoring received as adhering to the two NASW ethical standards highlighted in the study? (5) How do the independent variables influence the four domains of the study?

Descriptive Data Analysis Results

The total sample size was 136 participants with 122 respondents self-identifying as women and 14 respondents as men.

Seventy- seven percent of respondents reported having a MSW and 22% had a Ph.D. or DSW with a majority noting they responding from a Bachelor of Social Work program (39%), and a mixture of Bachelor and Masters of Social Work program (34%).   Respondents reported having a range from nine to 23 years of social work practice experience. Respondents' social work practice experience ranged from nine to twenty-tree years compared to one to twenty years of field administrative experience.

Mentoring and Training that occurred:

Approximately 71% of the sample indicated no mentoring occurred within the Academy when first hired as a field administrator. Additionally 73% of the sample reported no assignment of a position specific mentor when newly hired.

For overall self-directed learning, field directors identify learning through several areas of self-directed/initiated learning or mentoring. These areas were collapsed into similar categories and respondents answered yes or no if they engaged in these behaviors. (See Figure 1)
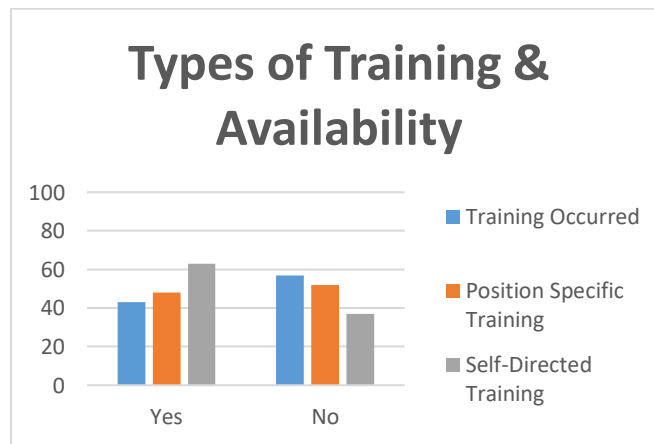
Figure 1 – Types of Training and Availability

Ethical Adherence to NASW Code of Ethics Standards

When reporting on whether they perceived their experience with mentoring and training within the academy reflected ethical adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics, standards 1.04(b)

and section 3.08, most field directors evaluated their experience as fully reflecting and mostly

being in adherence with the standards respectively. This compares to a significant number who

reported their experience mostly did not or fully did not adhere respectively (see Figure 2).

There were three areas where respondents' answers were numerically similar. Slightly over

twenty-six percent (26.5%) of respondent's perception was that their experience fully reflected

adherence to these two sections of the NASW Code of Ethics.   Almost twenty-six percent

(25.7%) of the sampled respondents also reported that their experience mostly did not adhere to

the two sections of the NASW Code of Ethics, with almost nine percent (8.8%) reporting that

their experience fully did not adhere. An interesting result is that over twenty-six percent

(26.5%) of respondents reported that their experience did adhere to two sections of the NASW

Code of Ethics, with 14% reporting their experience mostly adhered to the two sections of the

code.

Figure 2 Mentoring and Training Reflecting Ethics

The below table reflects the statistics across categories. N = samples size. Missing

represents the cases within the variables that were missing. The top across are the statistical tests

and the side labels are the categories examined. From the table you can see that for all but one

variable category, the sample was 100% valid, with one variable missing a response. Shown in

the graphic (see Table 1) is the mean and standard deviation across variables. Finally the

minimum and maximum represented the values that are highest and lowest in terms of how the

variable were coded (e.g. 1-5 as the scale for the mean), with 1 as minimum and 5 as maximum).

For those questions that were yes or no, the mode reflects the value.

Table 1

Statistics across Categories

N=136	Valid	Missing	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Mentoring Occurred	136	0	.29	.00	0	.457	0	1
Mentor Assigned	136	0	.27	.00	0	.447	0	1
Training Occurred	136	0	.43	.00	0	.496	0	1
Job specific training	136	0	.48	.00	0	.502	0	1
Self Directed Learning	136	0	.63	1.00	1	.486	0	1
Training reflects Ethics	136	0	3.12	3.00	3	1.481	0	5

Inferential Data Analysis Results

The first step taken to understanding the data was to examine each variable using

univariate statistics, useful for profiling characteristics of participation, identifying response rates

or missing data. The writer also used bivariate and multivariate analyses to understand linkages,

effects or relationships between variables. As previously noted, the inferential statistics were

non-parametric because the measurement levels of the dependent variable (DV) are nominal and

ordinal.

Regarding question one, did respondent receive training and mentoring by the university when first hired as field director? Results revealed that assignment of a mentor and field directors perception of whether the university made provisions to address initial training and mentoring needs had statistically significant relationship to each other and to all remaining areas with the strength of the relationships ranging from moderately strong to. The results suggest that assignment of a mentor and universities making provisions to address the training and mentoring needs of newly hired field directors strongly influence their perception.

Regarding research question two, the following results emerged. A statistically significant and strong positive relationship exists between field directors receipt of position specific training and receiving an orientation to field specific roles and responsibilities as newly hired field administrators. The data suggests that among field directors reporting that they did not receive an orientation to position/role responsibilities as newly hired field administrators, 95% noted that they did not receive position specific training. Field directors' evaluation of their ability to connect with an experienced field administrator/faculty and second, with three items from question one: assignment of a mentor, perceptions of university's awareness of training and mentoring needs and provisions made to address these needs.

Did respondents engage in self-directed/initiated learning and/or mentoring? Results revealed that respondent's engagement in SDL were significantly more likely when field directors reported receiving position specific training as new hires. Additionally, SDL occurred when respondents received a field administration and an orientation to position/role responsibilities by an experienced field director (90%). Furthermore, SDL was significantly related to field directors' perception that their university made provisions to address training/mentoring needs (89%).

Did respondents view the training and mentoring received as adhering to the two NASW ethical standards of competence (1.04b) and continuing education and staff development (3.08)? Results showed that field director's perception of training and mentoring adherence to the ethical standards when newly hired, perfectly related to position specific training and assignment of a field administration mentor. Additionally, perception of adherence had statistically significant association with receipt of an orientation to position/role responsibilities along with field directors' assessment of the university's action to address training and mentoring needs, and engagement in SDL. Every respondent who engaged in SDL perceived their university as adhering to the code and those who did not engage in SDL did not perceive their university as adhering to the code. Perception of adherence and SDL had a significantly perfect positive association. One hundred percent of field directors that engaged in SDL when newly hired perceived their training and mentoring as adhering to the ethical standards compared to 100 percent who did not engage in SLD and assessed their training and mentoring as not meeting the ethical standards.

How do the independent variables of gender, type of program, years of social work experience and years of field education experience, influence the four domains of the study? Results from several Mann-Whitney U tests showed there are no significant statistical differences for group variables of self-identified gender and the recoded binary variables of years of social work and field education experience, addressing the four previously stated research areas ($p > .05$). There was no evidence to support group effects. The distributions in the group variables did not differ significantly ($p > .05$). Comparisons within the group variables showed that median ratings of field director's perceptions were very similar. A noteworthy finding was found relating to the effect of gender on ability to connect and receive guidance from an

experienced field director/faculty as a newly hired field administrator. Although the result did not achieve significance, it indicated a 96.4% probability that gender affected field director's perception of their ability to connect with an experienced field director/faculty as a newly hired field administrator.

In addition, results from chi-square test of independence corroborated the findings of the Mann-Whitney U. There were no statistically significant associations or relationships between the independent variables of self-identified gender, program type, years of social work and field directors experience recoded as a binary and the items related to each research questions (p > .05).

Finally, the research conducted several ordinal logistic regressions to investigate the predictive ability of three independent variables (gender, years of social work and field experience) on the likely responses of field directors, specifically to determine which variables increased or decreased the probability of falling at or being in a higher rank level of effectiveness, awareness, or ability. There were no statistically significant predictors (p > .05), the independent variables. Knowing field directors self-identified gender, years of social work or field experience did not help predict their responses on the ordinal-scaled variables items.

Discussion

This study is important for several reasons. First, as noted in the literature review, there is limited research on the training and mentoring of social work field administrators' specific to the field administrative position (Fountain & Newcomer, 2018; Gee, 2017; Kahle-Piasecki, 2011; Pololi, Knight, Dennis & Frankel, 2002). This study adds to the literature on how administrators of the signature pedagogy in social work education are prepared within the academy. The study reveals several important findings. Field directors are not receiving

intentional mentoring and training within the academy when first hired as an administrator

(73%), that new field directors often do not receive orientation or mentoring specific to their

administrative position (71%), and that new field directors engage in significant self-initiated,

self-directed mentoring and training to learn the intricacies of their position (63%). Of those new

field directors who experienced a position specific orientation but did not receive training or

mentoring, 65% of respondents perceived their experience as of adhering to the two NASW

Code of Ethics standards. This suggests that new field directors may require position specific

orientation in order to begin engagement in field administrative activities. The data given

prompts further exploration to operationalize "orientation" to gain explanation of how this

perception was derived, further discussed below.

Training and Mentoring: This data suggests that the position of field director - while

responsible for administration of the signature pedagogy of social work education – does not

consistently warrant intentional training or mentoring within the actual department that hires

them. "Field education has had to struggle for acceptance within academia" (Homonoff, 2008

pg. 136). A secondary interpretation is that intentional mentoring, which the literature review

has shown as highly beneficial to both students and faculty – may be underutilized within the

academy as a source of professional development for new faculty entering social work field

education (Gellman, 2014).

Position Specific Training and Mentoring: A major focus of this study examined

position specific training of field directors within the host institution. The results demonstrate a

near equal numerical response regarding training and mentoring received and not received by

field administrators within the academy. Of importance here is that the study suggests a

significant portion of field directors when newly hired, lack training or mentoring that is specific

to administering field education. This is important in light of the significance of field practicum being the signature pedagogy of social work education. These findings create questions as to whether in actuality; field educators have parity of importance as other full time faculty within their departments. It is important for the academy to examine the causes for this disparity and implement a uniform approach to ensure that new field directors are not only oriented to their position, but also receive adequate training and mentoring specific to field administration. Maximizing purposeful training of field administrators can only benefit the academy and student constituents.

Self-directed Training: The focus of self-directed training, when coupled with the above results of training is also impactful. Almost 63% of respondents reported utilizing self-directed training. This included personal research, solicitation of information from other field professionals, and trial and error. While there is a significant report of field directors who did not engage in self-directed learning (37.5%), the larger number of respondents reported engaging in activities to self-educate themselves about the position and responsibilities of administering field education. There is an apparent reliance by the academy on new field administrators utilizing self-initiated mentoring and self-reliant training as a primary method for learning their position. This self-reliance speaks to the need for development of standardized protocol and procedures for universities to implement, ensuring field administrators have intentional training and mentoring towards competent administration of field education. While self-initiated and reliant training and mentoring seems to be an important aspect of navigation for new field directors, intentional and specific training of the various and complex components of field administration seems to be the more ethically sound approach for university's to embrace.

The Ethical Lens: A final area of focus was the perception of respondents regarding their experience with training and mentoring once hired, and their view whether such training and mentoring reflected the NASW Code of Ethics, standards 1.04(b) and 3.08. These standards require social workers to practice in areas of competency and calls for those who supervise social workers, to ensure that effective training is occurring to maximize practice area competence (NASW Code of Ethics, 2017). In examining these results, it is important to note that the majority of respondents viewed their experience with training and mentoring as demonstrating ethical adherence to the Code at some level. The incongruence between lack of training and mentoring, and perceived adherence to the ethical standards is curious and motivates further exploration of how this incongruence formulates among field directors. Examining the comparison analysis of new field directors who did or did not engage in self-directed learning (SDL), what is noted is that field directors were more likely to engage in SDL when their training and mentoring experience was specific to being a field administrator. Additionally, field directors seemed to feel that effective orientation to their position was a significant aspect of whether or not their training and mentoring adhered to the ethical standards highlighted. These findings suggest that field directors view their experience as adhering to the Code when they experience effective position specific orientation. It is possible that respondents do not differentiate as significant, engagement in self-initiated training or mentoring because the university provides an orientation that aides them functioning as a field director. Another possibility is that respondents view position specific orientation as sufficient to engage in the activities of field administration.

Limitations

Several limitations warrant discussion. First, the instrument used was researcher developed and only piloted with a miniscule group of former field directors. The survey research did not allow for depth of response, as most of the questions were nominal or ordinal. Calculation of the response rate is unknown since the Listserv membership changes frequently, with additions and subtractions occurring on a frequent basis. Another limitation was while participation of respondents was random; control for screening out participants who were not field directors did not go beyond requesting non-field or assistant field directors to self-exclude. Another area of limitation is that geographical information was not collected, which did not allow for analysis based on region (e.g. would those in Southern regions respondent differently from those in Western regions, etc…).

Recommendations. The researcher recommends a training framework to guide hiring universities in conjunction with the social work department. The researcher proposes the Field Education Training Framework, highlighted below that can be adopted by the hiring university and department, to ensure appropriate training and mentoring occurs for field administers hired to the field education position. There are four domains of the training framework:

1) Pre-hiring process: This involves contracting with the out-going field director to engage in adequate orientation and training time with the incoming field director, as is feasible. If this is not possible, the next category is a vital consideration.

2) Funding: The University can earmark funds to provide a training stipend as a budget line item, to engage the prior field director or an experienced field administrator to provide training and mentoring to a newly hired field director who is entering the position for the first time. This funding could also be used to contract with a part-time field administrator from a different local University, a retired field administrator

or an assistant field director from another University, who can provide contracted

mentoring and on-going training to a new field director. Also, it is recommended that

the university and department make sure that provision of adequate funding exists for

the new field director to access existing external training through CSWE, NASW or

BPD to augment internal training that occurs. Earmarking funds in this manner

allows a new field administrator to build networks with other experienced field

directors at the annual meetings of these professional organizations and access online

trainings that will add to how they learn their role, position, responsibilities and the

practice context of field education administration.

3) Hiring practices: Hire field administrators who have significant practice experience.

This includes direct practice, program development and administration, policy

development and implementation, and macro-level negotiation and advocacy

experience. There are areas of practice experience that are highly transferrable to a

field administrative position. Just as some areas of practice are not for every social

worker, so field education is not for every practitioner desiring to engage in field

administration. Careful consideration of how transferrable the practice,

administrative and policy development experiences of the newly hired field director is

imperative.

4) Develop an intentional mentoring and training process: New field administrators need

to have access to on-going mentoring to develop the critical skills that will allow for

growth of the field division within the university and among the community where

students will practice. Mentoring is an important aspect of career development often

overlooked in field education specific to the administrator. Purposeful training and

mentoring provide the foundation for a strong field educational leader. A strong field

leader benefits the academy. Assignment of mentors who can guide a new field

administrator with learning or enhancing their administrative training, supervisory

responsibilities, time management, community partner engagement, student problem

resolution and disciplinary responsibilities, as well as develop innovative and new

community partnerships is an effective way to ensure the competency and success of

the field education program.

Figure 3 – Field Education Training and Mentoring Framework

Future Implications for Research

Additional qualitative research on how field directors experience training and mentoring,

what suggestion they have regarding what is needed and implementation of a training framework

for universities are all focuses of future research on this topic. Additionally, examining how

training and mentoring looks for field administrators of color within the academy is of

importance regarding sustaining and improving diversity among field faculty within the

academy. These future research foci will continue to augmenting existing research regarding

how training and mentoring of field administrators occurs in light of field being the signature

pedagogy of social work education. A final area of future research would examine the

incongruence between those respondents who viewed their mentoring and training as

insufficient, but also perceived their experience as adhering to the two ethical standards of the

NASW Code of Ethics. Isolating what corresponds to these seemingly incongruent variables

would be important in understanding what new field directors believe is most beneficial in the

training and mentoring process.

Conclusion

This study reveals results that have significance for how the training and mentoring

occurs for field administrators within the academy. The results indicate that although some

training and mentoring is occurring, more work is needed to ensure that new field directors

taking on the responsibility of field education, have adequate and purposeful training and

mentoring from within the host university hiring them. This becomes more imperative given that

field education is seen as the heart of social work education. This study suggests that field

administrators are largely utilizing self-training and educating themselves about the complexities

of field administration, which may not demonstrate best practice and presents an ethical dilemma

regarding social work education's own professional ethical standards. The study reveals that a

significant portion of respondents viewed their training and mentoring experiences as

demonstrating adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics, standards 1.04(b) and 3.08. However, it

is concerning that 35% of respondents did not have this view based on their experience with

training and mentoring. The academy would benefit from standardizing how field administrators

are trained and mentored, ensuring that newly hired administrators are effectively and efficiently

prepared to take on this important and vital role in social work education.

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The Training and Mentoring of Field Directors within the Academy:

An Ethical Dilemma or Not?

Sibyl Beaulieu

The University of St. Thomas

Author's Note

Sibyl Beaulieu is a doctoral student in the School of Social Work at the University of St.

Thomas. Correspondence concerning this document should be addressed to

Sibyl Beaulieu, Brandman University. Contact E-mail: sbeaulie@brandman.edu

Abstract

This oral presentation presents initial findings from quantitative research conducted with professional social workers examining their experience of mentoring and training within the academy when first assuming the position of field director/administrator. The research examines occurrences of formal mentoring and training of field directors within the academy and whether such training aligns with two specific NASW code of ethics standards, 104b and 3.08.   The presentation powerpoint includes the premise for the study, existing literature on the topic, the NASW Code of Ethics standards examined, methodology, sample procedures, data analysis findings, results meaning, limitation of the study, and a recommendation framework for uniformity of training and mentoring.

Keywords: field directors, field administrators, field education, signature pedagogy, training, mentoring, the academy, NASW, code of ethics.

I presented at the 65th Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, held in Denver, Colorado at the Sheraton Downtown Hotel on October 24-27, 2019. The oral presentation in the Field Education Track of this meeting on October 27th was based on the preliminary findings of my exploratory quantitative research on the training and mentoring of field administrators within the academy. The research examined what training and mentoring occurred when social workers first took the position of field director/administrator and whether they perceived the training and mentoring received as an adhering to the NASW Code of Ethics standards 1.04b and 3.08. The title of my research is "Examining the Mentoring and Preparation of Field Directors: An Ethical Dilemma or Not?

The theme of this conference was Social Work Education: Looking Back, Looking Forward. My research was relevant to the theme in that field education is the signature pedagogy of social work education and a vital part of how social work students are socialized into the profession. An additional relevance is that respondents were asked to look back on their initial experience when becoming a field administrator and identify how they were mentored or trained for the position. The findings of this research provide an understanding of whether or not the academy is demonstrating effective training and mentoring of field administrators that align with the two focus ethical standards being taught to social work students.   The data findings can help the academy identify areas of training and mentoring gaps that when addressed through intentional training and mentoring, promote competently trained field education administrators from the inception of their starting the position. When field administrators have access to position-specific training and mentoring, their ability to be effective in executing the signature pedagogy of social work education is strengthened, which can result in stronger social work programs and more effective field practicum administration.

Slide 1

Slide Two

What already exists on this issue?

Mentoring/Training defined

(Zellers, Howard & Barcie, 2008, Ellison, Moore & Johnson, 2014).

Mentoring/Training in the Academy

(Baker, Pifer & Griffin, 2004; Fountain & Newcomer, 2018; Gee & Popper, 2017; Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Kahle-Piasecki, 2011; Pololi, Knight, Dennis & Frankel, 2002).

Mentoring/Training in Social Work

(Robbins, Regan, Williams, Smyth & Bogo, 2016; Wilson, Pereira & Valentine, 2002; Ellison & Raskin, 2014).

Mentoring/Training and Field Administration

(Ellison & Raskin, 2014)

Ethical considerations (NASW, 2017)

Slide 3

NASW Code of Ethics

Two Standards of focus
- Standard 1.04(b)
- Standard 3.08

Slide 4

Slide 5

Collection of data

- Online survey
  - Mentoring/Training that occurred –
  - Position specific training
  - Self-directed/initiated training
  - Complied with NASW Code of Ethics
- Data Analysis – descriptive analysis
 - Frequency and Percentages
  - Measures of Central tendency
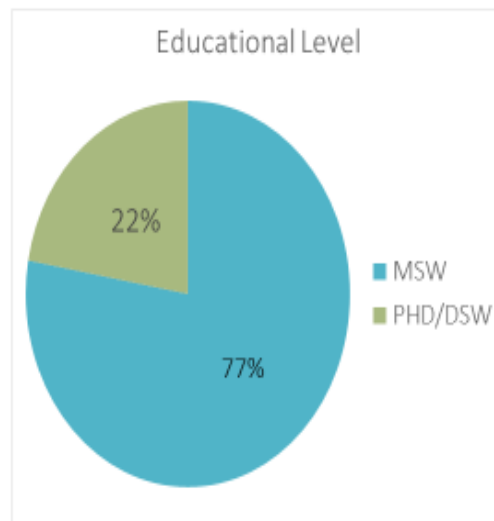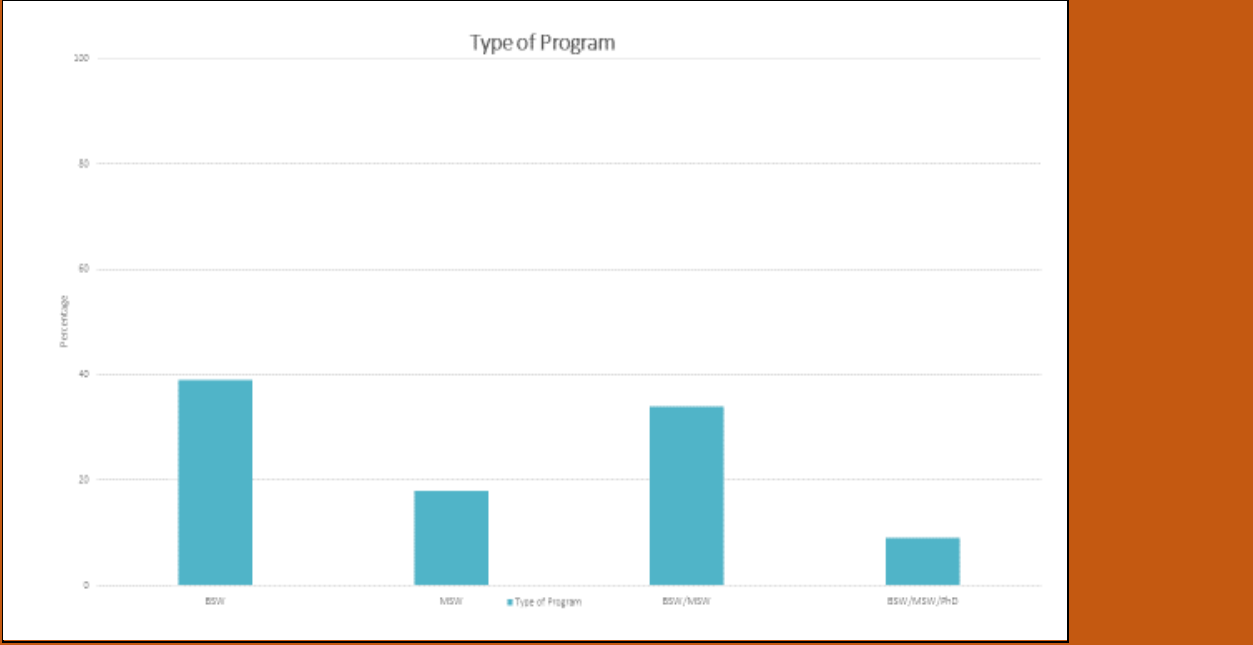
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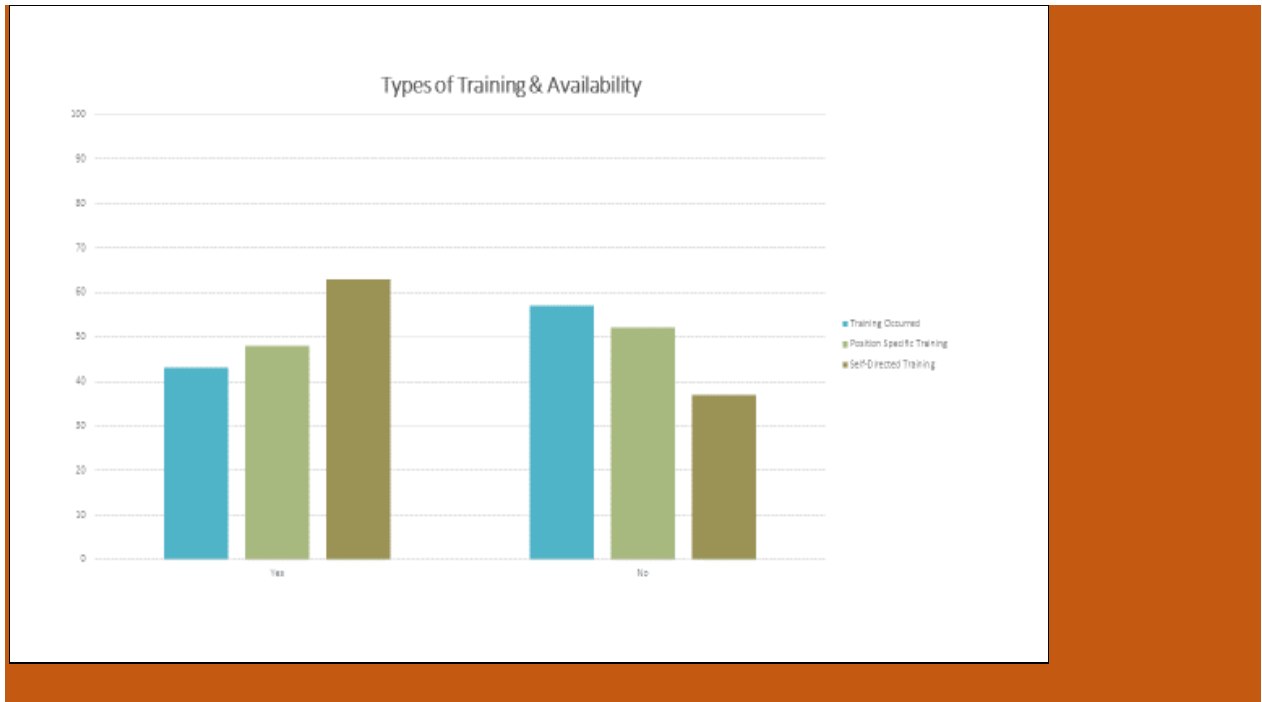
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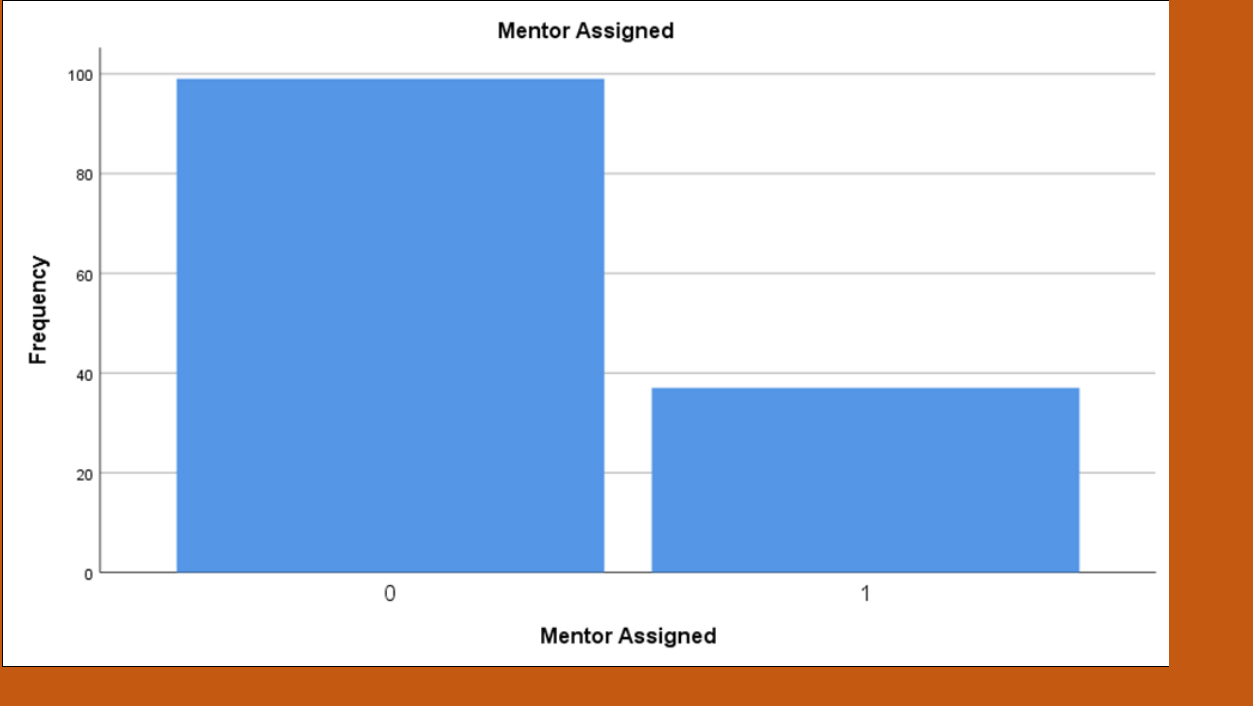
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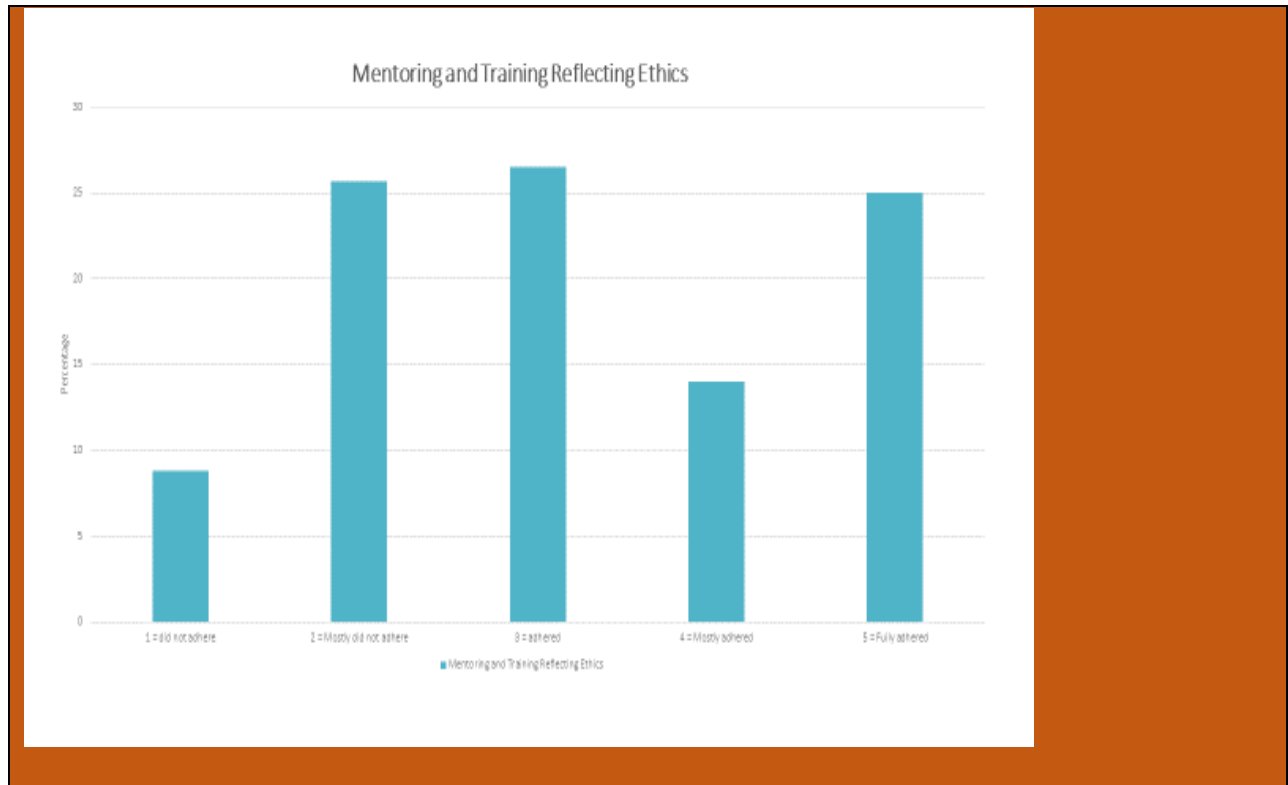
Slide 12

Slide 13

Slide 14

Slide 15

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Slide 17

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Slide 18