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Technology in Social Work Field Education According to the Standards: A Field Instructor Perspective on the Benefits, Challenges, and Implications for Student Learning

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TECHNOLOGY IN SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS: A FIELD INSTRUCTOR PERSPECTIVE ON THE BENEFITS, CHALLENGES, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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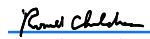Dr. Bobbi Nicholson
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Approval of Dissertation

We, the faculty supervising the work of **Alysha Nichols**, affirm that the dissertation**, Technology In Social Work Field Education According To The Standards: A Field Instructor Perspective On The Benefits, Challenges, And Implications For Student Learning** meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the EdD Program in **Leadership Studies** and the College of Education and Professional Development. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

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Dedications

This work is dedicated to my three awesomely wonderful children, Luke, Evan, and Catie. I hope that seeing mommy reach her dream of completing this degree always inspires the three of you to strive toward your own dreams. The future is yours my beautiful children. Dream big, work hard, and enjoy every minute of it. I love you and am always so proud of you.

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Abstract

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach to gather the insight and perceptions of social work field instructors about the role and effect of technology on the student field practicum experience. Through convenience and purposeful sampling techniques, social work field instructors from the seven accredited social work programs in West Virginia were chosen to participate in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 field instructors to gather their perspective on the integration of technology into the supervision of field students. Thematic analysis was utilized to organize and interpret the information gathered from these interviews. It was found that technologies such as videoconferencing programs, written communication methods, and agency specific technology and documentation programs were commonly utilized in placement experiences. Trainings, various supervisory techniques, ethical standards, and agency policies were all incorporated to train, monitor, and evaluate student usage of technology. The efficiency, conveniences, and potential for improved engagement provided by the addition of technology was seen by field instructors to improve student field experiences, yet service delivery issues, internet instability, lack of accessibility, ethical concerns, distractions, and trouble building rapport were found to be challenges. Findings suggest field instructors believe students are still getting quality field experiences when technology is incorporated and overall support the use of technology in field, especially when combined with in-person face-to-face experiences or as a hybrid model.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Technology continues to be increasingly incorporated into all aspects of life, fundamentally reengineering the way we communicate. Alternative communities are being formed through online venues, businesses are being developed and run entirely through the internet, and new approaches to education are being implemented in response to these new technologies (Dennis, 2016). This inclusion of technology in education is promoting new methods of teaching and instruction and is broadening student learning experiences. The impact of these changes has been especially influential on practices in social work. Ayala (2009) indicated "distance education and online learning have proliferated in recent years as social work has started to explore their potential for meeting the needs of a changing student population and an increasingly technological society" (p.284).

In response to these ongoing technological and societal changes, educational programs are offering a portion or even all of their curriculum in an online or distance education format. Therefore, in addition to the traditional in-person programs, hybrid model programs (those that offer courses with both in-person and online components) are now being developed and implemented. Some programs have transitioned to a fully online curriculum. This is the current trend for many social work programs throughout the country, specifically doctoral and master's level programs. According to the CSWE *2019 Statistics on Social Work Education in the United States,* 76.8% of doctorate programs and 80.8% of the master's programs offer program options that include partially online components and 64.3% of the doctorate programs and 30.1% of the master's programs are offered entirely online (p. iv).

These online methods of course instruction have been made possible through the development and incorporation of various telecommunication devices and learning management

systems such as Blackboard. Students now have the ability to access course materials, communicate with instructors and classmates, and submit assignments from just about any location, using smartphones, tablets, laptops, or desktop computers. These ongoing changes to program delivery have provided many new methods and opportunities for learning, including changes in how student field instruction experiences are delivered.

Social Work Field Education

Students completing the educational requisites needed to earn a Social Work degree are required to participate in and complete field education experiences. The social work profession considers these field experiences as the signature pedagogy for the field. Field education experiences provide students opportunities to take their classroom knowledge to the field and begin to practice and apply what they learned to real life situations. During this aspect of the students' educational experience, social work departments partner and/or affiliate with various community agencies and these agencies then serve as placement sites. Social work professionals typically employed with these agencies provide the on-site supervision and field instruction to students completing placement experiences. These agencies and professionals (field instructors/supervisors) also play a crucial role in student academic success by serving as the providers of the necessary hands-on training for these future social workers.

These social work professionals who agree to assume the roles and responsibilities of the field instructor are expected to meet with students at least once a week to process what students have been experiencing, delegate new learning opportunities, provide feedback and guidance, assess and evaluate student progress, and address ethical concerns, all as a means to enhance student learning. Maynard, Mertz, and Fortune (2015) indicated "field instruction is one of the most important aspects of social work education, with students reporting that the relationship

with their field instructors is key to their learning and positive experience in field" (p. 519). In turn, effective communication between the field instructor and student is the key to achieving this supervisory relationship that results in the desired enhancement of knowledge and a positive field education experience.

The manner in which a supervisor communicates with subordinates can play a major role in the workplace experience and "impact the success and satisfaction of employees" (Mikkelson, Hesse, & Sloan, 2017, p. 142). Given the importance of the relationship between the field instructor and social work student, ongoing communication between these two parties is of utmost importance and necessity. Students value the communication and feedback they receive from supervisors/field instructors while completing the field education experience (Coohey & French, 2017; Flynn, Kamasua, Brydon, Lawihin, Kornhauser, & Grimes, 2014; Fortune, McCarthy, & Abramson, 2001). Students who have supervisors that are available, provide support and feedback, provide learning opportunities, and are able to connect the student field experience to theory and classroom knowledge, consistently report a more positive experience and greater learning outcomes (Coohey & French, 2017).

The supervision students receive while completing field practicum experience is almost as crucial as the experiences themselves, yet in many cases these supervisors have limited time and resources to provide efficient and effective supervision. In a research study completed to evaluate different factors impacting the supervision of social work students, Hill, Cleak, Egan, Ervin, and Laughton (2019) found "fundamental issues such as staffing and workload demands" affect field instructor "ability to provide a quality placement" (p.162). In the field practicum, the supervisor/field instructor ultimately becomes another educator for the student and the level of interaction, processing, and communication that does or does not occur between the two can

be a determining factor in the success or failure of the practicum experience. Given the ongoing advancement and availability of technology and technological means of communication, many field practicum supervisors are turning to technology-based methods to not only complete tasks, but also offset the problems with their limited availability. According to Hitchcock, Sage, and Smyth (2019), field instructors now have a responsibility to "ensure students have opportunities to build and demonstrate competence in technology-mediated social work practice" (p. 279). As various technologies are being used to support agency functions such as electronic record keeping/documentation, training, scheduling, billing, and referrals, supervisors must ensure students are familiar with and able to utilize these technologies. Hitchcock et al. indicated supervisors must now cover topics such as "ethical behavior, assessment, treatment, and evaluation" regarding technology-based practices and "provide feedback related to professional use [of technology] and expectations in the field" (p. 279).

Field instructors, much like the classroom instructors, are beginning to rely on Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, FaceTime, Skype, email, texting, and phone conversations to perform supervisory functions and interact with their students. According to NASW and ASWB *Best Practice Standards in Social Work Supervision* (2013), "video-conferencing is a growing technological tool used to provide supervision, especially in remote areas" (p. 24). Doing so allows them to save time, yet still feel as if they have provided the students with some form of instruction and feedback. Nelson, Nichter, and Henriksen (2010) support the benefits of utilizing technology to enhance supervisory experiences, and as these technological opportunities have become more accessible and widespread, the more acceptable it has become to incorporate them into the student/field instructor relationship. "Webinars, TED talks, podcasts, videos, and blogs can be developed and used by social work field educational staff to teach content across their

areas of expertise" (Finch, Williams, Mondros, & Franks, 2019, p. 470). Finch et al. (2019) also

indicated "social networking tools are also increasingly used in a variety of ways to engage

students and to encourage a community for learning" (p. 489).

Technology in Field

Technology-based strategies have begun to replace face-to-face supervisory sessions and

the processing of field experiences now occurs through email, texting, phone calls, and

videoconferencing. The 2020 Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) also played a significant role

in the increased use of technological-based social work services such as telehealth and

telemedicine. In response to the potential dangers of COVID-19, agencies had to make

modifications to service delivery as a safety measure for all stakeholders. These immediate

changes to service delivery also affected students completing placement experiences. For safety

concerns, many students were removed from face-to-face placement experiences, which resulted

in their field activities and required supervisory meetings being transitioned to virtual platforms,

specifically videoconferencing.

Dennis (2016) indicated videoconferencing is one means of attempting to ensure

emotional support, understanding, and empathy are still present between supervisors and

students (p. 267). Dennis also suggested the availability of technology has provided many new

options for service delivery, data management, documentation, and communication, specifically

during this time.

Despite the numerous advantages associated with the use of these advancing

technologies, there are also challenges associated with the integration of technology into field

practicum and supervisory experiences. One concern with the ever-increasing use of technology

is in determining whether or not the use of technology, specifically for purposes of

communication, allows students to have the level of connection and interaction with their field supervisor that is necessary to provide quality educational experiences resulting in positive learning outcomes (Coohey & French, 2017). Another valid argument against relying solely on technology to complete field experience activities is whether or not students can effectively and appropriately utilize the technology necessary to complete the required daily tasks (Coohey & French, 2017). With that being said, it is also necessary to assess student access to the technology as it may be more of a challenge for students than is expected. According to a study completed by Gonzales, Calarco, and Lynch (2018), "access to information and communication technologies has expanded dramatically in recent decades, but technology-related inequalities persist," specifically with sustaining access and coping with technology disruptions (p 751).

Most agencies and organizations now function by incorporating various means of technology into everyday tasks and activities such as electronic records, virtual-reality interventions, and telehealth/telemedicine. With this continuing increase in the use of technology-based services and technological means of communication, it becomes critical to ensure those who will be utilizing these technologies can do so effectively and also have the necessary accessibility to function effectively. When students become affiliated with these agencies through their field placements, field activities will likely be tied to agency-specific technologies and some communication may occur via technology. It then becomes the responsibility of the field agency, specifically the field instructor, to make sure the student is properly trained, has access to these services, and receives a quality learning experience.

Technology Standards

In 2017, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and the Clinical Social

Work Association (CSWA) published a set of national standards for the use of technology in

social work practice. The *NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social*

Work Practice provides "a humanistic framework to ensure that ethical social work practice can

be enhanced by the appropriate use of technology" (NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA, 2017,

para. 4). These standards are separated into four major sections/themes: Section 1: *Provision of*

Information to the Public; Section 2: *Designing and Delivering Services*; Section 3: *Gathering,*

Managing, and Storing Information; and Section 4: *Social Work Education and Supervision*.

Section 4 of this document provides 12 standards that relate to social work education and

supervision.

For the purpose of this study, only the Section 4 standards were considered. These 12

standards were categorized into six overarching themes: Ethical Use and Cultural Competency,

Field Instructor/Supervisor Knowledge, Student Access and Support, Instruction and Academic

Standards, Technology in Practice and Supervision, and Evaluation and Assessment (See Table

1). Due to overlapping concepts within the themes, some standards are listed more than once in

the table below. At this time, there is little research on the use and impact of these standards on

student-field instructor/supervisor relationship.

Table 1

Section 4 Standards and Related Themes

Themes	Section 4 Standards
Ethical Use and Cultural Competence	4.01 Use of Technology in Social Work Education 4.02 Training Social Workers about the Use of Technology in Practice 4.04 Social Media Policies 4.07 Distance Education 4.10 Educator-Student Boundaries 4.11 Field Instruction
Field Instructor Knowledge	4.01 Use of Technology in Social Work Education

	4.03 Continuing Education
	4.07 Distance Education
Student Access and Support	4.06 Technology Disruptions
	4.08 Support
Instruction and Academic Standards	4.01 Use of Technology in Social Work Education
	4.09 Maintenance of Academic Standards
	4.10 Educator-Student Boundaries
	4.11 Field Instruction
Technology in Practice and Supervision	4.02 Training Social Workers about the Use of Technology in Practice
	4.11 Field Instruction
	4.12 Social Work Supervision
Evaluation and Assessment	4.05 Evaluation
	4.12 Field Supervision

Problem Statement

Field instructors play a vital role in the student field practicum experience. Students rely heavily on their support, guidance, direction, and feedback and the manner in which this is done may also play a part in student satisfaction with the learning experience. Nationally, technology is becoming a critical element of interaction between field supervisors and students and in response to this increased availability and use of technology, the *NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice* standards were updated in 2019. Section 4 of the standards provides 12 standards specifically related to the use of technology in field experience and supervision. There is little available research on the impact of these standards on field supervisors, students, and the field supervision process.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to gain, from the field instructor perspective, an understanding of what technologies are being utilized to complete field experience tasks and activities, how field instructors utilize and perceive the effectiveness of various means of

technologies to supervise (i.e., delegate responsibilities, process student experiences, answer questions, and provide feedback) social work practicum students, how these technologies affect student learning, and what are the major challenges in implementing technology-based social work field experiences.

Research Questions

The specific research questions developed to guide this study include:

1. What technologies are being utilized in social work field practicum experiences, both by field supervisors and students?

2. How do social work field instructors utilize technology to support student learning with regard to:

       a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

       b. Student access and support

       c. Instruction and academic standards

       d. Technology in practice and supervision

       e. Evaluation and assessment

3. To what extent do social work field instructors perceive the use of technology effective in and a challenge to supporting student learning with regard to:

       a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

       b. Student access and support

       c. Instruction and academic standards

       d. Technology in practice and supervision

       e. Evaluation and assessment

4. To what extent do social work field instructors perceive they have sufficient capacity to use technology to support student learning with regard to:

    a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

    b. Field instructor knowledge

    c. Student access and support

    d. Instruction and academic standards

    e. Evaluation and assessment

5. What strategies do social work field instructors utilize in training social work students on the uses of technology in practice with regard to:

    a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

    b. Student access and support

    c. Instruction and academic standards

    d. Technology in practice and supervision

    e. Evaluation and assessment

6. To what extent do social work field instructors perceive adherence to the NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA technology standards when working with social work students in field placement with regard to:

    a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

    b. Field instructor knowledge/capacity

    c. Student access and support

    d. Instruction and academic standards

    e. Technology in practice and supervision

    f. Evaluation and assessment

Statement of Significance

As social work programs are attempting to align with the technological interests of students and the safety precautions needed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the field experience is beginning to adapt to and include technology-based services and alternative means of communication. Supervisors are now taking advantage of the various telecommunication methods (email, texting, videoconferencing) to supplement face-to-face supervisory sessions as a means of attempting to process student field experiences. This transition created the need for a set of technology standards to be created as a means to provide guidance on how to effectively and appropriately utilize technology in field experiences. Agencies are also incorporating trainings for new employees and student interns on how to appropriately utilize the agency specific technology to complete required tasks.

Social work field programs would benefit from gaining a thorough understanding of how students are utilizing various means of technology to communicate and complete field activities and how field instructors are ensuring technology standards are followed. Concurrently, field instructors and students will gain insight into how the use of technology affects the overall student learning. Information on how technologies are being utilized in field experiences would allow for the identification of what technologies are actually being used, how effective students are at utilizing these technologies, the strengths and weakness of student/supervisor communications, and the effect that technology has on the overall student learning experience. This information could be utilized in training future field supervisors and in field placement orientations for students.

As telecommunication methods are more frequently being incorporated into field supervision as a means to process experiences, provide feedback, and answer questions, it

becomes imperative to determine whether relying on these systems still supports student learning in the field as compared to the traditional face-to-face methods. This study investigates what and how technologies are being incorporated into field experiences and the benefits and challenges technology presents to field instruction and student learning.

There is limited research on how supervision through technological means affects student achievement, satisfaction, and ultimately success in field practicum. Students have reported the relationship and ongoing communication with their field instructor is very much a contributing factor in the success of their field placement experience (Coohey & French, 2017). By gathering the field instructor perspective, this study examined the role of telecommunication in the supervision of students completing field practicum experiences, the role it plays in student learning, and the benefits and challenges of utilizing technological means of communication with students.

The results of this study can be utilized by social work field education programs in creating training modules for new and current field supervisors. The information obtained from this study would provide field programs with insight about how technology could be incorporated in the field supervision of students, as well as identify instances in which face-to-face interactions are more appropriate. Field education programs can emphasize these concepts when training field supervisors as a means to ensure that students are receiving a level of supervision that enhances their learning while completing their field practicum experiences. It will also be helpful to provide this information in orientations to students in field practicum experiences.

Delimitations

As this study provides a thorough look at how social work field instructors perceive the use of telecommunication to assist with their supervision of student interns, only field instructors will be interviewed. Student perspectives on the effects of technology on the supervision they received during their field placement are not addressed. Study participants were recruited from field supervisors affiliated with social work programs at universities in West Virginia, limiting the transferability of results to states and schools with similar demographics.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which is the accrediting body for social work programs in the United States, identified the field education component of any program as the "signature pedagogy." In the *2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards for Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs*, CSWE (2015) defined signature pedagogies as "elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline – to think, to perform, and to act ethically and with integrity" (p. 12). Field education, also commonly referred to as an internship, is the element of many educational programs that allows students to take their coursework knowledge and begin to apply it in real life practice settings with the help and guidance of field professionals. CSWE (2015) indicated the "intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting" (p. 12). Hunter, Moen, and Raskin (2016) stated that:

> The evolution of field education within social work education underscores the key role it has come to play in socializing learners to professional norms and behaviors, and in providing them with the opportunity to integrate theory and practice as well as to incorporate social work values and ethical behaviors into their emerging professional selves (p. 1).

The 2015 CSWE accreditation standards provide the outline and overview of the various requirements that every social work field education program must include for accreditation compliance. As of June 2020, there were 533 baccalaureate and 288 master's social work programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2020 https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation). CSWE standards require students completing a

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baccalaureate program to complete a minimum of 400 hours of field practicum experience, while those in a master's program are required to complete at least 900 hours. As the main objective of the field practicum experience is to connect theory and classroom content with practical experience, programs are responsible for ensuring that students are exposed to experiences that allow them to practice and demonstrate their capacity to become a competent social worker. "Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being" (CSWE, 2015, p. 6). CSWE established nine core competencies to be used in the task development, assessment and evaluation of student progress toward becoming such a social worker. The competencies are as follows (CSWE, 2015, pp. 7-9):

1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

5: Engage in Policy Practice

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

7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations

8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

These competencies not only signify the abilities and skills necessary to be an effective social worker but also provide students with a foundation from which to develop their field

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practicum goals, objectives, and activities. As students begin their field practicum experience, they are required to complete a learning contract in collaboration with their placement site supervisor as a means to ensure they are involved in and completing activities on site that allow them to enhance and master each of these nine social work competencies. Each competency also includes specific practice behaviors that further describe social work skills and values and how students can integrate actual field activities to the competencies. According to Royse, Dhooper, and Badger (2018), the field placement experience in general offers students the opportunity to achieve these competencies by not only practicing interactions "with clients, colleagues, and the professional community," but also beginning "to master the culture, norms, and values of social work. Field instruction assists students in making the transition from passive learners to active professionals" (p. 3).

Field Instruction Process

There are multiple components to the field practicum experience and several individuals involved in assisting students with the application of skills in these new practice experiences. Field education programs also recruit and utilize multiple other individuals to support and guide the student through their field practicum experience. As identified below in Table 2, these individuals and their roles include: the field coordinator, the field faculty liaison, the field instructor/supervisor, the task supervisor(s), and peers. Poulin, Matis, and Witt (2019) offered the following descriptions of these roles (pp. 4-5):

Table 2

Field Practicum Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Social Work Intern	Learn the practice of social work through experience, reflection, discussion, and feedback.

Field Coordinator	Individual from the institution of higher education that coordinates placement processes.
Field Faculty Liaison	Employee of the institution that serves as the direct point of contact for the student throughout the practicum experience. This individual supports student learning through hosting student field seminars/meetings, collecting assignments and other required paperwork, conducting site visits, and mediating as needed.
Field Instructor/Supervisor	Social worker that provides student with support, supervision, feedback, and oversight of placement activities. Most frequently this is an employee of the placement site/agency but may also be an external social worker.
Task Supervisor	Delegates tasks and provides oversight of activities. Not all sites will have a task supervisor, as these duties can be covered entirely by the field instructor.
Social Work Peers	Fellow classmates can offer support, insight, suggestions, and a different perspective based on their own field experiences.

The role of the field instructor/supervisor is critical to the success of the practicum experience. Supervision within the placement is an essential component that allows students to process with a professional already in the field and learn from the activities they are completing. Again, "the field practicum is the signature pedagogy of the social work profession," meaning it is the central method of teaching students and preparing these future practitioners for their new vocation (Maynard et al., 2015, p. 519). "Supervision within social work has long been a means to pass along practice wisdom from the trained professional social worker to the learner" and is identified as a collaborative process that enables the student and the supervisor to work together to enhance "practice skills and develop" the professional identity of the student (Poulin, Matis, & Witt, 2019, p. 52). Poulin et. al., (2019) went on to explain "supervision is to direct, watch over, or keep an eye on the work of another" and the supervisor "oversees the actions of the supervisee," but social work supervision takes the role a step further to include "a dynamic

engagement between the supervisor and the supervisee" (pp.52-53). Supervisors of field education students are not just administrators but also become educators and serve as support networks for the students throughout the experience. Students are encouraged to meet with their supervisors once a week to discuss, reflect, assess, and process the placement experiences. Without this level of communication, the student learning experience does not meet its full potential.

Finch, Williams, Mondros, and Franks (2019) suggest "field supervision creates the conditions needed for new ways to consider responses to the work to emerge. We are shaped by and learn from each other" (p. 18). Field instructors, also referred to as field supervisors in some settings, are the social workers, typically within the placement setting, who supervise the "work performed by students" (Hensley, 2016, p. 1). According to CSWE accreditation standards, to be eligible to be a field instructor for baccalaureate programs an individual would need to "hold a baccalaureate or master's degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program and have 2 years post-social work degree practice experience." Those who serve as a field instructor for master's programs must have the same requirements with the exception of the degree having to be a master's degree in social work (CSWE, 2015, p. 13).

Hensley (2016) described the field instructor role as one of mentorship and guidance, while Poulin et al. (2019) indicated that field instructors, in addition to orienting the student to the agency and overseeing field tasks, serve as a primary support system for the student they are supervising. It is the responsibility of the field supervisor to "create a meaningful learning environment" that enables students to apply "social work skills while being supported by trained practitioners" (p. 84). Literature consistently supports the importance of the field instructor/student relationship and ongoing open communication in fostering student learning

and success while completing field practica. "At the beginning of any relationship, whether with a person, a community, or organization, understanding our role and function begins the relationships we form and shapes the ongoing work" (Finch et al., 2019, p. 224). Bogo (2015) indicated dialogue, feedback, coaching, and assessing competence are crucial responsibilities of the field instructor, while Coohey and French (2017) found students believed their learning was facilitated by field instructors who were available and willing to talk, who provided emotional support and feedback, and who provided learning experiences and instruction.

Communication is the sending and receiving of information from one source to another by means of both verbal and non-verbal messages. Communication requires individuals to not only speak to one another, but listen and observe as well. "Successful engagement depends on your ability to communicate" and results in effective sharing of "knowledge, attitudes, and skills" (Johnson, 2004, p.94; Miller, 1988, p. 4). Johnson (2004) indicated "communication is the proverbial two-way street. In addition to being a good speaker and writer, you will need to be a good listener with the ability to listen to and respect the people with whom you are communicating" (pp. 94-95). Effective communication is a determining factor in the success of virtually any type of relationship and can in turn play a major role in the learning opportunities of students, specifically those completing a field placement experience.   According to Miller (1988), "effective teaching depends on successful communication" (p. 4). In other words, student learning is centered around the information and knowledge shared with them through the use of verbal and non-verbal messages from their teachers and supervisors.

Due to the increasing demands of the human service field, social work professionals, specifically those who serve as field supervisors for students, are finding themselves with "larger caseloads and less time to supervise" (Bogo, 2006). Despite knowing the importance of

providing supervision to the students, the demands of the job and the lack of support they get from the agency tend to put the student learning experience on the back burner and many students are finding that lines of communication with their supervisors are minimal at best. Due to many other responsibilities, field instructors have limited time to meet weekly with students, let alone in a face-to-face capacity. Therefore, as ongoing communication and interaction between the field instructor and student is necessary for the success of the student placement, technological alternatives are now being seen as a way to offset the time constraints that field instructors may have in meeting with students face-to-face.

Technology and the Field Experience

Hitchcock et al., along with Lewis and Schneweis (2019), indicated "when we offer up the topic of technology in social work field education, we have found that social work educators often fall into two categories: the nonbelievers and the believers" (p. 260). They found that those who were skeptical about utilizing technology were concerned the clinical relationships and rapport typically built through face-to-face interactions would be negatively affected and harder to develop through technological means. Singh, Doyle, and Wobbe-Veit (2021) indicated "despite the growth of online programs, there is concern regarding effectively engaging students in online learning" (p. 1695). Yet, one of the reasons those who support the incorporation of technology into social work education and social work agencies do so is because it has opened up access to opportunities for those in "underserved communities" (p. 260).

The CSWE *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* (2015) state "field education may integrate forms of technology as a component of the program" (p. 12). Given the ongoing trends and demands to utilize technology in educational programs and field experiences, the accrediting bodies had to revisit and adapt standards and competencies to guide the how, when,

and where technologies could be incorporated. In 2017, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), and the Clinical Social Work Association (CSWA) came together and formed "the Task Force for Technology Standards in Social Work Practice and jointly developed the *Technology Standards in Social Work Practice…* a uniform set of technology standards for professional social workers to use as a guide in their practice" (NASW, 2017, p. 4). These standards were created to ensure social workers are utilizing technology in an ethical manner in regards to how they "(1) provide information to the public; (2) design and deliver services; (3) gather, manage, store and access information about clients, and (4) educate and supervise social workers" (NASW, 2017, p. 8). When supervising a student in a field placement setting these standards direct practitioners to make sure that students are trained and educated on the use of technology, they have access to the technology being utilized in the organization, they are supported in their usage of technology, clear student - supervisor boundaries are set regarding the use of technology, academic standards are maintained, and "they are able to assess students' and supervisees' learning and professional competence" (NASW, 2017, pp 44 – 53).

Nelson, Nichter, and Henricksen (2010) found some students view telesupervision as being a convenient and flexible method of interaction with their supervisors and it made it more likely for some students to complete placements in rural locations. As various technological means of communication have become more readily available, those options could be used to supplement some of these required face-to-face interactions. Erichsen, Bolliger, and Halupa (2014) found students engaged in distance learning programs benefited from "proactive communication" and they encouraged the increased use of telecommunication for supervision. As distance education opportunities continue to grow "there is a swelling emphasis on field

education to incorporate strategies to accommodate geographical distances in field education delivery" (Dennis, 2016, p. 262).

"As videoconferencing has become more accessible and cost-effective, online field supervision and advising is increasing in viability," promoting "accessibility and flexibility," expanding "options for field placements," and even lowering "social work program costs by reducing travel for field liaisons (Dennis, 2016, p. 267). These ongoing technological advances are now providing alternative and creative ways for programs to support and enhance teaching methods for students. "It is becoming common practice for program staff to communicate with their field partners through interactive television, emails, Blackboard, electronic records, websites that contain field education forms, and online evaluation formats" (Finch et al., 2019, p. 489). The availability of online resources has also provided supervisors with a plethora of information and knowledge they can utilize to enhance the student learning experience in the field. Hitchcock et al. (2019) cited the importance of incorporating technology into student educational endeavors when they indicated that:

> Technology has the power to help students access content in new ways, create open networks that link students to the practice world outside the classroom, and help educators share and collaborate on projects related to social work pedagogy in thoughtful and effective ways. And as an added benefit, students who work with these technologies in their courses then develop competencies in the use of technologies in their courses then develop competencies in the use of technologies that will serve them later in their social work practice and professional development (p. 2).

Coronavirus Pandemic

In response to the 2020 Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that affected millions of people worldwide and killed more than 700,000 individuals in the United States, individuals and families were encouraged and/or required to stay at home, businesses and retail stores were forced to close, K-12 schools and institutions of higher education had to dismiss and convert to online instruction, and technology became more of a necessity than ever before. As a means to prevent the spread of COVID-19 individuals were asked to confine themselves to the safety of their homes, resulting in increased reliance on various means of technology to continue to communicate with one another, perform work duties, be seen by doctors, receive therapy, and/or carry on with their education.

One response to the pandemic was the dramatic increase in home usage of the internet and teleconferencing services. At the end of March 2020, AT&T reported their "core network traffic, which included its business, home broadband and wireless services, was up 24% from the month before" and Kelly Layne Starling, a regional spokeswoman for AT&T, stated "audio/video conferencing minutes of use have increased significantly from 6 million on an average day to 16 million one day last week" (as cited in Boone, 2020). In the month of April 2020, Zoom, one of the many available videoconferencing sites, "revealed that it has surpassed 300 million daily Zoom meeting participants…up fifty percent from the 200 million the company reported earlier this month, and a huge jump from the 10 million back in December" (Warren, 2020).

According to a study completed by Hacker, vom Brocke, Handali, Otto, and Schneider (2020), "WCS (web-conferencing systems) afforded a new virtual togetherness, new shared and synchronous social activities and events, and meetings that could not have taken place

otherwise" (para. 4). The authors also suggested "people also started to use WCS to support the everyday activities related to school, communities, friends, and families" (para. 2). These teleconferencing sites became the new and very common way for employees and employers to interact and discuss work related issues while many were now having to work from home. These sites also became the new face of education in which K-12 programs and institutions of higher education were forced to temporarily abandon face-to-face classes and instead utilize e-learning opportunities. This transition also affected undergraduate and graduate students completing field placement experiences as the COVID-19 pandemic led to many students being pulled from their practicum sites because of site closures and student safety concerns.

Social work students began to supplement their on-site field experience with digital learning and by telecommunicating with their field agency, field supervisors, and university faculty. On March 25, 2020, as a means to ensure the safety and wellbeing of social work students was a top priority, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) released a statement regarding the temporary changes to field requirements. These temporary changes included the allowance of "remote-based field activity" to be categorized as "in-person contact." CSWE indicated that "remote field activity can include engagement such as field-related assignments, trainings, and virtual meetings" (CSWE, 2020). Social work students now had to rely on their field instructors/supervisors, task supervisors, and faculty to identify alternative learning experiences that could be completed off site and/or virtually.

Many of the agencies housing social work student interns already utilized various means of technology to perform typical day-to-day functions, but these technologies typically served as a supplement to the primary face-to-face services offered. The use of already existing telehealth and telemedicine programs dramatically increased during this time as doctors and therapists

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began to more frequently utilize these platforms as a means to continue to offer services. "Telehealth, a term used interchangeably with telemedicine, has been defined as the use of medical information that is exchanged from one site to another through electronic communication to improve a patient's health (Tuckson, Edmunds, & Hodgkins, 2017, p. 1585). This type of electronic communication with patients is not limited to medical facilities but is also being used in the areas of psychiatry, behavioral health, and peer-to-peer mentoring. As many social work students frequently complete field placement experiences in these types of facilities, they are also now having to be trained to utilize telehealth services and be supervised during their implementation of the process. Wosik, Fudim, Cameron, Gellad, Cho, Phinney, Curtis, Roman, Poon, Ferranti, Katz, and Tcheng (2020) indicated that prior to this pandemic, "many health systems had low rates of telehealth utilization for routine care" (p. 958). In fact, the authors indicated that at one specific institution, less than 1% of their total patient visits were being conducted via telehealth, but in the short four-week period of time during the COVID-19 crisis, that number increased to 70%, totaling "more than 1000 video visits per day" (Wosik et al., 2020, p. 958). This major, and at this time necessary, increase in at-home internet usage, teleconferencing, and telehealth/medicine has also brought to light both the many benefits of and challenges of how the incorporation of technology into the student placement experience has affected student learning.

Challenges of Utilizing Technology

The incorporation of telecommunication into the supervision of social work students completing field practicum is still a newer concept and research on its effectiveness is limited. The addition of any technological advances into the field experience itself "may take practice, and glitches can delay smooth running of a session" (Finch et al., 2019, p. 498). There are also

"practical, clinical, ethical, and legal" challenges and concerns accompanying the integration of technology into the student field experience (Dennis, 2016, p. 275). According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), even though a significant portion of the American population has access to high-speed broadband service, in 2017 there were still 21.3 million Americans without "access to such connections" with approximately 4.3 million being located in rural America (Federal Communications Commission, 2019, p. 2). What this means is there is still a gap in the accessibility of technology for some that could both affect a student's ability to complete placement tasks and/or deter a client's ability to receive technology-based services.

Educators and practitioners have to be cognizant of these challenges as a means to ensure students are not negatively affected by the utilization of telecommunication over a face-to-face encounter. Some research still supports the use of live, face-to-face communication, indicating this type of interaction is more likely to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and practical learning (Saltzburg, Green, & Drew, 2010).

Chapter Summary

This aim of this chapter was to provide background information on the social work student field process and experience and the significant role that technology now plays. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) identifies the field experience as the "signature pedagogy" for all social work education programs and provides the nine core competencies guiding the professional skills development of social work students. The relevant stakeholders in the student field experience were identified and the roles and responsibilities of each were provided. There was a significant focus on the role of the field instructor/supervisor and the importance of the supervision provided and communication that occurs between the student and their field instructor.

As technology has become increasingly relevant to the student field practicum experience, technology standards were put in place to address and guide the use of technology in social work practice and education. A brief background regarding the development of these standards was addressed and an overview of how and why technology is now being incorporated into practice and student field experiences was provided. The COVID-19 pandemic has also played a significant role in the increased use of technology. As mandated safety precautions were enforced, it led to work, school, and social activities being completed remotely using various technologies including videoconferencing programs. This chapter concluded with a discussion of the benefits and challenges that are being recognized when technologies are utilized to provide services and for communication purposes.

Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this study was to obtain the field instructor perspective on the effects of incorporating technology into the social work student field practicum experience. This chapter provides the research methods that were utilized to gather and analyze this information and is organized into sections on research design, sample selection and characteristics, data collection, instrument development and validation, and data analysis.

Research Design

As this specific study sought to gather direct insight and perspective from social work field instructors regarding the role of technology on the student field practicum experience, a qualitative design was selected. Bloom, Fisher, and Orme (2009) defined qualitative research as:

> A set of philosophical ideas and empirical methods for identifying and describing some human experience, based on spoken or written words, and/or observable behaviors alone, that is, without forcing a preconceived theoretical position or set of values onto the experience (p. 22).

This design was chosen as "it is uniquely positioned to provide researchers with process-based, narrated, storied data that is more closely related to the human experience" (Stahl & King, 2020, p. 26). Qualitative methods offered a means to obtain a deeper look into the field instructor perspective on: how technology is utilized in the field experience, the quality of the student learning when technology is used as a supplement to or in place of face-to-face supervision, what benefits and challenges are present as a result of the incorporation of technology, and how they adhere to the technology standards set by NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA. Bloom et al. (2009), indicated the qualitative approach allows for the researcher to gain "a richer, more subjective interpretation of what the human experience is all about" (p. 23).

Padgett (1998) indicated there are many "parallels" between qualitative research methods and social work practice, making it an "attractive" design for social workers to utilize. She indicated "the primary methods of data collection in qualitative research…are already familiar to social work practitioners," most specifically "qualitative interviewing in particular bears a strong resemblance to a therapeutic interview" (p. 374). Quantitative methods were used briefly to gather basic demographic information, to identify the various means of technology that students are utilizing in their field sites, and to provide an evaluation of the perceived level of effectiveness when supervision is completed electronically.

This study used a phenomenological approach to identify and understand field instructor perceptions of how the incorporation of technology into the social work field practicum experience affects student learning. It explored what technologies were being utilized, how students were taught to professionally and ethically utilize technologies, how student use of technology was evaluated and assessed, and how field instructors ensured that their own knowledge and capacity of technological tools was sufficient to teach students. McMillan (2016) identified the purpose of a phenomenological study as "to describe, clarify, and interpret the everyday life experiences" (p. 317). This method is used when there is a need or interest in understanding how a group experiences a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2007, pp. 57-58). An overarching phenomenological approach was chosen for this study because it provides an opportunity to explore the role of technology on the social work field education experience from the vantage point of field instructors affiliated with various universities in West Virginia. In this case, the interest is in identifying how field instructors/supervisors view the role and impact of technology on the overall field experience of social work students and whether this utilization of technology adheres to the NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA technology standards.

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More specifically, a collective case study model was employed to gain the field instructor perspective on the experience as a whole. A simple case study is "an in-depth analysis of one or more real-life 'entities' – events, settings, programs, social groups, communities, individuals, or other 'bounded systems' in their natural context" (McMillan, 2016, p. 314). "Collective case studies are used when the best understanding is derived by synthesizing the results from several sites or instances" (McMillan, 2016, p. 317).

Population and Sample

As there are multiple social work programs across the state of West Virginia, field instructors from each university were recruited to participate in this study, allowing for more generalizable results. Seven colleges/universities in West Virginia offer social work programs: Marshall University, West Virginia University, West Virginia State University, Concord University, West Liberty University, Shepherd University, and Bethany College. The department chairs, program directors, or field directors of social work programs at each of these institutions were contacted and asked to assist with identification of potential participants. These individuals were asked to recommend participants that meet the study inclusion criteria. McMillan (2016) indicated the "contrasts between sites or events are helpful in providing convergence of findings, as well as learning how differences between contexts affect the results" (p. 317).

As this study seeks to gain insight from field instructors currently supervising students completing field practicum experiences, convenience and purposeful sampling techniques were utilized to identify participants. McMillan (2016) defined a convenience sample as "one that is simply available" (p. 122) and a purposive sample as one that that "is 'representative' of participants with characteristics that are being studied" (p. 124). Participants for this study were

chosen from West Virginia institutions due to the geographic convenience of the schools. The

population recruited included individuals who were serving in the role of field

instructor/supervisor in a social work program at an affiliated West Virginia institution. Field

instructors selected were those that are actively supervising or had supervised social work

students completing field practicum experiences within the past academic year. To be included,

field instructors must have supervised at least two students in the past four years and have

experience with supervising students both through face-to-face interactions and using

technology. A sample of 22 field instructors was identified. To account for variations in

institutional size, a larger number of potential subjects was identified from the larger institutions.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to gain the field instructor

perspective on the incorporation of various means of telecommunication into the process of

supervising field students. These interviews were conducted with an already established set of

questions (see Appendix C). Additional probes were used for clarification and elaboration.

"Clarifying probes provide an explanation, whereas elaborating probes seek more detail"

(McMillan, 2016, p. 345). Field instructors were asked to share information about student use

of technology, how technology is used for supervision purposes, what effect the use of

technology has in the overall student learning experience, and how students are informed of

ethical and cultural implications of the use of technology in the field. Field instructors were

given the opportunity to identify both the benefits and challenges of utilizing technology with

students and how technology is being utilized in practice. Supervisors were also be asked to

evaluate, (by means of a 5-point Likert scale) the effectiveness of their supervision when

utilizing technology enhanced methods rather than the traditional face-to-face methods.

Instrument Development and Validation

The interview protocol utilized in this study was created based on the details, description, and interpretation of the *Section 4: Social Work Education and Supervision* technology standards created by NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA. There are 12 standards in Section 4 of this document. For purposes of this study, these 12 standards were consolidated into six overarching themes. Interview questions reflect and at times restate the actual interpretation of the standards as a means to evaluate whether or not field instructors/supervisors are adhering to these guidelines for how to utilize technology when working with students. Prior to interviewing participants, the protocol was reviewed by two social work faculty members for content clarity, organization, and editing purposes. The Interview Protocol can be found in Appendix C. After the interviews were completed and data was organized, a follow-up email was sent to all 22 participants as a means to validate the study results. Participants were provided with a list of emerging themes and asked to review and determine if the identified themes consistently represented the technology trends being seen in social work field experiences.

Data Analysis

Following completion of participant interviews, a method of thematic analysis was used to organize and interpret the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified thematic analysis as a "flexible approach that can be used across a range of epistemologies and research questions" (p. 97). As this study sought to gain the perspective of social work field instructors, a thematic analysis approach served to "create a narrative understanding that brings together the commonalities and differences in participants' description of their subjective experiences" (Crowe, Inder, & Porter, 2015, p. 616).

Crowe et al. (2015) defined thematic analysis as "a process of interpretation of qualitative data in order to find patterns of meaning across that data" (p. 617). This process begins with a thorough and repetitive review of the interviews resulting in the initial development of the coding process. After these codes are created, the researcher identifies, names, and describes the emergent themes within the interview responses. The final step in thematic analysis is a "process of synthesis" in which "the presentation of findings shifts from description of the data to the meanings that have emerged" (Crowe et al., 2015, p. 618).

<div align="center">**Limitations**</div>

The limitations to this study are largely those that are inherent in all qualitative research. The quality of the research is heavily dependent on the individual skills of the researcher and may be easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies. The purposeful sampling techniques utilized to obtain participants may have created bias in reporting, given selected participants were chosen specifically because they used telecommunication methods in supervision. Likewise, the researcher's presence during data gathering (e.g., interviews), which is generally unavoidable in qualitative studies, can affect participants' responses. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality may be more problematic, and the data collected may be influenced by recollection bias and/or the inclination of participants to provide socially desirable answers. This is particularly true if the research subject is of a potentially sensitive nature or participants feel their behavior, choices, beliefs, etc., are under scrutiny. The final limitation is lack of representation, given the necessarily small sample size.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter provides the findings generated from this study. The presentation of findings is organized around sections related to data collection, characteristics of the respondents, and each of the six research questions. A final section provides a chapter summary.

Data Collection

Twenty-two social work field instructors were interviewed for this study. Field instructors were identified as individuals currently supervising social work students completing undergraduate or graduate level field practicum experiences. These field instructors had supervised at least two students in the past four years, with at least one student during the 2020-2021 academic school year and all had experience supervising students both in-person and through technological methods.

Using convenience sampling, the social work programs at each of the seven institutions of higher education in West Virginia offering social work programs were contacted by email to initiate the subject recruitment process. These emails, which included the letter of intent, a study abstract, the informed consent, and a copy of the interview protocol (See Appendices B and C), were sent to the program chairs and field education directors asking for assistance in identifying potential study candidates. Concord University, Marshall University, and West Virginia University (WVU) each have undergraduate and graduate social work programs and Concord and WVU also have online program options. These three programs were asked to identify 7-8 potential participants. Bethany College, Shepherd University, West Liberty University, and West Virginia State University each have undergraduate BSW programs and were asked to identify 1-2 potential participants affiliated with their programs.

Three of the programs contacted requested an additional phone call or Zoom meeting to gain more information about the study. After these follow-up calls, all institutions indicated the study information was forwarded to affiliated field instructors either through already created Listservs or to individuals that were specifically identified as potential subjects. WVU also has a large professional learning community and utilized that listserv to inform and solicit additional possible participants. An email response indicating interest in participating served as consent to participate in the study. Representing all seven institutions, 24 individuals expressed interest in being interviewed for the study. A follow-up email was sent thanking these individuals for their willingness to participate along with a time frame to schedule and complete the interview. Interviews were completed with 20 of the 24 potential subjects.

Snowball sampling methods were also incorporated into the end of each interview by asking the participants about the possibility of recommending other qualified individuals that might be interested in participating. One participant forwarded the information to colleagues, leading to two other qualified field instructors completing the interview. This brought the total number of interviews completed to 22. The interviews were conducted between April 29, 2021 and June 2, 2021. Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour and a half to complete.

Interviews were conducted through the videoconferencing option in Microsoft TEAMS. Permission to record the interviews was granted by 19 participants. Three participants interviews were not recorded either because they were completed over the phone or permission for the recording was not granted by the interviewee. Extensive written field notes were taken during all interviews and the recorded interviews were also transcribed through Microsoft TEAMS. A follow-up email containing a compilation of themes identified in interviewee responses was sent to all 22 participants to validate the accuracy of the emergent trend.

Responses from seven participants confirmed these themes to be representative of the field

supervisor experiences in utilizing technologies in field placement experiences, including the

benefits of utilizing a blend or hybrid approach to training and experience.

Characteristics of Respondents

Seventeen (77%) of the 22 subjects identified as female and 5 (23%) as male. The age

ranges included: 3 (14%) participants between the ages of 26 and 35, 4 (18%) between 36 and

45, 7 (32%) between 46 and 55, 2 (9%) in the age range of 56-65, and 6 (27%) 66+. Although

participant job titles varied, four overarching themes were identified. The largest of the four

themes was those in leadership roles or individuals identifying as supervisors, directors,

coordinators, and managers. This group represented 68% (n=15) of those interviewed. Three

(14%) interviewees worked in behavioral health professions as either therapists or behavioral

health specialists, two (9%) were in educational roles, serving as professor and training

specialist, and two (9%) identified as social workers in medical or prevention services

organizations.

The initial intent of recruiting was to attain a specific number of participants from each of

the identified institutions. As the interviews began it became apparent many field instructors

served in that role for multiple institutions. Given the close geographic location of some of the

programs, and the fact that two of the programs had online program options, many of the field

instructors identified themselves as being affiliated with more than one institution. All seven of

the institutions were represented within the completed interviews. Of the 22 individuals

interviewed, 14 were affiliated with one institution, four interviewees represented two

institutions, two represented three of the WV institutions, and two had been working with

students from four of the seven institutions. As three of the institutions do have both MSW and

BSW programs, 77% (n=17) of the respondents indicated they supervised students at both programmatic levels. Two (9%) of the field instructors interviewed only supervised BSW students and three (14%) reported only supervising MSW students.

The interviewees also varied in years of experience as field instructors and the total number of students they had supervised. The majority (63.6%) of respondents had served 15 or fewer years as a field instructor, with 29% (n=6) serving in this role between one and four years, 19% (n=4) serving between five and nine years, and another 19% (n=4) for 10-14 years. The remaining seven (31.8%) individuals had 15 or more years of experience supervising social work students. One field instructor reported having 15-19 years of experience, one reported having 20-24 years of experience, two (9%) reported 25-29 years of experience, and three (14%) reported having 30+ years of experience supervising students.

Inclusion criteria for this study required subjects to have supervised at least two students in the past four years, with at least one of those being during the 2020-2021 academic school year. When asked for the total number of students supervised during their tenure as a field instructor, forty-one percent (n=9) reported supervising 10 or fewer students, four (18%) had supervised between 11and 20 students, four (18%) had supervised 21-30 students, two (9%) interviewees had supervised between 31 and 40 students, and three (14%) reported supervising 41 or more students. Two interviewees reported supervising more than 75 students. Field instructors with a higher number of supervisees typically had a history of supervising not only BSW and MSW students, but students from similar disciplines as well.

Major Findings

This section provides a detailed summary of participant interview responses. The section is organized around the six research questions. Respondent interview findings were reviewed

and sorted, and central overall themes were identified. To protect confidentiality, participant

responses were not specifically identified by number as some institutions had a smaller number

of respondents. Participant quotes were used to support the emerging themes.

Technologies Used in Field Practice

Research Question One sought to identify specific technologies utilized by students and

field supervisors in practicum experiences. The interviewees were asked to consider the entire

placement experience and identify the technologies used to complete placement activities needed

to provide services or to complete weekly supervision sessions. Overall responses were centered

around five key themes: Technological Devices, Conferencing/Videoconferencing Programs,

Written Communication Programs, Social Media Programs, and Agency Specific Service

Provisions and Documentation Programs. Table 3 provides a synthesis of interviewee responses.

Table 3

Participant Identified Technologies According to Emergent Themes

Technology Themes	Technologies
Devices	Phones, cell phones, computers, iPads, laptops, hotspots, smart TVs, scanner, fax, copy machine, gaming devices
Conferencing/Videoconferencing Programs	Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, Skype for Business, Webex, Facetime, Google Suite, Google Meet, Google Voice Google Duo, GoToMeeting, Free Conference Call, Vidyo, Lifesize, telehealth
Written Communication	Microsoft Word, Microsoft Outlook/email, Google Docs, Texting
Social Media	Instagram, Twitter, Facebook

Agency Specific Technologies	Telehealth, Zoom Healthcare, Doxy, Basecamp, ECR/EMR/EHR, Tevera, Blackboard, Careview, Qualtrics, Voter Voice, Epic, Azuda, Google Translate, Therapy Notes, My Chart, gaming devices for treatment, GoToWebinar, webinars, agency specific databases, internet, professional websites

COVID-19 greatly affected the way most agencies communicate and provide services and created the need to increase the use of videoconferencing and telehealth technologies. Although one interviewee indicated COVID has had very little impact on their agency, stating, "It is business as usual, we have been doing telehealth for years," most respondents referenced services and communications now being completed virtually, which is a marked change from the traditional in-person service delivery inherent in the social work profession. One participant stated, "Every interaction with clients is now being done virtually" while another indicated "COVID forced us to use technology." Several respondents reported most internal meetings and interactions with outside agencies were also being conducted virtually, with one indicating their agency was "almost exclusively using Zoom" for service provisions. Court hearings were even being conducted through TEAMS. Eighteen of the 22 interviewees listed Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, and/or Webex as the preferred videoconferencing programs being utilized for ongoing communication.

Other technologies being utilized in field experiences were more agency specific. Twelve (54.5%) interviewees identified specific devices that were being utilized to complete field tasks, such as phones, cell phones, computers, iPads, and laptops. Seven (31.8%) participants named electronic health/medical/client records (EHR, EMR, ECR), or provided the specific name for these record management programs such as Careview and Qualtrics, and five

(22.7%) participants identified telehealth or specific telehealth programs (Epic, Zoom Healthcare, Doxy) being used during student experiences. Written documentation and communication methods were also noted as technological tools being utilized by students and field instructors. These tools included Therapy Notes, Google Docs, Microsoft Word, and email. The internet, social media, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook were also identified as technological tools students may be encountering while in their field placement.

In summary, Research Question One aimed to identify the technologies being utilized by social work students and field instructors in field practicum experiences. Interviewee responses indicate supervisors are commonly integrating various videoconferencing programs and agency specific technologies, along with devices (phones, computers, laptops, etc.) needed to execute these services. These included conducting supervision and other agency related activities on venues such as Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, Telehealth, and Webex. Written communication methods and agency specific documentation programs were the other commonly identified forms of technology being used in field. These technologies included email, texting, Microsoft Word, Google Docs, and various electronic medical record keeping programs.

Technology and Student Learning

As technology has been increasingly incorporated into student field practicum experiences, it is necessary to ensure students are still able to achieve required learning competencies set by the CSWE. Research Question Two was directed at determining how field instructors were incorporating technology into the field placement experience to support student learning regarding ethical uses and cultural competency, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment.

Ethical Uses and Cultural Competency in Student Learning

Respondents were asked to identify how technology was being used to address ethical practice and cultural competency, as well as how student professionalism in communicating was being taught and monitored through technology. Several respondents discussed ongoing communication and discussions, direct observation, supervision, trainings, modeling, and requiring the use of secure/password protected devices as the best ways to address this element of student learning. These uses were classified into two themes of Ongoing Communication and Guidance. Subjects consistently identified discussions and ongoing communication, a specific aspect of supervision, as a way to promote and ensure student ethical behavior. One participant identified the need to "have a conversation" and three other subjects specifically used the term "talk" when responding to this question. One subject emphasized how it is important to "talk about the expectations," another noted the need to "talk about different ways cultures use technology," and a third respondent reported they "talk about rules and expectations, same as you would face-to-face."

Participants also focused on the guidance provided to their students specific to ethical practice. One subject reported "all interactions are supervised" and a second indicated "I teach ethics monthly." Two other participants provided feedback on what they tell students about using technology. One of these respondents identified the importance of being "transparent when using technology" and the other teaches students to remember "when posting, you are representing." Two responses were specific to making sure students knew how to use technology with one subject stating they "teach them how to use technology" and another indicating the importance of making "sure they know how to use technology." Guidance and supervision on ethical and cultural competency were also provided in terms of client needs,

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teaching students to monitor client preferences, access, and knowledge on utilizing technology to receive services. One field instructor described the need for students to make sure they "meet each patient where they are at" when using technology, while another respondent stated they teach the importance of not assuming "because they [clients] are a certain age, they can or they can't."

Other strategies recommended for supporting ethical and culturally competent practice included providing a thorough orientation to the agency and ensuring students are familiar with ethical practice and policies when using technology. Field instructors indicated these discussions include how to appropriately be on camera during videoconferencing sessions such as: dress code, backgrounds, confidential/private locations, microphones and cameras on/off, and timeliness. Some respondents indicated students also sign off on confidentiality statements, HIPAA compliance, and agency policies, procedures, and expectations.

Overall, ethics and professional communication during videoconferencing was less of a concern for students who were just observing. Field instructors reported that in these instances, students were always being observed and microphones were muted.   In the instances in which a client or patient was present, permission had to be granted by them for the student to even be present.

Documentation in medical records was also addressed by some of the interviewees. One individual indicated students needed to be taught how to write notes and encouraged to use spell check. Another individual emphasized the need to do "Quality Assurance" checks in which written work by students is "routinely sampled" as a means to review documentation.

Education of Students on Access and Support

As technology is increasingly integrated into various aspects of the student field experience, field instructors have the responsibility to ensure students know how to use the technology and what to do when in it is not working. Field instructors were asked about student knowledge of technology and whether they know what to do when technology is not working. The overarching themes that emerged from this question were: Students are Knowledgeable, Available Support Systems, Training and Ongoing Discussions, and Not a Problem. Seven of the respondents complimented student abilities to utilize technology, with three specifically stating students were better with the technology than the interviewee and another reporting "they teach me." One interviewee noted "students have the technology," another respondent indicated "field placement students are comfortable with technology," while a third claimed "students do well with knowing how to use technology."

Four interviewees indicated students were made aware of and referred to the IT department, a "tech person," or Help Desk when experiencing challenges with technology. Others indicated on-site personnel or supervisors were available to assist. One participant indicated students have "access to the supervisor's cell phone," another indicated students are encouraged to "call a supervisor or other employee to receive support," and a third stated students were provided with "telephone numbers to call in" with questions or issues.

Several participants noted training, supervision, and ongoing discussion with students as important components in ensuring the students knew how to use the technology and what to do if there were issues. Six participants commented on the importance of ongoing supervision and support. These comments included: "offering support," engaging in "ongoing communication," "encourage practice," "talking about it," "learning together," and "ensure they use it

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appropriately." Seven interviewees recognized education, orientation, and training as necessities for student learning. One interviewee reported students were provided with "education at the beginning" and another reported they "provide students with an initial training about how to access everything." A third indicated they have specific "trainers work with new interns" and another noted the need to "demonstrate skills to students."

Individuals and agencies are becoming more tech savvy and four field instructors support this thought by indicating student knowledge and access were not seen as a problem. Many spoke of the experiences and knowledge of their students being better than their own and as a result have faced little to no struggles with getting students acclimated to incorporating technology into their field experiences. Their comments included: "there are not a lot of barriers," "no challenges, everyone has to use it," "we have not really had any problems," and "we typically have no issues with younger students."

Incorporation of Technology into Instruction and Academic Standards

Field instructors were asked how technology was being incorporated into placement experiences to assist students in achieving their required learning competencies. One field instructor reported we "integrate technology into everything we do" and it "has become part of the fabric of how we do service." Another stated "everything we were doing in person, we can now do virtually, 'in the box.'" Four themes emerged from these discussions: Increase in Connection, Training Opportunities, Research, and Benefits of Technology-Based Activities.

When looking at the increase in connections, six field instructors suggested students now had more opportunities to attend agency meetings (internally, locally, regionally, statewide, and nationally) and connect with staff and clients that were not local. One individual reported students "can more easily connect with a kid that is placed out of state" and another noted the

importance of students now being able to "connect with staff statewide." Students are developing skills in "connecting with others through the phone or through Zoom." Technology has also provided students more opportunities to receive specialized training to assist them in achieving competencies, with one respondent stating, "students are linked to trainings to help meet competencies."

One of the core competencies students must achieve is centered around research. Six of the interviewed field instructors indicated technology has made it easier for students to work toward mastery of this competency. One reported we are "incorporating technology into the research process" which is possible because of the increased accessibility to "research articles," "websites," "social media," and "national organizations." Another respondent indicated "students are using the internet to do research on client needs."

Several of the responses were directed toward identification and benefits of actual activities students were engaging in to meet competencies. One subject indicated technology-based activities in general are "helping with giving them [students] experience with utilizing technology," while a second field instructor felt students were learning "problem solving skills," and another indicated technology was allowing students to get "practice with completing documentation and electronic medical records."

Three field instructors suggested technology has opened new opportunities for students. For example, one interviewee reported students were able to be exposed to "more experiences" because "activities weren't limited to space and time," another stated technology is "broadening the scope" for students, and a third reported the "benefit has been reach [sic]". Other responses focused on the conveniences technology provides in student learning. One subject described the impact of technology as "making it [learning] more efficient, more consistent." Another

participant indicated students have the "ability to see more in a shorter amount of time," while another felt that students are "participating in activities that may not have been geographically possible."

Field supervisors were also asked about the factors to be considered in determining whether and how technology is used for educational purposes. Interviewee responses were categorized into six themes: In-person Preference, Clientele Abilities and Preferences, Time/Distance/Cost, Depending Upon, Needs for Technology, and COVID. Five respondents reported they prefer in-person activities, with three of those five simply stating they "prefer in-person" or "like meeting in-person." One individual stated "if there is an option to do in-person, choose in-person. Nothing beats in-person." Another stated "if possible, in-person is the first choice. That's how I was raised." One participant reported they "try not to do virtual activities with children. We try to work with children in-person."

As social work is a profession that promotes empowerment, client abilities and preferences appeared to be taken into consideration when interviewees responded to this question. One individual stated "it is not up to us, leave it up to the client," another believes the decision to use technology for service delivery should be "client preference and we should respect that," and a third reported we "offer patients a choice." As technology allows for improved time management, less travel, and less cost, seven respondents cited the decision to use technology was based on time, geographic constraints, and/or financial circumstances. One individual reported "typically we only use technology when trainings were distant." Several interviewees began their answers with "it depends on" or "depending upon." Some of these "depends on" responses included: "mandates from DHHR and court mandates," "the experience of the student," "the need of the client," "individuals and their proximity to the site," "what the

patient is comfortable with," or "the activity, there are some activities that are better in-person,"

"regulations," "client-need and comfort-level," "clientele tech literacy," and "policy, policy

dictated technology-based services."

In some capacity, technology has also proven to be a necessity for services to be

successfully provided. Some of the needs ascertained from interviewees were centered around

improved communication and program improvements. One interviewee suggested technologies

are being utilized because they needed "to make the program better" and "to communicate more

directly." Looking specifically at supervising students, one field supervisor mentioned

technology increased the "capacity to engage and identify what students have accomplished" and

another spoke about how "seeing students from distance sites" was now more easily

accomplished, specifically when an agency has more than one office location.

COVID-19 also played a role in some of the field instructors' decisions on when and how

to utilize technology. Five interviewees referenced COVID-19 and how it has influenced

changes to services offered by their agencies. As a result of COVID-19, one respondent

described technology as "the only option now." Another interviewee specifically named

"COVID" as a reason for choosing technological methods in field education and another

indicated COVID exposure would influence a decision to utilize technology. Two respondents

spoke about changes to the services provided as a result of COVID, stating that prior to last year,

technology "wasn't an option" or the "vast majority of services were face-to-face until COVID."

Technology in Practice and Supervision in Student Learning

Interviewees were asked to identify the strategies that go into determining and creating

technology-based experiences for students and how they are teaching their students about best

practices and about the risks and benefits of technology use. The strategies for the development

of technology-based experiences identified by the participants were organized into three categories: Organizational Function, the Integration of Agency Policies and Service Provision, and Ongoing Assessment of Needs. Less than a quarter of field instructors mentioned different organizational tools students utilized as part of their field experience. One interviewee discussed the importance of students "learning to use the organization-based database" and another noted students would be involved in providing telehealth services. Two participants indicated discussions in weekly meetings would help determine what experiences to create and a third indicated their students would be involved in "a lot of trainings."

Common participant responses suggested agency policies and agency provided services were factored into making decisions about the incorporation of technology-based experiences. One participant felt "agency rules and protocols" dictate how technology is used. Two interviewees indicated technology is already being utilized, with one reporting technology is now "integrated purposefully" into the student activities and the other stating "services were already" technology based. A few other comments were more specific to the services provided by the agency. For example, one interviewee indicated they "develop strategies for families using technology" and another stated "the main use of technology is to use it in place of face-to-face. You can have the same conversations through technology."

Determining what technology-based experiences students would have was also dependent upon agency, client, and student needs. An interviewee stated experiences would be determined and developed to "adapt to changes in needs" and a second participant commented, "We continue to assess functionality. If there are too many distractions, we try to have in-person sessions." Four participants aligned their responses specifically to the learning needs and wants of the students, with one indicating learning activities were developed based on the learning

contract students complete for their educational program, another stating a technology-based

experience is "what people want." A third participant reported "it depends on the student," and a

fourth acknowledged they "create opportunities to learn from."

When asked how best practices were being taught to students, four central themes

emerged: Observation, Discussion/Feedback, Supervision, and Training/Orientation/Policies.

These four themes are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Teaching Methods According to Emergent Themes

Observation	Discussion/Feedback	Supervision	Training/Orientation/Policies
-Observation	-Communication	-Talk about how to	-Training and orientation
-Practice under	-A lot of discussion	present self	-Review agency policies
supervision	-Discussion	-Promote	-Focus on confidentiality
-Participating	-Have conversations	mindfulness	-Ethics training
with them	-Talk about process	-Trial and error	-Go over etiquette
-Meetings allow	-Debrief after	-Modeling	-Policies and policies and
students to	activities	-Showing them	protocols
practice	-Encourage students	-Being present	-Comprehensive policy
-Always present	to ask questions	-Asking questions	-State regulations
to observe	-Discussion	-Modeling	-Orient
	-Processing of	-Supervision	-Quizzes on trainings
	experiences	-Weekly check-ins	-encrypted information
	-Processing	-Teach from a	-client-specific
	transactions or events	practice of respect	-what best meets where clients
	-Students get	-Expectations of	are
	feedback	professionalism	
	-Provide feedback	-Address the	
		issues if needed	
		-Problem-solving	
		methods	
		-Promote safe	
		environment	
		-Addressed early	
		when talking about	
		professionalism	

Two participants discussed challenges in teaching students best practices when utilizing technology. One indicated it "is harder than I expected" and "it depends on the personality of the students" as "not everyone is comfortable with the use of technology." The other participant indicated they felt "unprepared at first" so they "looked at what was working at other places" as a means to work through the incorporation of technology. Another participant talked more specifically about teaching students the process of using technology, stating students need to be taught "to document whether you are using technology to provide services" and to be mindful of "where they are doing services" as it "has to be built around privacy. Privacy has to be honored."

Supervisors were also asked about how they teach students about the risks and benefits of using technology. Responses were reflective of typical supervisory responsibilities, with most emphasizing the importance of ongoing communication and training and including statements about ongoing discussions in general, as well as statements about specific topics of discussion and training topics such as social media, information found online, and telehealth.

As the interviewees focused on various supervision methods utilized in teaching students about the risks and benefits of using technology in the field, including discussions, feedback, orientation to policies and procedures, and methods of training, this overall emerging theme of supervision was broken down into four more specific themes: Conversations and Discussions, Orientations and Trainings, Policies and Guidelines, and Teaching Methods. These four themes are described in greater detail in Table 5.

Table 5

Identified Supervision Methods According to Emergent Themes

Conversations and Discussions	Orientations and Trainings	Policies and Guidelines	Teaching Methods

-As things come up, have conversations -Having conversations -Discussions about social media to look at clients and point out unethicalness -Ongoing discussions and meetings -Ask questions and make sure everyone is okay -Supervision -Ongoing dialogue -Discussions of how to use social media -Remind them that not everything is factual online	-Orientation -have them review telehealth consent forms -Trainings specific to expectations about how to use technology -Orientation -Video trainings	-Sign-off on policies -Standards for the use of technology -Guidelines on how to use technology	-Have students research risks and benefits of some of the tools - Use teachable moments -Say it a lot -Repeat it

Some of the responses were statements about the specific identified benefits and risks. These responses will be included in the later discussion about benefits and challenges of utilizing technology in field experiences.

Evaluation and Assessment of Student Learning

As students are becoming more exposed to technology and are engaging in field placement activities centered around technology, field instructors are now having to evaluate and assess student uses of technology. Participants were asked how they were incorporating technology into the evaluation and assessment of students and how they were ensuring students were maintaining compliance with ethical and legal standards in social work when using technology. The evaluation and assessment responses were broken down into three themes: Supervision Methods, Institutional Evaluation Tools, and Email. Six participants listed using email communications as one way of evaluating and assessing student progress. Twelve

participants reported evaluating their students through online evaluation systems, with five

naming their institution's required data management program (Livetext or Tevera), four stating

they were using online programs or evaluations, and three simply stating they were using school

methods (either a Word document or online program).

Various supervision methods used to evaluate student use of technology were also

discussed by the interviewed field instructors. One field instructor talked of the benefit of

technology in supervising, stating "direct observation virtually is great. Unobtrusive observation

is better" and another indicated they were "using MyTeams for all supervision." Five

interviewees focused on methods of ongoing communication in their evaluation of students,

which occurred in meetings, over the phone, and in supervision sessions. Five respondents

indicated part of their evaluation of students was done through a review of student

documentation (i.e., therapy notes and other written work). One supervisor discussed what they

were looking for in their evaluation of students, specifically their level of competency and ethical

behavior.

When the field instructors were asked about how they were ensuring students were

ethical in their use of technology in practice, three themes were identified: Agency Policies,

Supervision, and Monitoring and Observing. Three individuals mentioned the importance of

getting feedback about the student from others who have worked with the student(s). These

responses are below in Table 6.

Table 6

*Methods of Ensuring Ethical Use of Technology Broken Down into Themes and Subsequent
Responses*

Agency Policies	Supervision	Monitoring and Observing
-Sign off on Confidentiality Agreements	-Discussions about not sharing identifying	-One-on-one time

-Provide students with right platform	information or looking at information on an unapproved device	-Reviewing how they document
-Review consents	-Licensed Social Worker supervises	-Shadowing
-Review expectations		-Always observed
-Remind them of confidentiality	-Engaging and communicating more frequently	-Review records
-Password protected and encrypted devices	-A lot of vetting	-Observe interactions
	-Supervision can be instant	-Observation
-Review policies and procedures	-Sign-off on documentation	-Spot-checking
	-Discussions	-Staff present to observe
-Signing contracts	-Process after each session	-Randomly observe once they are trained
	-Ensuring understanding of ethics	-Observation
	-Modeling and instruction	-Reviewing what students have done
	-Discussion	-Observation
	-Weekly supervision	-Observe
	-Address it if we see something "wonky"	-Observe and monitor
	-Ongoing discussions and weekly check-ins	-Oversight and monitoring
	-Meet with them	-Observation
	-Discussion	-They don't do anything on their own
	-Help student understand the difference between helping clients versus personal use	

In summary, the goal of Research Question Two was to identify how technology is integrated into placement experiences as a means to support student learning. Based on participant responses, there were four overarching approaches being utilized to ensure students were meeting academic competencies: the ongoing use of Training and Supervision, Conversations and Discussions, Monitoring and Observation, and the incorporation and use of Agency Policies and Guidelines. Decisions on how and when to incorporate technology-based field activities were dependent on concepts such as: preferences to use in-person experiences, client abilities and preferences, time, distance, and cost considerations, the need for technology

to support organizational function and needs, and safety measures as a result COVID. Interviewees also suggested technology-based experiences were being integrated because students were able to experience an increase in connections with others, had more training opportunities, and could more easily conduct research-related activities.

Benefits and Challenges of Technology in Field

Research Question Three sought to identify the extent to which field instructors perceive the use of technology effective in and challenging to student learning. Participants were asked to identify the benefits of incorporating technology into student field experiences as well as the challenges they have encountered.

All field instructors were able to identify both positive outcomes of incorporating technology into field experiences and agency provided services and the struggles they have faced when using technology. Field instructor responses ranged from "students need to know how to use technology and be comfortable with it" to an assertion that technology may be overused and "we don't want to use technology to replace face-to-face time." Two field instructors discussed their thoughts about the positives and negatives to integrating technology into field supervision practices. One indicated "when it works, it is great, when it doesn't is when it is challenging" and the other stated that "there is a lot of benefit to technology, but there is a lot of benefit in walking down the hall to answer questions." Two respondents claimed the challenges of technology were minimal and reported there are "not many" complications and "some services were not affected" at all.

Overall, the benefits of technology in field were mainly based on logistics in which field instructors noted efficiency and convenience, time management, cost savings, and a diminished need to travel as some of the strengths of utilizing technology. Several common challenges were

also identified by the field instructors. These challenges included service delivery issues, the accessibility of technology and internet, ethical concerns, and the tendency for distractions to interfere with services and supervision.

Two emergent themes appeared in all responses: internet instability and lack of access to technology, and distractibility.   Internet instability and lack of access to technology appeared to affect students, supervisors, and recipients of services/clients. One participant indicated "glitchy internet is awful. It is frustrating when you are missing things people are saying," while another reported "bandwidth gets weak and conversations were not easily understood as things got blurred." A third respondent spoke about challenges specific to the delivery of services and stated "patients can't always master technology, so they had to find other avenues to access services."

The potential for distractions was also noted in several participant interviews. One subject stated "access is good, but there is more potential for distraction," while four others reported specific challenges in sessions with clients, identifying "technological difficulties disrupted sessions," and the other indicating "services had to stop when someone walked in." A third subject discussed how students "forget cameras are on and we can see the distractions," and another spoke about distractions and questioned "are the interventions getting through" when distractions occur.

Some of the other challenges identified were more specific to the social work profession and rapport building with clients. One respondent expressed "we are a face-to-face profession. We need face-to-face and we lose that in the electronic medium." Three respondents discussed the challenge of building bonds with clients through virtual experiences. One participant noted it is a "challenge for the therapist to feel some bond with the client," while the second indicated it

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is "harder to form a bond with clients when you have only seen them virtually," and a third interviewee claimed you "have to work hard to form a bond." Struggles to read body language through a video screen were also mentioned by four interviewees. One subject claimed "understanding body language is really lost through technology," a second interviewee determined "reading body language is a definite challenge," a third posed the question "are we missing body language?" and a fourth lamented "it is hard to pull information when not seeing body language."

Benefits and Challenges of Technology on Ethics and Cultural Competencies

Interviewees were prompted to discuss the benefits and challenges of technology in terms of ethical uses and cultural competency, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment. The benefits and challenges were organized according to these categories and emergent themes were identified in each.

When considering the benefits of looking at student ethics and cultural competencies in utilizing technology, field instructor remarks centered around two themes: Client Access and Safety, and Accessibility and Reach, regarding services to clients, were identified as benefits by several field instructors. Comments included: "we can serve more people that we haven't been able to before," "we are able to reach people more often and reach more people," and "it gives students more access to more people in rural communities." The second theme identified was concern for safety. One field instructor reported incorporating technology was a way to demonstrate the importance of "being thoughtful of health concerns." Another subject stated the "risks of getting COVID outweigh the need to receive in-person services."

Ethical challenges were identified by one participant as "complex." The overarching themes that emerged when analyzing interviewee responses to challenges caused by technologies when ethics and cultural competency are considered include: Lack of Professionalism, Limits of Confidentiality, and Cultural Barriers. Professionalism is an evaluated practice behavior for students completing field practicum experiences. Several field instructors discussed how the incorporation of technology has created new opportunities for students to engage in unprofessional behaviors. One respondent discussed how students have at times become "excuse artists and always use technology challenges" as reasons for missing activities. Four field instructors discussed student motivation and characterized the impact of technology in the following manner: "Discipline and responsibility has gone down," "personal initiative is minimized," "students are not as self-motivated," and "they are not as fully vested when virtual." One subject spoke about the "constant redirection of appropriate behavior virtually" and mentioned having to remind students about how to dress and to not be wrapped in blankets while on camera. Two other interviewees talked about boundary concerns as various forms of technology are now being used to interact with clients, "boundaries can be blurred."

Field instructors also overwhelmingly placed emphasis on the concerns about client confidentiality and privacy when technology is used to provide services, specifically video conferencing or telehealth. The major concerns expressed by many respondents were client "privacy varied" and the "safeguards of confidentiality can't always be guaranteed." Two participants spoke about the possibility communications could be recorded, with one subject stating "everything can be recorded" and the other expressing "concern that sessions could be recorded." One subject questioned "where are services being conducted and who can overhear?" There could be "family members in the background" or "students in shared housing who have

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people walking behind the screen." One participant also raised a concern about client safety if sessions were overheard.

The technology-based cultural barriers respondents identified were based on generational gaps, diagnosis of specific challenges, and treatment intervention concerns. One respondent discussed how technology "may be age restricted," while another demonstrated concern about the "attention span of child clients" and how technology-based interventions might not hold the attention of a child. One subject specifically talked about victims of trauma and how they "could be at a disadvantage" when receiving services through the use of technology as they are less likely to disclose information over the computer. Another barrier addressed was the question of "how do you do family interventions? Technology is more geared toward individuals." Family therapy sessions need more guidance and structure. One participant stated, "you can't underestimate the importance of face-to-face human connections."

Benefits and Challenges of Student Access and Support

When discussing student access to technology in the field and the support they receive when complications arise, field instructors identified methods and processes they found to be efficient. The two themes that materialized were Access and Engagement, and Connection. Field instructors reported students had access to the technology and could get help quickly if needed. One subject stated "everyone likes their devices," while another indicated "technology has always been a part of our students' lives." A few field instructors claimed technology was "accessible and available," there were "IT systems in place," and other support systems provided students the ability "to quickly get a hold of someone." Another interviewee suggested technology enabled students "quick access to files."

Field instructors suggested technology increased engagement and connection between the student and others, with a few specifically stating technology had "helped make students more comfortable," and "connections have been stronger with interns." Other interviewees suggested students "can experience support and engagement," are "able to make connections with people further away," and now have "opportunities to meet with more staff across different roles and in different areas of the state." One interviewee described the impact of technology in the following manner: "Without technology, we couldn't serve the amount of students we serve."

Interviewees identified a number of challenges students experience in accessing technology and support while in field. Their responses were broken down into two themes: Technology Challenges and Lack of Connection. One participant claimed students have challenges because the "technology is not user friendly," while another stated the technology "doesn't allow you to do things on the spot." Another stated "students don't know enough to troubleshoot and have to have assistance," which may be due to what another participant referenced as "tech literacy challenges." One other respondent indicated "technology issues cause them [students] to log in late" possibly disrupting services. Two field instructors were concerned technology would interfere with their connections with their students. One subject claimed, "connections are stronger face-to-face" and the other asked the question "are we now going to be disconnected?" Another respondent included the disadvantage of losing connections with the agency office by stating the "environment of offices was lost virtually."

Benefits and Challenges to Instruction and Meeting Academic Standards

In looking at training methods and how field instructors ensure students are meeting academic standards, the common themes emerging from interviewee responses were Flexibility and Efficiency, Process Improvements, and Exposure. A few interviewees suggested the use of

technology promoted "more flexibility" and was "efficient" and "convenient." One subject noted they were better "able to stay on target and schedule to meet more consistently" with the use of technology. Some interviewees felt technology allowed for various improvements to be made within their agencies. One subject acknowledged that "for internal trainings, phone calls, and meetings, technology works best." Three other supervisors felt by using technology students are "learning to use it professionally," can "learn to provide services and be accountable," and have "the opportunity to learn how to have meetings." Field instructors also felt technology afforded them and their students more exposure to various opportunities. Supervisors stated they have more "teaching moments," have more "access to trainings," and have "more exposure to other experiences without having to take a lot of time away from the job." Two other responses focused specifically on student learning, claiming students "gain so much more information" and it has become "helpful to have alternative learning opportunities."

Interviewees identified some of the challenges that are specific to training students on the uses of technology in field experiences. The themes include: Lack of Skill Development, Lack of Communication Methods, and Limited Access to Activities. One concern identified was students not being able to develop various skills when simply relying on technology to learn. One subject stated "it is harder to teach individual practice skills" through technology, another reported they "worry about student clinical skills," a third felt "de-escalation skills are not achieved," and a fourth stated "students are not learning how to manage certain situations" when students are trained through technological methods. One subject asserted, "interns learn more about organizations and process when on site."

Methods used to communicate when training students were also seen to have complications. One participant discussed the significant "cost to get good HIPAA compliant

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technology" which is used to interact with students and clients. Another interviewee spoke of the importance of interpersonal relationships and how interactions conducted through technological methods "do not have the interpersonal relationships that you have with in-person." Technology can also be viewed as an access barrier as one subject noted "access to activities is limited. Students could do more if they were onsite."

Benefits and Challenges of Technology in Practice and Supervision

Specific to the benefits of technology in actual practice and methods of supervision, the themes emerging from participant responses included: Convenience and Increased Productivity, Supervisor/Student Engagement, and Professional Advancements. The majority of the field instructors supported the claim that incorporating technology into student field experiences enhanced the convenience of providing supervision and improved productivity. One subject claimed the overall benefit of technology is "it is user friendly." Another participant cited "being able to share information quickly" as a benefit, while others focused on the benefits of not having to travel. Several interviewees suggested by relying on technology, "travel time is cut," "missed days [are reduced] due to travel barriers such as the weather," and it is "more efficient because you don't have to travel to meetings." Two others spoke specifically about productivity and indicated "we get more done" and "meeting prep is shorter."

Technology use was also viewed as a strategy for improving supervisor/student engagements. One subject described the relationship in this manner: "Ongoing communication with my student has been crucial in supervision," while another participant believes technology "gives me the opportunity to provide a more intimate supervision experience." Three other respondents spoke about how technology has allowed them to be more available to provide supervision. One suggested "I am more accessible to students especially when I am in the field."

The other two stated technology "enhances communication" and creates more of an opportunity for "ongoing discussions."

Field instructors acknowledged the beneficial impact increased technology integration has had on the social work profession. One participant described the impact in this manner: "Technology brings us together." Technology "bridges distance" was one respondent's description, while another focused on seeing new "opportunities for growth in the profession." One of these opportunities identified was the ability to "offer virtual counseling sessions to clients" as "some clients prefer to receive services" through methods of technology. COVID-19 was identified by two field instructors as being an integral factor in increasing the use of technology as a resource. One subject stated "technology has been there, COVID has allowed us to use it" and another participant felt COVID-19 "pushed people out of their comfort zone to use material that has been there." Another respondent supported the idea "technology will be used from here forward and students now get that experience."

Technology is being used to provide social work services to clients and to conduct supervision with students. Participants noted some challenges that may affect service provision and supervision and their comments were classified in three categories: Effect on the Client, Student/Supervisor Connection, and Effects on Supervision. A few participants expressed concern clients were not able to benefit as much from services provided through technology. One subject reported "clients are less likely to be vulnerable in video than in-person," while a second cited seeing "some struggles with clients disclosing over the internet." Two other participants supported the importance of in-person face-to-face interactions with clients with one stating "you can go more deeply in-person" with the other indicating "conversations can go deeper when face-to-face."

The student/supervisor connection was also seen to be negatively affected by technology. One subject believed as a result of incorporating technology into supervision, they actually "lost contact time with student." Two participants discussed how communication is affected by technology with one explaining there is a "lack of communication and follow through if they [students] are not in-person" and the other believed technology "can drive a wedge if communication is not good." One other field instructor explained, "I like to turn my chair around and talk to students," while another reported they are "less able to develop personal relationships with students that would be beneficial" when they are using technology to communicate.

Respondents also reported direct effects on the effectiveness of supervision as well as a result of utilizing technology. One field instructor claimed, "students need more direction" than what can be provided through technology, while another discussed having an added layer to supervision because "you have to recreate a level of comfort when using technology." In comparing technological methods of supervision with in-person supervision, two respondents emphasized the benefit of being in person with one stating "when students are done meeting with a client, you are there to meet with them" and the other supporting the need for "impromptuness [sic] of supervision when an issue comes up." A few field instructors noted a lack of efficiency when supervising through technology due to a "lack of consistency because we weren't all in the office," "we are not sure what the policies are," "things get lost in translation," "you have less control," and "it is not the same."

Benefits and Challenges of Using Technology for Evaluation and Assessment

Field instructors noted some of the benefits of being able to evaluate and assess students using various means of technology. The two main themes in participant responses were

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Documentation Review and Skill Assessment. Technology improves the "ability to review notes and documentation" was a comment made by one field instructor. Another participant suggested technology allows for a "tight system with feedback loops," while a second subject stated "managers can look and review" all student documentation. One participant also noted technology affords field instructors and students the ability to "email and scan evaluations." In terms of assessing student skills, one participant suggested with technology they also "can have students demonstrate abilities" and a second subject claimed "observation is beneficial" is monitoring students.

Respondents also reported difficulties when relying on technology for the evaluation and assessment of student progress. Field instructors consistently claimed, "accountability is difficult" and "you have to rely on the honesty of employees and students." Some field instructors reported utilizing technology to deliver services, to train students, and to provide supervision does not allow for constant oversight of student performance. Some of the responses included: "I can't always watch intern reactions," "I have to rely on others for feedback," "I am not sure about the accuracy of time logs," "it is trickier seeing how they are building rapport," and "I don't always have eyes on the activities" to demonstrate why it is at times difficult to evaluate students.

In summary, Research Question Three was focused on identifying the perceived effectiveness and challenges of incorporating and using technology-based activities in field practicum experiences. Interviewee responses suggested what some field instructors saw as beneficial, others identified as a challenge. Some of these conflicting concepts included: access, engagement and connection, and the ability to assess student skills. Access to technology, services and support was seen to either be made easier by technology or more difficult due to

limited access to devices or internet instability. Engagement and connection were thought to either be improved by the use technology or more limited when technology-based interactions were utilized. The ability to assess student skills was also noted by some to be easier due to the increased capacity to be present through technology, while others indicated they were less able to assess skills as a result of not being able to see all components of interaction.

Interviewee responses identified some of the overarching benefits of incorporating technology into placement experiences. These benefits included flexibility, efficiency, convenience, increased productivity, and increased exposure to experiences. Interviewees also noted technology allowed for improvements to be made on agency processes and promoted advancement of the social work profession as a whole.   The challenges emerging from participant responses were based on service delivery issues, a lack of professionalism, ethical concerns, cultural barriers, and difficulty developing social work skills. Internet instability and distractibility were the two most common challenges identified by interviewees.

Ensuring Field Instructor Capacity

As students are being increasingly exposed to technology in field placement experiences, field supervisors are also expected to know how to utilize technology to teach students how to use agency required technology efficiently, effectively, and ethically. Research question four focused on determining field instructor knowledge and capacity to utilize technology to support student learning. Field instructors were asked how they ensure they have the current knowledge to train and provide support to students, and to ensure students are maintaining compliance to codes and policies when utilizing technology. Six overarching themes emerged from participant responses: Policies/Guidelines, Agency Compliance Methods, the Supervisor as the Learner, Support of Others, Training and Research, and Communication and Ongoing Supervision.

Based on similar responses across interview questions about field instructor capacity, this section was organized around the identified themes rather than the subsections within the questions.

Policies/Guidelines

Policies and guidelines were identified as both ways to ensure field instructors have knowledge and stay current on how to utilize technology and how supervisors train and evaluate students on how to follow ethical codes and standards. More than half of the interviewed field instructors mentioned polices, guidelines, and codes as part of their ongoing training. Eleven of the 22 respondents specifically used the term policy/policies in their responses including: technology policies, social media policies, agency specific policies, national policies, and policies based on state regulations. Three of those eleven spoke about how they and their students must read, review, and sign off on these policies. Two other participants talked about rules and guidelines, one indicating their agency has clear guidelines and the other subject noting they "try to follow the rules." Three subjects spoke about Codes and Standards with one indicating there is push to "follow the Code of Ethics," the second stating they "need to know the different standards for different services," and the third reporting their agency follows the "WV Code on how to work with clients."

Agency Compliance Methods

Many of the field instructors spoke specifically about how their agency disperses information about technology, ensures compliance to protocol, and provides support for technology challenges. Twelve of the 22 respondents described their agencies as having a specific department or individual that disperses information and handles technology challenges. Ten of those respondents indicated they have an IT department or IT person that provides information, including "how to use platforms" and "policies about etiquette." One participant

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indicated they "have a pretty robust compliance department which is part of the national organization" and another reported they "hired someone to do that, our Operations Coordinator." Six other interviewees discussed agency related ways to pass down current information. One participant reported they teach about "what is acceptable at the agency and about agency processes." Other responses reported technology-based information is shared through email, "receiving regular updates from the agency," "agency specific by-laws on technology, "using proper platforms," and by "reviewing and staying in tuned with the agency." One subject reported their agency as "haven't provided technology education."

Supervisor as the Learner

Several of the interviewees discussed seeing themselves as the learner and spoke about what they do to enhance their level of knowledge. Four respondents focused on how their learning was an integral part of being able to teach students. One subject stated "students suffered when I didn't know how to use it [technology]," while another indicated they "had to make it my responsibility to learn what they need to know," a third stated "I have responsibility to learn the systems," and the fourth claimed "supervisors have to walk the walk," so they need to know the technology. Field instructors also discussed specific ways in which they learned to used technology and some of the struggles encountered. Some of these responses included: "try to work out the bugs and kinks," "try out new technologies," "I go in and play with it," "trial and error," "learn in the moment," "familiarize myself with the technology and services," "be creative," "be open-minded," "I self-teach," "find solutions," "TEAMS was new to me," and "I took notes." Two other respondents mentioned "learning as I go" and "learning as I go on an as needed basis" as their methods of staying knowledgeable about technology. One individual

stated, "I was pushed out of comfort zone to explore and discover how to use it" while another suggested "don't be scared of it."

Support of Others

As technology is new to some people, there are always others that have a lot of experience and knowledge who are also willing to help. One participant explained "if I don't know something, someone else does," while another stated "I depend on others to provide guidance." Knowing how to and whom to ask for help was pointed out by several participants as the need to "rely on others to help" was a theme. Some of their comments included: "use members of the team to help with tech issues," "ask for help," "leaning on the university for direction," "people in the office can help," and "students help." Working together was also a suggestion of four other respondents. They spoke about the need to "assist each other," "talk with one another," "learn together," and to be "co-learners." Three other subjects said they are "asking others what they are using" or "got suggestions" to gain more information, and another stated "students have taught me a lot."

Training and Research

Learning to utilize technology at times requires more detailed trainings and research. Field supervisors interviewed in this study consistently identified the incorporation of trainings and ongoing research as ways they increase their knowledge and train students. Twelve respondents listed some version of a training utilized to enhance their knowledge. Types of training included: "personal trainings," "distance learning," "ethical training related to technology," "agency specific trainings," "annual learning" events, and "webinars and trainings to learn Zoom," "Three of those twelve identified trainings through Continuing Education Units (CEUs). One reported "I was skeptical of using telehealth, so I went to training," another stated

"we go through trainings for new technology," and a third indicated "I have taken all kinds of classes." Three spoke about looking for, reviewing, and watching videos as another training method. Research was discussed by five of the participants. One respondent stated "I read a lot," and another indicated they have students "research new technology that may be beneficial to the agency," while another said they had student conduct "website reviews." The availability of and training on various resources was discussed by three participants, with one relaying they "taught them (students) to us EMR."

Communication and Ongoing Supervision

Ongoing and interactive supervision are key factors in the success of the student field experience. The incorporation of technology into the experience has altered the experience for many and has created the need for specific conversations about what technologies are used and how they are used in the agencies. Three of the interviewees mentioned the use of technology was not new to their agency. One stated "we have been doing it for years," the second indicated their agency was "an early adopter of technology," and the third reported they had "not run into many issues" with utilizing technology. Another participant reported communication and supervision methods should be "kept the same as if in person."

As a means to ensure complications and challenges are minimal, supervision and communication are two necessary concepts identified by many of the interviewed field instructors. "Ongoing supervision, "field supervision," and "supervisory meetings" were identified as strategies by four participants to increase technology knowledge. Conversations and communication were also explored as methods of teaching with one field instructor stating this is accomplished with "communication through management and supervision" and another suggesting the important of "sharing your screen with students." Four other respondents

reported a need "to have conversations," to "communicate one-on-one," to incorporate "mid-semester conversations," and to "have ongoing conversations about expectations."

Participants were also able to share some of the specific supervisory discussions they may have about technology with students. Four respondents spoke of the importance of talking to students about boundaries, focusing on "making sure boundaries are clear," and "addressing professional and personal boundaries." One specifically stated, "because boundaries are so different, you have to have strong boundaries."

Four other comments were made regarding specific supervision methods addressing professionalism in using technology. Participants were teaching students about "knowing limitations," "making sure they are not with others and talking," "encouraging discipline on the use of technology," and "being thoughtful about where clients are." Two participants discussed the need to model and monitor student activity when utilizing technology, while two others specifically discussed the need to "check and double check charting" to minimize "documentation errors."

In summary, Research Question 4 sought information about field instructor knowledge and capacity to utilize technology and their resulting ability to support student learning. Interview data suggests field instructors relied on their agency and ongoing communications with others to ensure they were knowledgeable enough to train students. Identifying themselves as learners, supervisors indicated they had access to and relied on agency policies and guidelines, agency compliance methods, the support and help from others with knowledge of technology, and ongoing trainings and self-paced research, to ensure they had the knowledge and capacity to use technology and to also train students to use technology.

Training Students on the Use of Technology in the Field

When students enter a new field placement experience, supervisors are charged with

orienting students to the site, the people they will be working with, the services provided, their

responsibilities as a field student, and the policies and procedures of the agency. That orientation

and training must now include discussions about what technologies are used, what functions and

purposes they serve, and how to use and implement them properly and appropriately. Research

question five explored the strategies being utilized by field instructors to train social work

students on the use of technology in practice. Field instructors were asked to identify the

methods utilized to teach students about the uses of technology in practice regarding ethics,

cultural competency and diversity, student access and support, instruction and academic

standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment.

Ethics, Cultural Competency, and Diversity

Inherent in all aspects of the social work profession are the ethical codes that guide

practice decisions and the delivery of services, including how technology is used. Interviewees

were asked about the training students receive on ethics, cultural competency and diversity when

using technology. As students begin a new placement experience, they are typically involved in

an orientation to the agency and receive training to learn agency specific procedures. Thirteen

participants supported this process and identified specific training topics and orientation as ways

to inform their students about how to ethically use technology. Eight of the 13 listed various

trainings that students should complete with one commenting they "provide students with a lot of

direct trainings on advocacy, understanding poverty, the dynamics of domestic violence, and

grant writing. Others indicated they use: "quarterly trainings," "ethics trainings," "training about

how to document appropriately in the chart," "webinars," and "trainings on how to use

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technology." One other respondent suggested "field instructor trainings need to be had every year." The remaining four mentioned orientation with one stating ethics and cultural competency "should be included as part of orientation and a second indicated "students need to be oriented on how to document."

Although three participants indicated they were either "not sure" their agency had trainings or there were "no formal trainings" on utilizing technology with diverse population, six others stated their students were involved in some level of training, education, or orientation to using technology when working with diverse populations. Three of those respondents identified specific training and education topics including a "sensitivity to diversity" training, "quarterly diversity and inclusion trainings," and "education on issues of socioeconomic status."

Policies and codes are created to guide and govern procedures. Agencies typically have their own policies to provide structure to their organization and employees and the social work profession has a specific Code of Ethics that guides practice. Seven respondents talked about having students review and sign off on agencies policies. One participant indicated "policies are reviewed the first day," another talked about having social media policies that direct employees and students to not "friend clients or foster parents" and a third subject reported they utilize "tracking to make sure policies are followed." Two other respondents identified specific agency policies, including HIPAA policies, and "having students sign off on Protected Health Information policies."

Incorporating and teaching ethics was recognized by four interviewees as a necessity for ensuring students appropriately used technology. One participant stated, "social work ethics are infused in education and field," another indicated they "encourage them [students] to read the social work code of ethics," a third discussed the need to "provide ethics materials" to students,

while a fourth acknowledged they "teach ethics courses which covers social media." A key piece of the ethical code is confidentiality which was addressed by three participants. One respondent discussed how they teach students it is "most important that clients understand the limits of confidentiality," the second individual reported they teach students about "the seriousness of confidentiality," and the third reported they have their "students sign a confidentiality agreement."

Processing experiences, creating learning opportunities, and providing suggestions are all elements of the supervisory role, necessary in ensuring students are utilizing technologies ethically. Comments about ongoing discussions and conversations were mentioned by participants in several interviews. Participants mentioned the need to have "conversations about rural areas," "discussions about dual relationships," "discussion about the effects of decisions and actions," and the "development and discussion of expectations." Addressed in these participant responses, was the need to talk with students about "how boundaries have changed," "what they have learned and what they are learning," "decision-making in working with rural areas," "ethics with students," and "how the social media discussion is ongoing."

As field instructors engage in on-going supervision, they teach and guide students on how to become professional social workers. One interviewee remarked they "ask questions of the student to ensure they understand" while another indicated they "provide guidance and pointers" to students, and a third spoke about how they "try hard to use teaching moments" to help students. Some of the specific topics of supervision mentioned by participants included: the need to "have to explain that phones need to be put away," to not "record any community activities," "social media access to clients, needs to be addressed and discouraged," and "to be careful about posting on social media."

The interviewees talked about this guidance being provided by meeting regularly with students and observing both their practice and documentation skills. Five respondents specifically talked about meeting with students, with one participant indicating they have monthly meetings in which they review various scenarios with students and discuss "how to handle sticky situations." Another respondent described having students "role play and practice" various scenarios during supervision sessions. Two other participants spoke about the importance of direct observation of the student and by the student, with one respondent indicating the need to "make sure they shadow." Another participant reported they have meetings with student to learn "about group facilitation." Two other participants discussed the how they review and utilize the student's educational learning contract to guide supervision, with a third participant emphasizing a need to "create objectives" to guide student experiences. Three respondents indicated they ensured students were using technology in an ethical fashion through "direct communication," "reviewing documentation," and "communication and documentation."

Interviewees discussed specific statements and guidance they provide to students when training them on how to appropriately utilize technology when facing issues of diversity. One participant stated they inform students "to be mindful of what you are saying" and a second respondent indicated they describe "the use of technology is the same, but interviewing is different." Three other supervisors provided insight into specific experiences in which they engage their students in to ensure they know how to use technology when working with diverse populations. One respondent indicated they provide "face-to-face direct observation to see how students work with diversity," a second participant stated students need to have "exposure to diversity," and a third interviewee claimed "students being exposed to the interactions" will help them effectively work with diversity. Some of the other direct statements supervisors indicated

they make to students are to remind them "to state the obvious," "don't assume, ask" and "offer help."

Technologies have the capabilities to provide an extra layer of security to help ensure confidential client information is protected. One respondent indicated "information needs to be secured," a second respondent reported they use "password protected technology" and another discussed how they have "restructured clinical records to limit access to therapeutic notes."

As supervisors work to educate students on how to use technology to provide services to clients, it is essential to both, "respect client choices, noted by two participants, and to address specific client characteristics that may affect their ability to effectively receive technology-based services. Some of the considerations the interviewees address with their students include age-related issues, knowing "the policies on documentation for transgender issues," and being aware of how a client's "lack of access [to technology], leads to the need for in-person services." Three participants discussed age-related concerns, with one respondent stating the need to "explain to students why technology is used for certain age groups and not for others," the second participant reported they make students aware of the fact that it is at times "hard to work with kids remotely," and the third stating they have had "to provide extra support for older individuals."

Student Access and Support

When technologies are a required component of a student field experience, field agencies and supervisors are responsible with providing students with the knowledge of how to use those technologies, but also how to get access and support when issues arise. Three central themes emerged when the field supervisors were asked to identify how students were informed about access to technology and to secure support when technical problems arose. These themes included: Orientation, Direct Supervision, and Agency Provided Provisions.

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Seven of the 22 respondents indicated students are oriented about technology and where to receive support for technological difficulties at the beginning of their placement experience. One participant discussed the details of what information students received specific to how to present themselves while participating in videoconferencing services, stating "students are oriented on what to wear, the camera, the background, and lighting."

The ongoing interactions between the supervisor and student(s), through ongoing conversations and supervision meetings, play a role in the continual training of students, especially on how to use technology. One interviewee indicated "students are encouraged to ask questions," while another discussed how supervisors and students "work together to find solutions" to technology problems. Two other respondents spoke about specifics of supervision sessions, with one indicating the "supervisor goes over the electronic health record and how to use it" while the other interviewee noted how these sessions can be used to "review expectations" of using technology with clients.

The field placement agency/organization typically has structures in place to help guide and support employees which are extended to help students as well. The "agency atmosphere" was listed by one participant as being important in helping students feel comfortable in knowing how to use technology and what to do if they face difficulties. Two field instructors spoke about their agencies' IT Department being responsible for providing technological guidance and support for the students. Three field instructors discussed agency policies and procedures being in place to guide the use of technology. One of these respondents spoke about having a "centralized location for HR policies and procedures," the second indicated students are asked to "sign-off on policies," and the third claimed their students must "read personnel policies and By-laws."

Instruction and Academic Standards Achievement

Field supervisors help provide instruction and opportunities to students allowing them the opportunity to meet and fulfill academic standards and work toward the ability to demonstrate competency in social work practice. The interviewees were asked specifically to identify teaching and supervision methods used to train students on how to demonstrate professionalism and effective and ethical communication skills when the using technology in field experiences.

Teaching Methods and Technology Etiquette were the two consistent themes in participant responses. The most common participant response to the inquiry about training students was centered around the supervisory process and specific topics of training. Three respondents discussed "supervision" as a method, with one noting the importance of making sure the "supervisor is accessible to the student" and a second stating "one-on-one supervision" is utilized. Five participants claimed "modeling" practice behaviors was one way they as supervisors help teach and train their students to be professional and ethical when using technology. Various other methods of supervision were identified by several participants including observing students, having discussions, providing feedback, processing field experiences, and training.

The "observation" of student performance was mentioned by four respondents, with one of those four stating "listening and observing" students allows them to monitor progress toward competency. A fifth participant reported "allowing students to observe and listen to conversations" was another way to help them learn. Conversations and discussions were also frequently identified by interviewees to be a primary teaching function. Some of these "ongoing continual discussions" included topics such as: "processing experiences," providing "direct

feedback," "talking about the use of silence," to "review expectations," to "be aware of the expectations of the clients" and to "encourage patience."

Providing compliments and encouragement to students was also seen as a way to teach students about professionalism and ethical practice. Some of these responses by field instructors included give them "praise" and be "encouraging." Five interviewees discussed the incorporation of trainings and orientation into the ongoing teaching of their students such as: "de-escalation trainings," "specialist training," and to "do it [train] directly and at on boarding."

Field instructors reported having conversations about basic etiquette when utilizing videoconferencing to provide services or participate in meetings. Some of those suggestions included: "looking presentable," "not eating" while on camera, the appropriateness of the "backdrop," minimizing "distractions," and paying attention to "how you look and present oneself." Three participants specifically discussed the operations of the video and microphone functions. One participant indicated they instruct students to "turn on the camera," the second directs students to "leave cameras on and mute themselves," and the third wants their student to have "camera and video muted."

Being mindful of what is occurring during the experience and being present in the moment were also addressed as important aspects of technology etiquette. Three respondents stated students need to be mindful of the experience, paying attention to how it affects those receiving services. Another respondent stated they have discussions about confidentiality and the need for students to be aware of how that can be affected through technology. Two other participants discussed teaching students about "making sure you are present" or "being present" in the moment.

Technology in Practice and Supervision

As various means of technology are now being used in social work practice and as a part of the supervisory process, field instructors are responsible for training students on the technologies that are being used to provide agency specific services to clients, as well as how technology will be incorporated into the ongoing supervision process. Field instructors were asked to identify how their students were trained to utilize technology needed to engage in or provide agency services. Responses were classified into three themes: Modeling, Training, and Policies and Ethical Codes.

Three participants chose the term "modeling" when responding to being asked about how they train students to use technology in practice. This was a theme mentioned by several other participants as well. As modeling can be seen as a demonstration, having students observe or shadow was noted by seven respondents as a training method. One participant recommended students should participate in both the "direct observation of the supervisor" and a "direct observation of the process," while another stated students should be "exposed to different therapists and clinicians," and a third indicated students should engage in an "observation of employees" within the agency. Other interviewee responses specified students should "observe first," "shadow to see how it is done," and "shadow first with client permission."

A variety of training and teaching methods were identified by respondents as ways in which their students are prepared to use technology in practice situations. One participant reported "every moment is a teaching moment," another indicated they "encourage students to complete activities," and a third incorporates "role plays" for students to practice and gain experience using technologies. Six participants discussed employing trainings and webinars, with five of those six specifically using the term "training" and further identifying specific

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training topics.   One interviewee reported students engage in "training on the process" and a second respondent indicated they "train them on how to ask the questions not just the questions to ask." Three of those five focused on training students on using agency specific technologies. One interviewee specified students receive "training on the computer system and how to access the system," a second indicated students participate in "training on how to use the electronic medical record," and the third spoke about having students "review the process and procedures of telehealth." Other participant comments focused on initial training protocols such as introducing students to technology and it's logistics and providing guidance about utilizing technology to provide services. Guidance was provided on how to introduce themselves as students and what to look for and how to be aware of client needs.

Agency policies were also identified as training techniques supervisors employ with their students. Respondents discussed having trained students to understand "informed consent," having "to get consent from the client" to use technologies, their policies on "boundaries and ethics," and other "agency guidelines." One other participant commented "most students know how to use technology and the same ethical principles apply virtually."

Evaluation and Assessment

The field instructors were asked if students were informed of how their use of technology would be evaluated and how they assessed and evaluated student use of technology in the field experience. Responses were categorized in three themes: Conversations, Observation and Monitoring of Skills, and the Learning Contract. Six of the 22 participants indicated students were either not informed of how their use of technology would be evaluated, there was "not a policy or written process" or "it is not addressed unless issues come up." One of those six stated there is "not a real discussion. We take it for granted that students know." Two other

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participants claimed the evaluation of the use of technology was understood, with one stating "this is just how we do things and students knew that" while the other indicated "it is the main way to learn."

Seven respondents identified conversations and discussions as a means to inform students of the process and to engage in the ongoing evaluation of the student use of technology. Some of the responses included: "talk about it," have "post conversations," "talk to them about asking appropriate questions," and "encourage students to ask questions." Participants also included more specific comments about supervisory discussions such as the need to "provide education to students," require "ongoing trainings," "helping students learn how to document," and "encourage research" as a learning opportunity.

To evaluate and assess student progress, field supervisors recognized the need to observe and monitor their delivery of services through technology. Five field instructors discussed observation and what practice behaviors they observe in their students, with one stating "services are monitored and reviewed," and the others specifically discussing the need to monitor: "how effective they (students) are at using technology," "how do students deal with access issues," and "how they engage families, how they engage children." Five other interviewees commented on gathering information from other sources to evaluate their students. These additional sources included to "follow-up with clients to evaluate," "data collection," reviewing "notes reviewed in real-time," feedback from "the onsite task supervisor," and "feedback from others."

The learning contract, completed at the beginning of the student field experience, is a tool implemented by each educational institution allowing the student and supervisor to identify and monitor field activities. This document is designed to guide the incorporation of specific field activities that enhance learning experiences and allow students to demonstrate mastery in the

nine core competencies established by CSWE. Nine of the respondents reported their evaluation and assessment of student progress was dependent upon the developed learning contract. Six of those nine participants listed the "learning contract" or "student plan" as their evaluation mechanism, with one indicating students need to "demonstrate competency in the learning contract" and other reporting their evaluation is "embedded in the contract." Three other interviewees alluded to the learning contract in their responses. One respondent stated their evaluation of students was "part of school," the second indicated assessment was "infused in the practice behaviors," and the third specified the evaluation of the "goals identified based on technology."

In summary, Research Question Five sought to identify the supervision methods utilized to teach students about the uses of technology in field experiences. Participant responses suggested trainings and orientation, providing knowledge about and using agency policies and ethical codes, and ongoing supervision were all seen as common approaches in educating students on the uses of technology. Methods of supervision included: discussions and conversations, modeling, providing guidance, monitoring skills, using the learning contract, and teaching technology etiquette. Respondents also noted the need to ensure technology enhanced protections were in place and that students understood the need to be aware of client specific needs when technology was being used to provide services.

Use of Technology Standards as a Guide for Supervision

Research Question Six sought to explore the extent to which field instructors perceive adherence to the NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA technology standards to guide their supervision of social work students in field placements. They were asked to complete a Likert scale indicating their uses of standards in performing the following functions: to consider the use

of these standards in terms of ethical uses and cultural competency, field instructor knowledge

and competency, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, technology in

practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment. Responses to this question are

summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Utilization of Technology Standards

Themes	No Utilization		Minimal Utilization		Some Utilization		Significant Utilization		N/A	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Ethical Uses and Cultural Competencies	1	4.5	1	4.5	8	36.4	11	50	1	4.5
Student Access and Support	1	4.5	4	18.2	4	18.2	12	54.5	1	4.5
Field Instructor Knowledge/Capacity	1	4.5	3	13.6	7	31.8	10	45.5	1	4.5
Instruction and Academic Standards	1	4.5	2	9.1	7	31.8	11	50	1	4.5
Technology in Practice and Supervision	1	4.5	3	13.6	4	18.2	13	59.1	1	4.5
Evaluation and Assessment	1	4.5	3	13.6	7	31.8	10	45.5	1	45

N=22
Scale: 1 – Do not utilize standards as a guide to supervise students; 2 – Minimally utilize standards to guide supervision of students; 3 – Some utilization of standards to guide supervision of students; 4 – significant utilization of standards to guide supervision of students; and NA – I still do not know enough about the technology standards.

Overall, most respondents believed they were significantly utilizing the technology

standards to supervise students, with only one participant claiming no utilization of the standards

and only one selecting Not Applicable across all themes. Twenty (86.4%) of the 22 participants

rated themselves at a 3 or 4 indicating they had some or a significant utilization of standards to guide supervision regarding ethical uses and cultural competency, 11 (50%) of those respondents rated themselves at the significant level and eight (36.4%) indicated they engaged in some utilization of the standards. Seventeen (77.3%) of the 22 participants rated themselves at a three or four, with 10 (45.5%) indicating a significant usage of the standards, seven (31.8%) reporting some usages of the standards, and three (13.6%) stating they minimally utilized standards to address field instructor knowledge and capacity. More than 80% (n=18; 81.8%) of the 22 participants rated themselves as having had some or a significant utilization of the technology standards, with 12 (54.5%) of those at the significant level of utilization, four (18.2%) claiming some utilization of standards, and another 4 (18.2%) only minimally utilizing standards to guide how supervisors inform students about access and support.

Eighteen (81.8%) of the 22 interviewed field instructors reported either some utilization or a significant utilization of standards to guide their supervisory process regarding instruction and academic standards. Eleven (50%) participants indicated a significant usage of the technology standards, seven (31.8%) engaged in some usage of the standards, and two (9.1%) had minimal usage of the technology standards to help students achieve academic standards. Seventeen (77.3%) of the 22 respondents indicated they engaged in some or a significant utilization of the technology standards, with 13 (59.1%) of those employing a significant utilization of standards to supervise, four (18.2%) claiming some utilization of standards, and three (13.6%) minimally utilizing standards to supervise student on how to use technology in practice and supervision. Seventeen (77.3%) of the 22 participants reported to some utilization of standards or a significant usage of standards to supervise students on the evaluation and assessment of their use of technology. Ten (45.5%) participants engaged in a significant

utilization of standards to supervise their students, seven (31.8%) reported to some usage of the standards, and three (13.6%) only minimally utilized the technology standards to guide their supervision of students on the evaluation and assessment process.

Mastery of Skills When Using Technology

To successfully complete the field practicum experience, students must demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency in the nine CSWE Core Competencies and associated practice behaviors. As technology has been increasingly incorporated into the social work student field experiences, it also now plays a role in their ability to master core and essential professional skills. The participants in this study were asked if they believe the increased incorporation of technology enables students to master core and essential skills and to explain their answer. Nine (40.9%) respondents said yes, three (13.6%) participants said no, and ten (45.5%) interviewees said maybe with a balance of both technology-based and in-person interactions or a "Hybrid" model.

Participants supporting the use of technology to help student master and achieve professional skills spoke about technology as a convenience enhancement, as it being a component of practice that is now becoming the new norm, that there are minimal differences between technology-based services and in-person services, and the benefits of incorporating technology are actually enhancing student skills. These participants acknowledged the ongoing role of technology in practice and the similarities to in-person activities in comments such as "technology is an important component, we need to be comfortable with it," "this is the ways it is going," "technology has exploded," "there is very little different" and "with the variety of technology, you can still do things face-to-face."

When addressing the increased conveniences that technology provides, respondents focused on facts such as "they get to see a lot in a short amount of time," "you get so much more done," and "research is so much easier." These participants also addressed the skills students are still able to achieve by pointing out, "technology is a part of professionalism, a skill that is very much needed in today's world," "they still have to interact and make eye contact, they have to be more observant, and they have to work harder to make connections," "the creativity needed to overcome it [technology barriers] makes better social workers."

The interviewees that believed students would not be able to master their core professional skills with the use of technology consistently supported the need for in-person services as important pieces of interactions could be missed through virtual communications. The first participant stated, "No, in person. Body language, personality, and organization are not always apparent virtually." The second participant indicated, "No, I would rather have them in-person. They need to see the client in their environment. They need to see the client in-person." The third interviewee reported, "We are a face-to-face profession, and it is hard to re-create that."

Respondents that indicated technology might allow students to master competencies or there needs to be a balance or hybrid approach of both technology and in-person interactions, also supported the conveniences technology brings, but also noted limitations to student learning that can be offset by in-person experiences. These participants focused on how the blending of in-person experiences with technology-based activities is more beneficial than that of an all-virtual approach stating, "if there is a hybrid option with technology and in-person, they can master competencies," "it can help get them a more diverse experience, but all virtual, they would not get the skills they need," "I believe you need a balance. I don't believe you can be an

effective social worker entirely virtual," "they can learn through technology, but to practice there needs to be face-to-face human connection," and "I do not think exclusive use of technology does. A hybrid approach would absolutely allow them to meet core competencies." As these participants promoted the balanced approach, they discussed the positives of technology while also acknowledging some skills are better developed through in-person interactions making statements such as "for 85% of skills, yes, but not group skills or de-escalations," "Technology is a tool; practice is a human connection," "non-verbal/verbal behaviors still need to be seen in-person" and "even the best therapist might struggle to do group virtually."

Use of Technology to Assess Student Learning

Technology has afforded field instructors the opportunity to supervise and assess their learning virtually. Participants were asked if they felt the use of technology allowed for them to sufficiently assess student learning and competency in the field. Of the 22 respondents, 10 (45.5%) reported feeling confident in their ability to do so, only 2 (9%) determined they were not able to assess students effectively, and the remaining 10 (45.5%) participants provided the neutral position of maybe.

Participants who believed they could use technology successfully evaluate student learning and competency, reported to being able to provide immediate feedback, were able to observe more of what students are doing, and at times was a better choice than an in-person option.   Participant comments on the convenience and availability provided when technology is integrated into assessment included: "I can be present from afar if needed. I can provide remote, direct observation," "I can respond right away in real time and whenever I want," "I sit in on sessions, supervision sessions are on-line," and "there is constant communication about what is working and what is not working." Participants also noted the opportunities to monitor

interactions between students and clients more closely stating, "any interaction between a client and the student will still have a lot of recap and a lot of input" and "in some ways the observation of individual sessions is better."

The two participants that did not believe they could sufficiently assess student learning cited preferring in-person connections and the ability to get distracted on technology as their reasons. One participant indicated, "No, I am not convinced. I am not a fan. There are major benefits of being in-person. You miss so much with technology. I get distracted. They get distracted." The second stated, "No, it is easier to get distracted. I can't always get a good feel for what students are gaining."

Participants providing a more neutral stance to being able to assess student progress through technology noted there were benefits to being able to use technology to evaluate students, but there were still concepts of learning missing in this type of evaluation. One participant indicated they had not assessed students in this fashion, but knew it was possible, stating, "I haven't sat in on a session. Technology does allow for this, but I haven't thought through using recordings to assess skill-sets." These participants focused on the added benefits of integrating technology into the assessment which also acknowledging the need for in-person assessment as well by making comments such as "I don't think anything replaces face-to-face, but technology does enhance the ability to learn," "if I am joining virtually, I can see what they are doing or saying, but I don't always get to observe all behaviors," "I need a personal relationship with the student first, just seeing them remotely would be less effective," and "in terms of fully assessing, I think there is partial assessing, but there is something lost relying on it entirely."

Chapter Summary

After a description of the data collection methods and the participant characteristics, this chapter provided a detailed narrative of the participant responses to the interview protocol questions. Participants were asked various questions about the incorporation of technology into the field placement experience, in which they were able to identify and discuss supervisory techniques and methods that are commonly employed to help train students in becoming professional social workers. The results of each interview question were organized according to the common themes that emerged from the analysis of participant responses. Some of the major themes that were present throughout the protocol included: ongoing supervision, communication and discussions, training, and policies and codes. Participants were able to identify the benefits and challenges of incorporating technology into the student field placement experience. The benefits were consistently logistical in nature (i.e., convenience and efficiency), while the challenges were more practice specific (i.e., rapport building and access).

Interviews determined various videoconferencing programs, written communication methods and agency specific documentations programs, including Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, Telehealth, Webex, Google Docs, and email, were the commonly identified technologies being utilized in field supervision, service provision, and communication. The role of technology in student learning, as reflected in participant responses was that technology was being incorporated in ongoing trainings and supervision, supervisory conversations and discussions, methods of observation and monitoring, and to inform students about agency policies and guidelines. It was also determined that the decisions to incorporate technology into field experiences were made based on concepts such as preferences, convenience, to support

organizational functions and needs, to increase student connections with others, to allow students to more easily conduct research-related activities, and as a safety measure.

The benefits of incorporating technology into placement experiences were identified as flexibility, efficiency, convenience, increased productivity, improved agency processes, professional advancement, and increased exposure to experiences. The identified challenges included internet instability, distractions, service delivery issues, a lack of professionalism, ethical concerns, cultural barriers, and difficulty developing social work skills. There were also concepts identified as both a benefit and challenge of incorporating technology which included: access, engagement and connection, and the ability to assess student skills.

Interviewees indicated that access to and reliance on agency policies and guidelines, agency compliance methods, the support and help from others with knowledge of technology, ongoing trainings, and self-paced research were how they ensured they had the knowledge and capacity to utilize technology. Field instructors are training students about the uses of technology in field experience by providing them with trainings and orientation, knowledge about and using agency policies and ethical codes, and ongoing supervision. Supervisors provided this information through discussions and conversations, modeling, providing guidance, monitoring skills, using the learning contract, and teaching technology etiquette.

The interview protocol also determined that about 90% of respondents utilized the NASW, ASWB, CSWE, CSWA Technology Standards to guide their supervision of social work students. Almost all interviewees claimed to at least some or a significant utilization of the technology standards to supervise students, with only one participant claiming no utilization of the standards and only one selecting Not Applicable across all themes.

It was determined that technology provided many learning opportunities for students, but almost half of all participants instead supported the use of both technology and in-person experiences (a Hybrid approach) to help student master their core competencies and professional skills. This was also the case for the evaluation and assessment of students. Participants acknowledged the potential to successfully evaluate their students through technology, but almost half of participants claimed that skills should be assessed in a combination of in person and technological methods.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sought to identify the field instructor perspective on the role of technology in the field experiences of social work students and the overall effect it has on student learning. This chapter provides the purpose of the study, the problem statement, research questions, a summary of the methods, and a summary of the findings. The study conclusions, a discussion of their implications, and recommendations for additional research are also included.

Problem Statement

Field instructors play a vital role in the student field practicum experience. Students rely heavily on their support, guidance, direction, and feedback and the manner in which this is done may also play a part in student satisfaction with the learning experience. Nationally, technology is becoming a critical element of this interaction between field supervisors and students and in response to this increased availability and use of technology, the *NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice* was created. Section 4 of the standards provides 12 standards specifically related to the use in field experience and supervision. There is little available research on the impact of these standards on field supervisors, students, and the field supervision process.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to gain, from the field instructor perspective, an understanding of what technologies are being utilized to complete field experience tasks and activities, how field instructors utilize and perceive the effectiveness of various means of technologies to supervise (i.e., delegate responsibilities, process student experiences, answer questions, and provide feedback) social work practicum students, how these technologies affect student learning, and what are the major challenges in implementing technology-based social work field experiences.

Research Questions

Based on the Section 4 Standards and the resultant themes, the specific research questions developed to guide this study include:

1. What technologies are being utilized in their field practicum experiences, both by field supervisors and students?

2. How do social work field instructors utilize technology to support student learning with regard to:

   a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

   b. Student access and support

   c. Instruction and academic standards

   d. Technology in practice and supervision

   e. Evaluation and assessment

3. To what extent do social work field instructors perceive the use of technology effective in and a challenge to supporting student learning with regard to:

   a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

   b. Student access and support

   c. Instruction and academic standards

   d. Technology in practice and supervision

   e. Evaluation and assessment

4. To what extent do social work field instructors perceive they have sufficient capacity to use technology to support student learning with regard to:

   a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

   b. Field instructor knowledge

c. Student access and support

d. Instruction and academic standards

e. Evaluation and assessment

5. What strategies do social work field instructors utilize in training social work students on the uses of technology in practice with regard to:

a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

b. Student access and support

c. Instruction and academic standards

d. Technology in practice and supervision

e. Evaluation and assessment

6. To what extent do social work field instructors perceive adherence to the NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA technology standards when working with social work students in field placement with regard to:

a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

b. Field instructor knowledge/capacity

c. Student access and support

d. Instruction and academic standards

e. Technology in practice and supervision

f. Evaluation and assessment

Summary of Methods

As this study served to gain the social work field instructor perspective about the role of technology in the social work student field experiences and its effects on student learning, a phenomenological qualitative research design was chosen. Social work field instructors

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affiliated with the seven institutions of higher education in West Virginia housing accredited

social work programs constituted the study sample. Convenience, purposeful, and snowball

sampling methods were utilized for recruitment. A total of 22 participants were interviewed for

this study, with at least one subject from each of the seven West Virginia institutions included in

the study. Semi-structured interviews occurring between April and June of 2021 were used to

gather data. Upon completion of all participant interviews, thematic analysis was utilized to

categorize responses. Interview recordings, transcriptions, and notes were reviewed to identify

the overarching themes in the field instructor perceptions about the uses of technology in social

work field experiences.

Summary of Findings

Interview results allowed for the identification of various technologies being used in field

placements, how they are being used to support student learning, what benefits and challenges

are being experienced by the integration of technology, how field instructors are ensuring their

own knowledge on how to utilize the technology, what methods are being utilized to train

student on how to appropriately, effectively, ethically, and professionally utilize technology, and

whether or not the technology standards are being utilized to guide the field supervision process.

An analysis of interview data found the technologies most frequently being utilized by

field instructors and students to complete field practicum activities were videoconferencing

programs, various written communication methods, and agency specific documentation

programs. Field instructors indicated technology is being used to conduct trainings, orient

students on agency policies and guidelines, for supervisory sessions, to have ongoing discussions

and conversations, and to observe and monitor student progress. The decisions to incorporate

technology into field activities were based on need, preferences, convenience, engagement, and safety.

Interviewees identified the benefits of incorporating technology into field experiences as being based on flexibility, efficiency, convenience, increased exposure and productivity, and improvements to the social work profession. The challenges identified were based on internet instability, lack of professionalism, ethical and cultural barriers, and limitations in social work skill development. Access, engagement and connection, and skill assessment methods were seen by some interviewees as being a benefit, and as a challenge by others. Study participants indicated having access to information, engaging in trainings, and having support and assistance of other technologically savvy individuals helped ensure they had a sufficient level of knowledge about technology needed to train students.

Study findings found trainings, orientations, and ongoing supervision are being utilized to teach students about the uses of technology in field experiences. Strategies used to accomplish these tasks include ongoing discussions, modeling, guidance, monitoring, reviewing the learning contract, and teaching technology etiquette.

Study participants were asked to rate their adherence to applicable social work standards related to ethical uses and cultural competency, field instructor knowledge/capacity, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment. Approximately 70% or more interviewees attest to utilizing the technology standards to guide their supervision and education of social work field students across all categories.

Participants were asked whether they believed the use of technology enabled students to master core and essential skills and if technology-based methods allowed them to sufficiently

assess student learning and competency in the field? Almost half of all respondents believed that

a combination or hybrid approach of technology-based and in-person activities would allow for

students to master core and essential skills and for field instructors to sufficiently assess student

learning and competency. Less than a sixth of respondents said that technology-based activities

would not create valid learning experiences or assessment opportunities. The remaining

participants supported the use of technology alone and its ability to promote student learning and

to sufficiently assess student skills.

Conclusion

Findings from this study were sufficient to support the following conclusions:

What technologies are being utilized in their field practicum experiences, both by field

supervisors and students?

Technologies such as videoconferencing, communication methods, and documentation

programs are those most commonly being incorporated into social work student field placement

experiences.

How do social work field instructors utilize technology to support student learning with

regards to ethical uses and cultural competency, student access and support, instruction

and academic standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and

assessment?

Overall, social work field instructors are utilizing technologies for training, supervision, and

service provision. Field instructors are engaging in ongoing communication and continuing to

provide guidance and trainings to ensure students are maintaining ethical practices and cultural

competency when utilizing technology. Students were seen by field instructors as

knowledgeable, and that access and support was not problematic as students received training

and had access to available support systems within field agencies.

Field instructors believe using technology to teach and assist students in meeting academic

standards increases student connections with others both within and outside of the agency, makes

necessary trainings more readily available, provides more accessibility and convenience to do

research, and enhances social work skill building opportunities. Factors influencing the desires

to incorporate technology-based experiences into field practicum experiences included

responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need and desire to save time and money and reduce

travel, adherence to agency polices, providing services, and the need to meet the preferences and

abilities of clients receiving services.

Teaching and supervising students about how to appropriately and professionally utilize the

technologies in social work practice occurs by engaging in various methods of observation,

having discussions and conversations with students, providing students with feedback about their

use of the technologies, requiring students complete orientations and trainings, through typical

supervision methods, and by having students review and learn agency policies and guidelines on

the uses of technology in practice. Field instructors also reported that their evaluation and

assessment of the effects of technology on student learning occurred through the use of pre-

determined institutional evaluation tools, email, and traditional supervisory methods. Agency

policies guide the decisions to use technology and how it would be implemented, and

supervision, monitoring, and observation were utilized to ensure students used technology

correctly, ethically, and professionally.

To what extent do social work field instructors perceive the use of technology effective in

and a challenge to supporting student learning with regard to ethical uses and cultural

competency, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment?

Study participants saw the incorporation of technology into field experiences as both challenging and beneficial to student learning. In terms of ethical and cultural competencies, technology was seen to provide more options and access for clients to receive services yet was also seen to create concerns with maintaining professionalism and confidentiality, difficulty providing specific treatment interventions, and an increase in cultural barriers affecting clients of certain ages and diagnoses. Because of the availability of technology, students had easy and quick access to devices, making it more convenient to connect and engage with others which was also noted to be challenging when technologies malfunctioned and internet connection issues occurred.

Technologies used for instructional purposes to assist students in meeting academic standards were viewed by field instructors as methods that provided students with greater exposure to field activities and offered them more flexibility and convenience in what and how they participated in their field learning experiences. Concerns were noted about relying on technological methods of instruction making it more difficult for students to participate in on-site experiences and to learn and practice social work skills, specifically interpersonal relationship development.

Incorporating technology into practice and supervision was seen by some field instructors to result in an increase in productivity and more consistent and ongoing communication between the student and supervisor. On the other hand, technological interactions were seen by other supervisors as negatively influencing the effectiveness of the student/supervisor relationship, in which there was a reported loss of interaction time with the students and increased limitations

with communication. Evaluation and assessment completed through use of technology was felt to provide benefits in the ability to review student documentation and in providing additional methods to observe students practicing social work skills in field. In contrast, participants also noted not all skills were easily monitored with technology. Student accountability and skill assessment was actually more difficult.

To what extent do social work field instructors perceive they have sufficient capacity to use technology to support student learning with regard to ethical uses and cultural competency, field instructor knowledge, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, and evaluation and assessment?

Field instructors indicated they had sufficient knowledge, resources, and guidance about technology to be able to effectively support student learning. Agency policies, guidelines and compliance methods were available to guide ethical practices and cultural competency. Trainings, research, and the support of others were utilized by field instructors and provided to students enabling all parties to have sufficient knowledge about the available technologies, including how to utilize the technologies and where to go for assistance. Field instructors consistently provided ongoing communication and supervision to their field students as methods of teaching and instruction regarding the uses of technology and the overall evaluation of the students' application of the tools.

What strategies do social work field instructors utilize in training social work students on the uses of technology in practice with regard to ethical uses and cultural competency, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment?

Field instructors utilized multiple trainings, training topics, supervisory methods, and tools to train students on the various uses of technology in practice. An initial orientation to the field site was a commonly used approach. These orientations instructed students on topics such as agency policies and codes used to ensure ethical practices and cultural competency as well as other concepts such as how students gain access to and support for technology-related issues. Ongoing trainings, supervision, and discussion were used to teach and monitor students about technology etiquette, technology enhanced protections, and policies regarding the uses of technology in practice. Aside from traditional supervision methods, the learning contract guided the incorporation of technology-based activities and how student progress would be evaluated and assessed.

To what extent do social work field instructors perceive adherence to the NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA technology standards when working with social work students in field placement with regard to ethical uses and cultural competency, field instructor knowledge/capacity, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment?

Field instructors overwhelmingly reported that there is adherence to and utilization of the technology standards across all mentioned themes, with 70% or more indicating to having either some or a significant level of utilization of the technology standards when supervising social work field students. Approximately half of all respondents were significantly utilizing standards to guide supervision regarding ethical uses and cultural competency, field instructor knowledge/capacity, student access and support, instruction and academic standards, technology in practice and supervision, and evaluation and assessment. Only one individual expressed that

there was no utilization of the standards to guide supervision and one other individual reported to not knowing enough about the standards to provide a rating.

Conclusions from Ancillary Findings

In addition to the six research questions, two additional questions were asked of the research participants.

Do you believe that using technology enables students to master core and essential professional skills? Explain.

Overall, field instructors supported the claim that the use of technology in field experiences would enable students to master core and essential professional skills. Almost all participants claimed that either technology-based activities alone or a hybrid blend of face-to-face experiences and technology-based experiences would promote a positive field experience for social work students.

Do you feel that the use of technology allows you to sufficiently assess student learning and competency in the field? Explain.

Interviewees felt technology-based assessment and evaluation methods provided a sufficient assessment of student learning and competency. Almost all participants supported the use of either technology-based methods alone or a combination of virtual and in-person experiences to conduct evaluations and assessments of student progress.

Discussion and Implications

As reflected in the literature review, field instructors had mixed feelings about the incorporation of technology into student field experiences. This divide occurred with some supporting the use of technologies claiming an increase in educational opportunities for students, while others believed utilizing technology made it more difficult to build relationships and

rapport. Singh, Doyle, and Wobbe-Veit (2021) addressed both arguments. On one side, they indicated "technology can enhance distance learning and leverage the current capacity to expand content delivery methods in academic institutions" (p. 1695). On the other hand, they made readers aware that "skeptics and critics within social work academic circles fear that technology will undermine the profession's traditions" and some "view virtual programming as a necessary evil driven by student (consumer) demand" (p. 1699). While both points were also addressed by interviewed field instructors in this study, the incorporation and integration of technology overall was seen by interviewees as a positive addition to the social work student field experiences and as a supplement to and not a total replacement of in-person experiences. As claimed by Ayala (2009), "this blended learning may have much potential for social work in providing educational opportunities that take advantage of the best of what both online and traditional education can offer" (p. 277). As a result, this study can be utilized by social work field education programs in creating various training modules for new and current field instructors and supervisors and social work students regarding the incorporation and utilization of technology into the student field experiences. What needs to be further investigated is determining the appropriate balance between in-person and technology-based field experiences. This would include identifying what activities need to still occur in-person and which can be replaced with technology-based approaches, while ensuring students are able to meet competencies and have successful learning experiences.

As technology is being increasingly incorporated into the social work student field experiences, field instructors are now having to adjust supervisory methods to include training students on what technologies will be used, when they will be used, how to use them appropriately, the resulting benefits and challenges, and how to overcome challenges. As stated

in the literature review and supported by Hitchcock et al., (2019), "every communication with a field liaison, an agency staff member, and student is another opportunity to engage in a relationship, whether it is an in-person meeting, a videoconference, or an email" (p. 265). Based on the overall themes that emerged throughout the interviewing process, the information obtained in this study demonstrated and verified the importance of the overall supervisory process and communication methods occurring between a field instructor and a student. Future trends should move toward an emphasis on acclimating students and field instructors on how to use technology to effectively and professionally communicate with one another while still allowing for students to learn and master social work competencies and skills and field instructors to assess student progress. As some of the most common technologies being incorporated into placement experiences were videoconferencing, telehealth, and documentation programs, a focus for schools and field instructors should be ensuring and monitoring student knowledge and capacity to use these methods, to engage their social work skills, to maintain professionalism while participating in activities that occur through these technological-based methods.

Consistent with both the literature review and interview data, the relationship between the student and the field instructor continues to be a key factor in the success of the student placement experience. Mentorship, guidance, orientation, and ongoing communication were found to be effective supervisory techniques. According to Barsky (2019), field instructors "may use technology to assess, provide feedback, and offer support in flexible and concrete manners" by utilizing "videoconferencing, file sharing, digital evaluation tools, and educational apps to supplement their in-person supervision" (p. 244). The emergent themes from this study continuing to support this idea were under the umbrella of ongoing supervision, guidance, and

teaching methods, and as evidenced by these participant responses, regularly occurring communication and interactions between the supervisors and students were just as important when technology was included in these processes. As these concepts are consistently found in literature and this research study, it maintains the importance of emphasizing the student/supervisor relationship in the success of the field placement experience.

As convenience and safety are more consistently becoming deciding factors in how to meet and interact, it is was expected to find social work students and field instructors utilizing these methods in field placement experiences. In recent response to COVID-19 safety measures, many trainings and educational conferences are now being provided through on-line formats, therefore, it was anticipated that field instructors would discuss their incorporation of these methods into student field experiences. Interviewed field instructors did determine that technologies were consistently being used in various ways to enhance student learning in field practicum experiences, concluding that ongoing trainings and orientations were being provided to students to enhance learning, provide information on agency protocols, and ensure technologies were being used appropriately and professionally.

Gibson and Carroll (2019) claimed that "while virtual placements may lack the face-to-face interactions inherent in most practicum sites, they can also open the door for more specialized training" and that "video calls, telehealth, and virtual meeting mediums are becoming commonplace communication and meeting forums" (para. 4). As these forums are becoming a widespread addition to the social work profession as well as to social work student field practicum experiences, it was not surprising that the interviewed field instructors identified technologies such as videoconferencing, documentation programs, social media platforms, and other various technology devices as being incorporated and utilized by their students.   As

literature claims, "the emergence of more portable and mobile devices could be a conduit" for observing students and evaluating their social work skill development (Dennis, 2016, p. 269). Study participants supported this concept by identifying teaching, modeling, observation, and feedback as some of these fundamental methods of supervision and teaching currently occurring through these technology-based formats.

The benefits and challenges found in this study were also consistent with those identified in the literature review. Literature found that the incorporation of technology and video conferencing programs used for supervision and service provisions, were accessible, convenient, flexible, and cost-effective. Dennis (2016) stated "promoting remote accessibility, Webinars – real-time, online presentation mediums – provide field instructors and students access to training and orientations through a Web site link, reducing the need for travel, saving time and expense" (p. 267). The overarching benefits identified by participants in this particular study also included access, convenience and efficiency, and engagement.

The challenges identified in the literature review included internet instability and ongoing concerns that clinical relationships and rapport were harder to develop through technology than through in-person face-to-face interactions. Participants in this study expanded upon those challenges and included limits to connection and rapport building, technology challenges, lack of professionalism, difficulty with skill building, and accessibility limitations for students and clients. In sorting through participant responses regarding the identified benefits and challenges of incorporating technology into placement experiences, it appeared that the challenges far outweighed the benefits. The benefits were based on convenience, efficiency, access, and engagement, whereas the challenges expressed were based on limitations in student skill building, connection and rapport building, professionalism and ethical concerns, and ongoing

issues with technology and internet, and access to both. It was also concerning to see that some of these challenges addressed professionalism, distractibility, and confidentiality. As technologies continue to be utilized in field and to provide services to clients, it became apparent that there is now an increased need to ensure that students are aware of how to be professional and remain engaged while on camera. The need for training students on technology etiquette should now be included and emphasized in orientations and ongoing supervision and a continued awareness of the significance of these challenges needs to be a focus of the educational institutions social work programs.   Far more research needs to be conducted to determine how these challenges are being addressed in social work practice and in student field placement experiences.

As field instructors are tasked with training students, it is their responsibility to know the content they are teaching, including the technologies being utilized. "FEs (field educators) need to keep apprised of changes to ethical practice standards, as well as current research and scholarly literature on the uses of technology in social work practice" (Barsky, 2019, p. 251). Interview respondents reported to consistently engaging in these activities to ensure they were knowledgeable enough to demonstrate and train students on the needs and uses of technology. Hitchcock et al., (2019) reported that "knowing how to engage students, such as developing relationships, disseminating knowledge effectively, and problem solving via distance and with digital tools requires expertise." Study respondents were able to identify various resources utilized to meet this standard including conducting their own research, attending trainings, following agency policies and guidelines, and relying on the knowledge and expertise of others. It will continue to be important to ensure that field instructors have access to and utilize

informational resources need to keep them current with the ongoing technological changes and advancements.

As technology is playing a vital role in field agency processes and service delivery to clients, field instructors are tasked with ensuring students know how these technologies appropriately in practice situations. Barsky (2019) stated that "given the growing uses of technology in social work practice, field educators need to prepare students for both existing and emerging ways that technology can be used to help social workers engage and assess clients, plan and implement interventions, and monitor, document, and evaluate services." Interview data, supported by literature, indicate field instructors do believe they are utilizing teaching and supervisory methods and engaging students in technology-based activities that allow them to practice skills and achieve competency.

Future trends should not only include teaching students how to utilize these methods, but also how to deal with the challenges that come with those methods. Students should know how to interact with clients through videoconferencing but should also know how to overcome distractions that are in the background, what to do when the internet is unstable, and how to engage clients of all ages and backgrounds, just to name a few. Barsky (2019) claimed "students and field educators may benefit from engaging in frank discussions about current best practices, as well as emerging opportunities for innovative uses of technology in social work practice" (p. 252). Interviewee responses to several questions reinforced the importance of these discussions and conversations in teaching and evaluating student uses of technology to ensure they are learning and able to demonstrate social work skills in practice. Training, observing, processing interactions and experiences and assessing student progress, whether through in-person or

technological means, remains a vital part of the student field practicum and may even be more important when students are engaging in virtual placement activities and experiences.

As a result of these increases in the use of technology to provide social work services, NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA created standards to guide the professional use of technology to provide services and educate students. Section four of the *NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice* provides 12 standards specifically related to the use of technology in field experiences and supervision. Most interviewees reported utilizing this guide and adhering to the standards when working with social work students in field placement. As Lopez (2014) indicated, "many social workers may not even know that these technology standards exist" and "how to best share these standards remains a significant limitation" (p. 827), so it is unclear whether the interviewed field instructors were familiar with the actual standards or responded based on the concepts behind the standards. Although technology specific standards are a newer addition to the social work profession, the underlying concepts of professionalism and ethics were already a part of social work practice, providing a guide for the use of technology as well. In response to the uncertainty of the level of familiarity with the actual technology standards, acknowledgement to and use of this resource to train students and field instructors should more readily be made. "Universities and schools of social work could also include these discussions as part of their coursework" (Lopez, 2014, p. 830).

Suggestions for Future Research

As there was very little research regarding the application of the technology standards to guide practice, this study set out to provide more information about the effects of technology on areas of the student field practicum experiences based specifically on these standards set forth by NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA. As referenced in the implications, the information

gathered in this study provided knowledge about the supervisory processes that occur when technology is involved. This study only took into consideration the field instructor perspective, specifically those affiliated with West Virginia institutions. This same research could be repeated at institutions outside of West Virginia as states vary in their level of technological advancements. Future research should also be geared toward acquiring the perspectives of other individuals involved in the field education process, including those who have observed students utilizing technology to conduct services. Research should be conducted to gain the perspective of the social work students and how they view the role and impact of technology on their field practicum experiences. The challenges of technology also appear to play a significant role in the successful delivery of services, therefore research on what is being done to offset these complications would be another step toward improving technology-based service delivery.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the overarching results of this study concluded that the incorporation of technology is seen as a positive addition to the social work student field practicum experience. As the social work profession is typically seen as being based on relationship and rapport building, it was surprising to see more professionals in favor of technology-based experiences rather than pushing to return to the traditional in-person experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic created the urgency to increase the utilization of technology-based services such as videoconferencing, telehealth, and telemedicine, so the access to and the convenience and safety of these services were seen as major benefits. Although technology has continued to provide alternative methods needed for communication, supervision, and to deliver various social work services, it appears that the West Virginia social work field instructors interviewed in this study still see value of in-person experiences as well. The participants in this study noted the many

benefits of using technology and incorporating them into the field experience, but overall, there was still a push for the hybrid or balanced approach of combining both in-person experiences and technology-based activities.

The information obtained from this study would provide field programs with insight about how technologies are used for practice and supervision, as well as the benefits and challenges that are commonly occurring when technologies are used. Students and field instructors can be made aware of the identified challenges as a way to better prepare them to more effectively provide services and minimize the struggles caused by technology. "While the *Standards* provide some guidance, there may also be room for social work to provide education and advocacy, helping both practitioners and client understand their rights and responsibilities when using technology to conduct social work practice" (Lopez, 2014, p. 830). Ideas for training and orientation topics for field instructors and students can be ascertained from this information to include topics such as technology-based professionalism, how to use the technology standards, and how to address access and internet instability issues.

Field education programs can emphasize these concepts when training field supervisors as a means to ensure that students are receiving a level of supervision that enhances their learning while completing their field practicum experiences.   It will also be helpful to express this information to students who are currently in a field practicum experience and students getting ready to begin their experience. A student orientation to the field practicum experience should contain a discussion about what to expect regarding the use of technology in the placement experience and supervision and how technologies might be utilized in place of a in-person, face-to-face meetings. Student still need to be made aware of the necessity of communication with the supervisors and how this relationship plays a significant role in their

learning experience even when done through various means of technology. Encouraging

students and their field supervisors to communicate and process technology-based field

experiences will only enhance the quality of student learning in the field setting.

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Appendix A: Approval Letter from the Office of Research Integrity

M MARSHALL UNIVERSITY ®

w w w . m a r s h a l l . e d u

Office of Research Integrity	FWA 00002704
Institutional Review Board	
One John Marshall Drive	IRB1 #00002205
Huntington, WV 25755	IRB2 #00003206

April 22, 2021

Ronald Childress
Leadership Studies - COEPD

RE: IRBNet ID# 1751078-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Childress:

Protocol Title: [1751078-1] Technology Standards in Social Work Field Education: A Field Instructor Perspective on the Student Practicum Experience

Site Location: MU
Submission Type: New Project   APPROVED
Review Type: Exempt Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.104(d)(2), the above study was granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee. No further submission (or closure) is required for an Exempt study **unless** there is an amendment to the study. All amendments must be submitted and approved by the IRB Chair/Designee.

This study is for student Alysha N. Nichols, ABD.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Anna Robinson at (304) 696-2477 or robinsonn1@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.
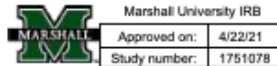
Sincerely,

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
Director, Office of Research Integrity

Appendix B: Informed Consent for Participation

<u>**Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study**</u>

	Marshall University IRB	
	Approved on:	4/22/21
	Study number:	1751078

TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS IN SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION: A FIELD INSTRUCTOR PERSPECTIVE ON THE STUDENT PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

Dear (participant),

My name is Alysha Nichols, and I am a doctoral student in the Leadership Studies EdD Program at Marshall University in Huntington, WV. I am currently working on my dissertation and am contacting you to request your participation in a research study to explore the social work field instructor perspective on the effects of the increased use of technology in the student field practicum experience. **A study abstract is attached**.

You were selected for inclusion in this study based on your current role as a field instructor/supervisor for a West Virginia accredited social work program. This study has been approved by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board.

Specifically, I am requesting your participation in a semi-structured interview. The interview will focus on identifying what technologies students are using in field experiences and how these technologies are affecting overall student learning. **A copy of the interview protocol is attached**.

The 2017 *NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice* provided the framework for evaluating this use of technology and to identify the benefits and challenges of utilizing technology for both field instructors and students. Time frame for participation is confined to the interview process and should last 45-60 minutes. The success of this study is dependent on the willingness of professionals such as yourself to share their experiences and insights.

There are no known risks involved with participating in this study. Your consent and that you are at least 21 years of age are implied by your willingness to be interviewed. Participation is completely voluntary and there are no penalties or loss of benefits if you choose not to participate. You may also choose not to answer any question included in the interview protocol. Data collection will occur virtually through one-on-one interviews using Zoom/Microsoft Teams and will be recorded and further stored on a secure device. Participants will have the right to refuse recording if so desired. Field notes will also be taken during the interview.

The information you supply is confidential, and no individual or institution will be identified by name or other identifying information. **If you agree to participate in this study, please respond to this email and indicate your intent.** You will be contacted by the Co-Investigator within a week of your response to schedule a date and time for your interview.

For questions about this study, you may contact Alysha Nichols at 304-553-1560 or nichols108@marshall.edu. Alternately, you may contact Ronald Childress EdD (PI) at 304-545-0245 or rchildress@marshall.edu. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at 304-696-4303.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to consider participating in this study. Study findings will be shared with all participants.

Alysha N. Nichols

Alysha N. Nichols ABD, LCSW, Co-Investigator
304-553-1560
nichols108@marshall.edu

Field Instructor Perceptions about Technology Integration in the Social Work

Field Experience

Name:_____**Title:**_____**Date:_____**

As technology is increasingly integrated into all aspects of the social work student field practicum experience, it is necessary to assess what and how technologies are being utilized and the affect it has on student learning. The 2017 *NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice* provides "a humanistic framework to ensure that ethical social work practice can be enhanced by the appropriate use of technology" (NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA, 2017). Section 4 of these standards focuses specifically on education and supervision and, as a field instructor, you provide a unique perspective on how the use of technology in the field experience plays a role in what and how students learn. Given your ongoing interactions with students as their supervisor, you have the opportunity to offer first-hand knowledge of what technologies students are utilizing in their field activities and how this utilization corresponds with the established technology standards.

The intent of this interview is to learn from your experiences in supervising students during their field practicum experiences. The information gathered from this interview will be combined with experiences of other field instructors from other accredited social work programs in West Virginia. I anticipate the interview will take 45-60 minutes.

Demographic Information

1. Male / Female / Other
2. Age: 26-35 / 36-45 / 46-55 / 56-65 / 66+
3. What is your title/position?
4. How long have you been employed with your current agency?
5. Do you have a social work license? If yes, what license?
6. How long have you been a field instructor?
7. How many social work students have you supervised?
8. Do you supervise MSW Students / BSW Students / Both?
9. Did you supervise a student(s) during the 2020-2021 academic school year?

Interview Questions

1. What technologies are being utilized in field practicum experiences, both by supervisors and students (i.e., service delivery and conducting supervision)?

2. How are you utilizing technology to support student learning with regard to:
   a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

      b. Student access and support
      c. Instruction and academic standards
      d. Technology in practice and supervision
      e. Evaluation and assessment

3. As technology is integrated into the student field experience, what technologies do you see being effective and what do you see as challenges in supporting student learning with regard to:

      a. Ethical uses and cultural competency
      b. Student access and support
      c. Instruction and academic standards
      d. Technology in practice and supervision
      e. Evaluation and assessment

4. How do you ensure that you, as the field instructor, have sufficient capacity, knowledge, and skills to use technology effectively to support student learning with regard to:

      a. Ethical uses and cultural competency
      b. Student access and support
      c. Instruction and academic standards (i.e., to ensure compliance with codes, laws, and agency policies)
      d. Technology in practice and supervision
      e. Evaluation and assessment

5. How do you do you train social work students on the uses of technology in practice with regard to:

      a. Ethical uses and cultural competency (i.e., confidentiality, diversity, boundaries, social media, dual relationships)
      b. Student access and support (i.e., agency protocols)
      c. Instruction and academic standards (i.e., professionalism, communication skills)
      d. Technology in practice and supervision (i.e., service delivery)
      e. Evaluation and assessment (i.e., how will their use of technology be evaluated)

6. Do you believe that using technology enables students to master core and essential professional skills? Explain.

7. Do you feel that the use of technology allows you to sufficiently assess student learning and competency in the field? Explain.

8. Utilizing the following scale:

   1 – Do not utilize standards as a guide to supervise students

2 – Minimally utilize standards to guide supervision of students
3 – Some utilization of standards to guide supervision of students
4 – Significant utilization of standards to guide supervision of students
N/A - I still do not know enough about the technology standards

To what extent do you use the NASW, ASWB, CSWE, and CSWA technology standards to guide your work when supervising social work students in field placement with regard to the following six themes:

_____ a. Ethical uses and cultural competency

_____ b. Field instructor knowledge/capacity

_____ c. Student access and support

_____ d. Instruction and academic standards

_____ e. Technology in practice and supervision

_____ f. Evaluation and assessment

IN CONCLUSION

You have been most patient, thoughtful, and reflective in your responses. Do you have any other comments, observations, or suggestions that you would like to contribute?

Do you know other social work field instructors that I should request to interview?

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND WILLINGNESS TO BE A PART OF THIS STUDY.

Appendix D: Curriculum Vitae

Alysha N. Nichols
Marshall University
Social Work
Email: nichols108@marshall.edu

Education

Master of Social Work, West Virginia University, 2003.

Master of Public Administration, West Virginia University, 2003.

Bachelor of Social Work, West Virginia University, 2001.

Employment

MSW Field Coordinator, Marshall University Department of Social Work. (August 1, 2018 -
Present).

WVU/WVSU Collaborative Program Coordinator, West Virginia University MSW Southern Tier
Campuses (August 2017 – August 2018).

Teaching Instructor, West Virginia University School of Social Work (August 2012 – August
2017)

Addictions Therapist, Prestera's Addiction and Recovery Center (2006-2012, 2016-2018).

Licensures and Certifications

Master Addiction Counselor, National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals.
(November 30, 2016 - Present).

Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor, WV Certification Board for Addiction and Prevention
Professionals, Inc. (September 19, 2010 - Present).

Licensed Certified Social Worker, State of WV Board of Social Work. (May 30, 2008 - Present).

Teaching Experience

Marshall University
SWK 541, Foundations of Research,
SWK 551, Foundations of Field Practicum
SWK 631, Int Health Models & Practicum
SWK 653, Adv Field Practicum
SWK 673, Family & Community Violence

West Virginia University
SWK 513, Research Methods
SWK 520, Human Behavior and the Social Environment

SWK 581, Generalist Field Experience
SWK 618, Personal Practice Assessment
SWK 641, Social Work with Groups
SWK 643, Psychopathology and Social Work Practice
SWK 644, Brief Therapy
SWK 649, Practice with Individual
SWK 650, Practice with Groups
SWK 675, Addiction and Social Work Practice
SWK 682, Advanced Field Experience

Presentations Given

Isaacs, T. M., Nichols, A., Lucas, P. L., Eastern Educational Research Association, "Measuring Success by the Seeds We Plant: One Institution's Experience with Alumni Tracking," EERA, Virtual. (February 18, 2021).

Nichols, A., Lyons, S., Closson, M., Neely-Goodwin, S., Practitioner Education in Substance Use Disorders, "Social Work Practice in Substance Use Disorders: Field Education and Learning Activities," Council on Social Work Education, Virtual. (2020).

Nichols, A. (Presenter & Author), Young, D. H. (Presenter Only), Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, "How technology affects the field instructor/student relationship: Getting the field instructor perspective.," CSWE, Virtual. (November 2020).

Isaacs, T. M., Nichols, A., Lucas, P. L., Eastern Educational Research Association Annual Conference, "The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time: Finding Praxis success through the POST tutoring center," EERA, Orlando, FL. (February 2020).

Nichols, A., Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Across Campus & Community Conference, "Suicide and Personality Disorders," MU-SPEAC, Marshall University. (August 29, 2019).

Nichols, A., White, K., R. H., 2019 Spring CE Conference for Social Workers, "Social Work Ethics & Substance Use Disorder Intervention," NASW - WV Chapter, Charleston, WV. (May 3, 2019).

Nichols, A. N., White, K., Hayes, R., 2019 Spring CE Conference for Social Workers, "Behavioral Health Intervention in Primary Care and SUD," NASW - WV Chapter, Charleston, WV. (May 2, 2019).

Isaacs, T. M., Nichols, A., Lucas, P. L., Rowe, K., 2019 Eastern Educational Research Association Annual Conference, "I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become - Carl Jung: Training teacher candidates to work with children of trauma," EERA, Myrtle Beach, SC. (February 2019).