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THE INFLUENCE OF DISTANCE LEARNING ON UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

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THE INFLUENCE OF DISTANCE LEARNING ON UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL
WORK COMPETENCY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Social Work
at the University of Kentucky

By

Christine K. Fulmer

Lexington, Kentucky

Co- Directors: Dr. David Royse, Professor of Social Work

and Dr. Kalea Benner, Professor of Social Work

Lexington, Kentucky

2022

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE INFLUENCE OF DISTANCE LEARNING ON UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

This is an exploratory study of undergraduate social work education at a private faith-based university. The university offers both online and residential program options. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of distance education and program option on the educational outcomes of graduates in a newly developed social work program. The program started in 2015 with its first graduating class in 2017. The sample ($N = 262$) consists of students graduating in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Students could take classes across program options and each student in the sample completed both traditional and online social work courses. The outcome measures utilized are field instructor evaluations and comprehensive exam scores. The field instructor evaluations assessed students' skills during their practicum internships while the comprehensive examination scores captured students' knowledge and critical thinking. The study uses multiple linear regression analyses to determine the influence of social work distance education credits, program option, and other demographic variables had on educational outcomes. The dissertation addresses the limitations of the data collection as well as implications for social work educational programs and areas for future research.

KEYWORDS: social work education, distance education, online education, baccalaureate social work education, remote education, social work educational outcomes

Christine K. Fulmer

04/03/2022

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Date

DEDICATION

To my family, who sacrificed for me to complete this project. Thank you Jeffrey, Jed, Sierrah, Noah, Mom, and Dad for believing in me, praying for me, feeding me, and supporting me.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Distance education offers increased access to learning opportunities with flexibility and affordability. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), there is a rise in the number of U.S. students engaging in higher education through online options (Snyder et al., 2019). In the fall of 2019, NCES (2022) reported over 6 million undergraduate students were enrolled in at least one distance education course in higher education institutions rising from just over 19 thousand in the academic year 2015 – 2016. Kurzman (2013) reported that there were five baccalaureate and 22 master’s social work distance education programs listed on the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) website in 2013. On April 6, 2020, there were 28 undergraduate and 87 graduate distance education programs listed (CSWE, 2020). The number of online baccalaureate programs listed as of April 3, 2022 were 90 with 169 MSW programs offering distance learning program options (CSWE, 2022). The 2020 numbers may have been an underrepresentation of the whole group because in the past program had to email CSWE specifically requesting to have their distance education program option listed on the CSWE website. This has since changed.

1.1 The Problem

Coe Regan and Youn (2008) anticipated this growth and put forth a challenge for more research on outcomes of distance education programs. Even with this encouragement, the literature is still limited especially when considering the exponential growth in distance education programs. This limitation is specifically present around baccalaureate education.

The following is a brief review of the main body of literature available on the topic of online social work education, first at the graduate level and secondly at the undergraduate.

1.2 MSW Literature: Comparisons with a Single Course

York (2008) evaluated the outcomes of the course human service administration taught utilizing three varied venues: online ($n=11$), hybrid ($n=13$), and residential ($n=18$). The same instructor taught all sections. The instructor taught the hybrid course 50% online and 50% residentially. In all three sections, the instructor administered a pre-test and post-test to assess level of knowledge. There was no significant difference in knowledge gain, self-efficacy, or course satisfaction among all three groups. The residential section of the course earned significantly higher course grades ($M=89.57$, $SD=5.41$) than the hybrid course ($M=84.76$, $SD=6.56$). However, the difference between the online and residential course grades was not significant with the residential grades only being slightly higher.

Woehle & Quinn (2009) assessed the outcome differences across two Human Behavior and the Social Environment graduate courses taught by the same professor in North Dakota. The professor offered one in a distance-learning format and the other in a traditional classroom. The sample size for the two classes combined was 44. After adjusting for grade inflation, no significant difference between the two classes regarding learning outcomes was found. However, regarding demographics, on average MSW students in the traditional classroom completed their bachelor's degree 4 years earlier as compared to 12 years for those in the distance class.

A study by Forgey and Ortega-Williams (2016) focused on outcome differences between a MSW practice course taught both online and in a traditional classroom. Thirteen students completed the distance education course and 23 students engaged in the traditional

class. The researchers surveyed students regarding their perceptions of the quality of the educational milieu and the effectiveness of the teaching methodology. Upon comparing assignment rubrics and the end of course evaluations, the researchers found no significant differences.

Wilke et al. (2016) also focused on the outcomes of a practice course taught both online and face-to-face. This study collected data from three semesters resulting in a sample size of 74 residential students and 78 distance students. Of the demographic variables, it is interesting that the online student average age was almost 8 years older than the residential group. A doctoral student graded two assignments: 1) a role-play and 2) an assessment with a corresponding treatment plan without knowing the course format for the students. After accounting for age, there was no significant difference in grades on either assignment. However, at the end of the semester there was a significant difference in overall course points. With further analysis, traditional students earned more class participation points than distance students did. Distance students earned points through discussion board posts. The professor graded traditional students on their level of participation in class activities and discussion, not written content.

Vito and Hanbidge (2021) conducted a qualitative research study on student outcomes from a leadership and supervision course taught in Canada. One course was taught on-campus at King's University College and the other was taught online through Renison University College. The online students were located through the country as the residential students were all in the same proximity. Educational outcomes and student satisfaction with the overall course design were similar. However, the online students

found it difficult to accomplish group work with students having varying schedules and living in different time zones.

In sum, the sparse literature found that online MSW students fared no worse in a single course than students in residential courses. One notes the small sample sizes in these studies. One also notes the sparse studies found on the topic.

1.2.1 Origins of the Social Work Program

After years of prayer and consideration on the part of faculty and community members, the university committed to the development of the social work program as an outpouring of its mission statement. The university's values align well with the core values of social work: the dignity and worth of a person, the value of human relationships, service, social justice, integrity, and competence. These professional values are reflective of the biblical concepts to value and serve others, represent the oppressed, tell the truth in love, work diligently, and seek knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Agreeing social work was a good fit for Liberty, the board of trustees approved the allocation of the financial resources necessary to start the program in November of 2014. The university launched the social work undergraduate program in the 2015-2016 academic year. Students could opt for a distance or residential learning option.

1.3 MSW Literature: Programmatic Research

Noble and Russell (2013) analyzed student perceptions of Texas State's online graduate social work educational experience. The sample consisted of 242 students taking six different foundational courses over the time span of 11 semesters. The main finding of the study was students' perception of faculty engagement served as a predictor of course

satisfaction. Areas of faculty engagement included items like quality of and timeliness of communication as well as perceived helpfulness of the professor. This study marks the importance of the relationship between the instructor and student. Response time and quality of the response seem to matter in quantifying the relationship.

Faculty members from the University of Tennessee published two studies comparing the outcomes of their graduate online and traditional programs. Cummings et al. (2015) evaluated outcomes of their traditional and distance students from the graduating classes of 2011 and 2012. Part-time, full-time, and advanced standing students were included in their sample of 345 (255 residential and 90 online). They found no significant differences in comprehensive examination results. There were significant differences in field instructor evaluations for non-advanced standing distance students; their scores were higher than the rest of the groups for seven competencies. Another significant difference was in GPA. The advanced standing traditional students earned a significantly higher GPA than the other groups. One other significant finding was that distance students had a higher satisfaction score in relationship to their interaction with faculty.

In a second study evaluating student data over the span of 5 years, Cummings et al. (2019) evaluated the outcomes of 883 (255 were distance and 564 were residential) MSW students, who graduated from UTK between 2012 and 2015. The demographics varied between the two groups, as there was a higher frequency of older African American females studying in the online program than in the residential option. There was a significant difference in GPA with the residential students earning higher MSW GPA averages but there was no significant difference between the groups in the average score on the comprehensive exam. This led the researchers to question the validity of GPA as an

objective measure since professors may have relationships with residential students. These relationships may positively influence the professors' grade assessment. Whereas professors are less likely to know the students studying at a distance. Additionally, distance students felt more professionally prepared for practice and found their professors more helpful than residential students. This sample is significantly larger than the other studies discussed.

1.4 MSW Literature: Hybrid Course Comparison

A review of the literature resulted in sparse research addressing hybrid outcomes for graduate programs. One study by Cummings et al. (2013) compared a distance education group practice course with a residential section of the same course. Thirty-seven students took the distance education course meeting via synchronous and asynchronous web-based technology paired with face-to-face Saturday classes. The residential course of 67 students met face-to-face three hours once a week over the course of a full semester. There were no significant differences noted between the outcomes of the courses in the areas of test scores, leadership skills, and knowledge.

1.5 MSW Literature: Addition of an Online Component to Residential Course

As online education in social work is becoming more prominent, the research demonstrates a degree of innovation on the part of educators. These educators are adding online components to traditionally residential classes as a way of enhancing the educational experience. The following articles address these innovations.

Elliott et al. (2013) added an online statistics lab to a residential research methods course. Twenty-five students completed a posttest after taking the course and reported an

increase in positive attitude toward statistics; 68% felt were fearful of learning statistics before taking the course and none reported to be fearful of statistics after taking the course. Additionally, the students increased in their confidence in their ability to both use statistical procedures and being able to understand statistics when reading journal articles.

Ferrera et al. (2013) described two courses in which they added an online component to courses typically taught residually. They discussed the challenges faced and significant time commitment to build community using the Community of Inquiry Model on the part of the educators. The courses selected were social work direct practice and Human Behavior in the Social Environment. The researchers saw the potential for enhanced learning as they reported increased student engagement especially in online discussion posts.

Adding online components to traditional courses tended to increase student confidence and engagement. The research neglected to compare these outcomes to those of courses taught completely residually. Again, these studies reflected small samples at a single point in time.

1.6 BSW Literature: Course Comparison Research

As mentioned previously, CSWE (2020) lists 28 programs offering online educational options at the undergraduate level. At present, there is almost no research comparing online to traditional baccalaureate social work education on a competency level. There are some studies specifically focused on analyzing the difference in outcomes in a particular course.

Lucero et al. (2017) published a mixed methods study discussing a community-based research project that they added to a macro social work practice course taught both online (n = 15) and residentially (n = 45). The distance students were 10 years older on average than the residential students were. The instructors for the two classes collaborated in developing the syllabi and course assignments. The findings included collaborative statistics about the effectiveness of the project in addition to educational outcome comparisons between the online and residential sections of the course. Students completed both a pretest and posttest. In the pretest the distance students had a higher self-efficacy score, although, it was not statistically significant. The face-to-face students showed more gain from pretest to posttest than the distance students in areas such as macro professional interest and self-efficacy. The distance students slightly decreased in their interest in macro social work and the face-to-face students increased from pretest to posttest. After analysis, the qualitative responses showed no significant differences between online and residential student comments. There was no significant difference in educational outcomes between the groups.

Stauss et al. (2018) evaluated the outcomes of an undergraduate diversity class taught both online and residentially. The courses were taught by two seasoned professors, who collaborated on both the syllabus, some course content, and assignments. Students took the Diversity and Oppression Scale (DOS) as well as the General Belief in a Just World Scale (GBJWS) as pre and posttests. There were 61 students in the face-to-face class and 52 of those students took the pre and posttests, 35 of which were social work majors. Of the 152 distance students, 65 completed the tests with 20 being social work majors. On the pretest of the DOS residential students reported less self-assurance and cognizance of

diversity issues than the distance students did. The results of the posttests were as expected. Since the face-to-face students had lower scores on these areas of the DOS, their scores increased at a greater rate. There was no significant difference on the pretest GBJWS. When considering the posttest results, both groups improved in their overall DOS and GSJWS. However, on a question regarding social work and client congruence on the DOS, the distance students fared better. The question focused on the need for the client and social worker to be of the same ethnicity, sex, and sexual identity to be effective. More distance students reported that this was not necessary for effective social work practice. Another difference reflected in the posttest scores of the GBJWS was that distance students decreased in their belief of a just world and residential students increased in the same belief.

Huerta-Wong & Schoech (2010) evaluated the outcomes of teaching active listening online or residentially; they utilized the teaching methodologies of experiential learning or lecture and discussion. The results indicated positive outcomes in learning and course satisfaction in each of the learning environments when the instructors used experiential learning as the teaching technique. Additionally, students in the online sections demonstrated higher learning gains and course satisfaction than those in the residential class using lecture and discussion as the teaching technique. The sample size was a minimum of 132 students in each of the four courses.

In the three studies, there were no significant differences in overall outcomes. There were some nuances and subscale differences between online and residential student outcomes. However, the research was limited to the outcomes of one course or concept.

1.7 BSW Literature: Programmatic Research

On a more comprehensive level, McAllister (2013) surveyed University of Southern California's undergraduate students regarding their perspective of their online experience and compared performance, grades, and retention outcomes between the residential and online program options. The study assessed outcomes across four different courses: Introduction to Social Work ($n = 8$ online, $n = 40$ on campus), Human Behavior in the Social Environment ($n = 15$ online, $n = 12$) on campus, and both Social Policy I ($n = 15$ online, $n = 15$ on campus) and II ($n = 10$ online, $n = 17$ on campus). The researcher taught a section of each course face-to-face and online. The findings indicate no significant difference in the areas of performance, grades, and retention. However, McAllister found significance in two of the residential sections reporting a closer relationship with the professor than the online courses described. Additionally, in two of the online course sections students reported a lower level of familiarity with their classmates than their residential counterparts delineated. The data collected in McAllister's study is from a for-profit private institution.

In summary, while the existing research on the benefits and outcomes of online instruction was essentially positive, there were enormous gaps in the literature and the usefulness of what is available. Further, an unpublished study (Fulmer, 2019) revealed that articles addressing BSW distance education have little representation in pedagogical social work journals. As illustrated in Table 1, 2.75% of the literature in these journals over a ten-year span was dedicated to BSW distance education with approximately 1% focused on educational outcomes. Out of the eight studies addressing educational outcomes, only

McAllister's study (2013) assessed the undergraduate program. Other outcome studies had different emphases.

Table 1.1 Total Articles and Percentage focused on BSW distance education and outcomes within Pedagogical Journals 2008-2018

Journal	Total Articles	BSW	%	BSW Outcomes	%
<i>Journal of Social Work Education</i>	549	12	2.19%	4	0.73%
<i>Journal of Teaching in Social Work</i>	469	16	3.41%	4	0.85%
Total	1,018	28	2.75%	8	0.79%

1.8 BSW and MSW Literature: Combine Studies

Buchanan and Mathews (2013) described a longitudinal quasi-experimental study evaluating both undergraduate and graduate social work students' attitude toward and knowledge of research. The researchers compared the outcomes between distance and residential students across the span of two years. All students were engaged in a hybrid-learning milieu. Some students took the class face-to-face with the teacher half of the time and used the online course management system to gain the other learning material and experiences. The other group of students joined those learning face-to-face through interactive T.V. They could ask questions remotely and participate in class discussion. Twice during the semester, a professor would meet with the distance students face-to-face. Both undergraduate and foundational year graduate students take two research courses. Students took the Kirk-Rosenblatt Research Inventory midway through the second course. The first year of the study indicated some significant differences.

In year one, 26 BSW residential and 13 distance students with 14 MSW residential and 9 distance participated in the study. Overall, the students on the main campus had a significantly more positive attitude toward research compared to the distance students. However, there was no significant difference in attitude for the BSW students when separated from the whole. As far as knowledge is concerned, as whole there was a significantly higher knowledge attainment for residential students. However, when viewing the programs separately, there is no significant difference for the MSW students. However, there was a difference, but not significant, with the residential being higher in knowledge for the BSW students. In year two, 23 BSW residential and 13-distance students with 15 MSW residential and 10 distance engaged in the study. There were no significant differences noted the second year.

With the rise in social work undergraduate distance education programs in the country, there is a need for an increase in outcome evaluation of these programs. The undergraduate studies found in the literature review on small samples of students with only one article having a sample of over 100 students (Huerta-Wong & Schoech, 2010). This dissertation proposes to add to the limited body of knowledge on undergraduate social work distance education by measuring the influence of distance education on social work competency.

Social work as a discipline prepares students for professional practice. It is in practice settings where students learn the nuances of the field, how to engage in problem solving, and under supervision, gain practice wisdom. Professional education requires more application than the traditional liberal arts education. As noted by Shulman (2005):

professional education is about developing pedagogies to link ideas, practices, and values under conditions of inherent uncertainty that necessitate not only judgment in order to act, but also cognizance of the consequences of one's action. In the presence of uncertainty, one is obligated to learn from experience. (p. 19)

In the 2008 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards, CSWE adopted field education as the signature pedagogy of social work, thus addressing this as the opportunity for students to develop their professional identity connecting values, knowledge, and theory to practice (CSWE, 2008). This study recognizes and draws upon the competency level students demonstrate in their undergraduate senior field experiences as a measure of social work competency.

1.9 Context of the Study

1.9.1 History of the University

Jerry Falwell, Sr. along with the members of Thomas Road Baptist Church founded Lynchburg Baptist College in 1971 with 154 students. The college offered classes on the church's campus to fulfill an original intention of providing quality Christian education. In 1976, the name changed to Liberty Baptist College with the college adopting the colors red, white, and blue. In 1980, Liberty earned accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and in 1983 Liberty delved into graduate education. Two years later the college earned university status and began the distance education program. In 1987, the seminary offered the university's first doctoral degree in ministry. Upon the passing of Chancellor Falwell, the trustees named Jerry Falwell, Jr. chancellor and president of Liberty. In 2020 Jerry Falwell, Jr. resigned as

president. Currently, the former chairman of the board of trustees, Jerry Prevo, serves as president. The university has over 100,000 students. The curriculum offerings range from certificates to doctoral degrees in over 800 unique programs of study (Liberty University, 2022). Throughout the years, the mission of the university has not wavered from the founder's vision to develop Christ-centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to affect the world.

1.9.2 Additional Context of the Study

Liberty University is in Central Virginia in the growing city of Lynchburg, which is approximately 2 hours from Richmond, 3 hours southwest of Washington D.C., and 1 hour northeast of Roanoke (Figure 1.1). The city is home to just over 79,000 people and surrounded by several rural counties, Bedford, Campbell, and Amherst (U.S. Census, 2020). The campus is nestled in a valley with a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Before the launch of Liberty's social work program, the closest program to Lynchburg was over an hour away in Farmville, Virginia. Community members noted a dearth of social workers within the greater Lynchburg area and started an advisory council to encourage the development of a program. The advisory council approached Liberty and over time, the university pursued its development and hired a program director.

Since Liberty had such a long history with distance education, it was determined very early on in the development process that the program would have both residential and online program options for degree completion. As a Christian university, Liberty integrates biblical concepts into the curriculum and the faculty members profess the Christian faith and affirm the university's doctrinal statement; the social work program follows suit. This is noteworthy, as there are many universities founded as Christian, which no longer practice

the integration of the Christian faith and education (Lawrence, 2007). Another aspect of the university is its desire for students and graduates to have a global influence. As a result, students in the social work program can practice international social work in numerous countries throughout the world including the Philippines, Greece, Uganda, Spain, and the Dominican Republic. These opportunities are available for a full semester field placement or as an elective course with students developing international cross-cultural skills for seven to ten days under the supervision of a social work professor.

Some other aspects of the curriculum worthy of note are the opportunities students have for field exposure. During the first year of the program, students shadow a social worker for a 40-hour workweek and complete corresponding assignments. During the junior year of the program, students complete a 100-hour or more field experience. As is typical of most programs, during senior year, students complete a 400 hour or more field experience under the supervision of a social worker. Both field experiences include a synchronous seminar. Distance students participate in seminar via WebEx or Microsoft Teams and local students have an in-class seminar. As mentioned previously, students can also take an elective course, *SOWK 439 International Field Experience*. A social work professor teaches the course and supervises students working within organizations with clients according to the needs of the in-country organization. Over 80 students have participated in these elective courses since the program's inception. Due to the pandemic there were no international elective course offerings since 2019.

The social work program admitted its first students in the fall of 2015 and has since earned retroactive accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). It is important to note that although Liberty University is a Christian university, the students

that attend do not have to profess the Christian faith. There are a variety of faiths, beliefs, and religions represented by the student body. Therefore, the students that attend are agreeing to be taught from a Christian perspective. Students tend to have a wide range of personal beliefs. The courses taught at Liberty in social work are quite similar to courses taught at other universities. The big difference is the infusion of biblical principles throughout the curriculum. For instance, in *Introduction to Social Work*, students write a paper about what the Bible says about helping the poor and needy. Students complete the same assignments in both the residential and online program options.

The Department of Social Work at Liberty offers both online and residential program options for social work students. Pre-Covid-19, students choosing the online program option attended a 5 day on-campus intensive *SOWK 355 Social Work Practice with Groups*; residential students may have chosen to take this intensive as well or they may have taken the class in a traditional manner during a full semester. Students enrolled in the intensive course complete course work prior to and proceeding their time on campus. While on campus, students receive course instruction and facilitate both an educational and support group. At their exit exam, students often reported it to be the highlight of their educational experience.

Eight highly motivated residential students finished the program in May of 2017. In academic year 2017-2018, 80 students (43 residential and 37 online) earned their degrees. By the end of 2019, the program had 262 graduates (148 residential and 114 online). As mentioned previously, students designated as residential students may take some online classes; in the same manner, students designated as distance students may take

classes traditionally. This is consistent with the national trend of undergraduate students completing at least one course in a distance format (Snyder et al., 2019).

Students may claim social work as their major upon starting the university, but they are required to apply to the program to be officially accepted into the program. This is similar to many undergraduate programs. One thing that is a bit different at Liberty is that we continue to track students through a formal gate system. In gate one, they submit their application for the program, demonstrating that they have the minimum GPA of 2.5, successfully completed a number of courses, volunteered for 10 hours at a social service agency, submitted their background checks, and references. Once they are formally accepted into the program there are other gates that they complete as they move through the program. Gates 2 and 3 are where students complete their field readiness applications. Gate 2 prepares them for their 100-hour field experience and gate 3 does the same for their 400-hour field experience. Gate 4 is where students complete their comprehensive exam.

Students completing the program during the time of the study could complete up to 45 social work credits. There were other required courses in the major, but those were taught by other departments. For instance the research class was taught by the Department of Psychology faculty and students took their first diversity class through the Department of Global Studies.

1.10 Data Collection

As the literature indicates, there is a shortage of research on the effectiveness of online social work baccalaureate education. Attempting to add to the sparse literature, this study explored the influence of social work distance education credits, program option, and

other educational and demographic variables on the educational outcome variables: comprehensive exam and field competency.

In students' senior year of the program, the following variables served as assessment outcomes:

a) Field Competency. Field instructors completed a web-based evaluation of student social work practice at the end of the senior field placement. This instrument rates students across the ten competencies identified by CSWE. The instrument uses a Likert Scale with a range of 1 to 9 or a similar scale with a range of 1 to 7 (See Chapter 3 for more detail).

b) The Comprehensive Examination. Students completed a comprehensive examination covering the ten CSWE competencies. Students completed their exam the final semester of their social work educational experience. The comprehensive examination focused on both knowledge and values. Students took the exam simultaneously through an online survey software, Qualtrics. Residential students and students living in the greater Lynchburg areas completed the exam on campus. Distance students outside the greater Lynchburg area took the exam remotely. This examination is a 200-question exam created by the social work faculty (See Chapter 3 for more detail).

The study analyzed the data collected from the outcome measures in relation to the amount of distance social work credits students earned and program option along with the following educational and demographic variables using a standard regression model.

- a. Age Category. 18 – 24; 25 - 34; 35 and over.
- b. Marital Status.
- c. Previous College Experience.

- d. Pell Grant Status.
- e. SAT/ACT Scores.
- f. High School GPA.
- g. Social Work GPA.
- h. Overall College GPA.

The results of the statistical analysis may contribute to an increased understanding of how particular demographic and educational variables influence student outcomes. This exploratory study using outcomes from comprehensive examinations and field instructors' evaluations may provide information on both strengths and needs of social work course delivery, distance and traditional. As mentioned, with the limited research in this area of study, this research study contributes to the body of knowledge on BSW distance education.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Socrates (Plato, 350 B.C./1950) predicted changes in society reflective of the increased complexity of the needs of its members. One consistent need over time is that of education. People have a variety of responsibilities, time commitments, and relationships. They live all over the world with differing levels of opportunities and access to education. To meet the desire for learning in this increasingly more complex world, society in the form of higher education has adapted accordingly. The following is an account of snapshots of this evolution and the implications for graduate and undergraduate social work education.

2.1 History of Education

For those, who believe in the Christian rendering of creation, instruction started in the Garden of Eden when God spoke to Adam and Eve telling them not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. For those having different religious leanings, verbal traditions eventually were scribed to provide instruction for religious practices and living as evidenced in The Vedas (Hinduism), The Qur'an (Islam), The Tripitaka (Buddhism), and The Torah (Judaism). A desire for learning goes back to the origins of society.

These early educational experiences consisted of training in cultural, religious, and moral societal norms. Early Greek scholars such as Socrates and Plato challenged the status quo and taught others to do the same. Higher education was for wealthy male Grecian and Roman aristocrats until the rise of Constantine (Downey, 1957). During Constantine's reign, traditional education married to Christianity became available to the masses. This education focused on reading and writing with some classical Greek and light logic and

philosophy. The more elite members of society had private tutelage and delved deeper into philosophy, logic, and oration (Downey, 1957).

The idea that all people should have the opportunity for education has continued for centuries. Comenius, considered the father of modern education, was an educational reformer with religious convictions. They espoused universal education in his written work *Didactica Magna* (1633/1967). Comenius (1633/1967) believed God made all people, young and old, poor, or wealthy, in His image; therefore, all deserve the opportunity to gain an education.

Jean Paul Satre (1977), known as an existentialist atheist, believed that man is responsible for himself, but also for the rest of society. Amartya Sen (1999), Nobel Prize winner and economist, posits that access to education is one of the keys to development for both the individual and society. Martha Nussbaum (2011), an American philosopher in accordance with Sen, emphasizes the importance of universal educational access as way for individuals to have the capability to create, imagine, and use all of their senses. Paulo Freire (2000/2018), a renowned educator, advocated for educational access for all as they viewed it as liberating and transformative.

2.2 History of Distance Education

Some credit Josiah Holbrook with creating the first distance educational experience in America. Holbrook developed the American Lyceum in 1826 (Baughn, 1952). Holbrook brought the practical agricultural concepts of science to the public through lectures and demonstrations. Students could interact with the teachers afterward through correspondence and receive specific instruction to their posed questions. Using this same model, Dr. George Birbeck demonstrated the basics of mechanics through lectures and

demonstrations (Harting & Erthal, 2005). The Lyceums spread across America, forming over 3,000 chapters bringing in respected and knowledgeable speakers (Baughn, 1952). Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Ward Beecher are some of the more famous speakers traveling to chapter lyceums (Wright, 2013). These chapters were sources of lively debates and timely discussions. Towns started libraries due to the increased interest in learning sparked by these events. Individuals otherwise unable to get formal schooling benefited from the traveling and eventual homegrown lecturers. Giving a lecture or participating in a debate was a sign of prestige (Adams, 1901).

After the Civil War, the Chautauqua movement started in the U.S. using a platform similar to the lyceum (Scott, 1999). Chautauquas provided education by traveling from town to town and sharing educational lectures under a tent. Individuals could purchase additional correspondence material, complete the assignments, mail them to the institute, and earn certificates (Harting & Erthal, 2005).

In England in the 1840's, Isaac Pittman, credited with creating shorthand, offered instruction to students via written correspondence. In the same era, the University of London's External Program provided distance-learning opportunities for the populace in an effort to ease the hardships of coming to campus to earn a degree (University of London, 2022). After hearing about Queen Elizabeth's charter of the external program, Anna Eliot Ticknor created *The Society to Encourage Studies at Home* to promote women's education (Bergman, 2001). Ticknor was the daughter of a Harvard professor of history with access to an extensive library. After the death of their father, the society created the first correspondence courses for women in the United States for subjects such as history, natural science, art, and literature. More than 7,000 women enriched their personal lives through

the program by studying at home. Ticknor engaged over 500 educated women to correspond with the students via the postal system (Bergman, 2001). At the time, few women received education at a university (Nash & Romero, 2012). Society often characterized college-educated women negatively (Wein, 1974).

In the late 1800s, the University of Chicago under the direction of its president William Rainey Harper started the Extension Program, which provided opportunities for students to learn through the mail. Harper recognized the societal need for flexible learning opportunities (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006). Gould (1961) reported Harper's involvement in the Chautauqua movement and noted the similarities between the two programs.

Correspondence schools started to multiply and thrive in the late 1890s (Hampel, 2009). Nugent (1939) reported close to 500,000 students enrolled each year in the hundreds of schools available. Some of these schools provided excellent education. However, others were disreputable and caused some doubt to fall on those, which were doing a true service. At the behest of Frederick Keppel, the president of the Carnegie Corporation, the National Home Study Council (NHSC) came into existence to mitigate this rising problem. NHSC appointed John Noffsinger as its first executive secretary with the charge to help rectify the arising problems (Hampel, 2009). Noffsinger listened to complaints and addressed them. They found many of the complaints to have basis and wrote about their findings in his often-cited book *Correspondence Schools, Lyceums, and Chautauquas* (Noffsinger, 1926). Critics of these schools rose as a result (Kulp II, 1927). However, there was praise for established institutions of higher education's extension programs, which brought opportunities for learning to the masses through their programs (Hall-Quest, 1926).

As technology advanced, the distance education options increased. With the commercialization of the radio by Guglielmo Marconi, several universities created educational broadcasts over the radio. In 1919, the University of Wisconsin was the first with others soon joining. In the 1940s, television arrived and soon became an educational medium. The University of Iowa, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, University of Michigan, and American University were among the first to utilize television for educational broadcasts. In the 1950s, Western Reserve University and New York University offered credits for the courses taken via television (Tracey & Richey, 2005). By the 1970s, the public found televised education unstimulating as professors read from notes and made little eye contact with the audience. Other educational programming from the Public Broadcasting Station offered information in a more engaging fashion (Kentnor, 2015).

In the 1980s and 1990s, computer conferencing emerged as a conduit for distance education (Harasim, 2000). Students and professors would meet virtually through their computers and engage with the curriculum. As the World Wide Web developed in 1992, distance education started to shift. Interactive television became a popular way to engage students at a distance in a live classroom (Tracey & Richey, 2005). Today distance education has numerous forms. Students can take a course synchronously or asynchronously. Students can access the course materials whenever is convenient for them with or without internet access via an application on their phones. It gives more flexibility for those with varying responsibilities and in different phases of life. As distance education increases its course offerings, it is important to consider the elements involved.

2.2.1 Recent Literature on Distance Education

Lee et al. (2004) completed a content analysis of the four most prominent journals in distance education from 1997 -2002. The journals chosen were *The American Journal of Distance Education*, *the Journal of Distance Education*, *Distance Education*, and *Open Learning*. The analysis omitted items such as commentaries, book reviews, and editorials. The distribution of the 383 articles were across six different topics. Thirty-one percent (118) of the articles addressed theory and research topics. Design-focused articles such as course design, needs assessment, and scheduling accounted for 27% (102). Management related articles about topics such as technological support covered 11% (45). Thirty-eight (10%) of the publications focused on the institutional and operational aspects of distance education. Articles related to development such as learning management tools, online testing systems, and material development covered 9% (33). Evaluation of items such as outcomes and program quality control accounted for 12% (47) of the publications.

Zawacki-Richter et al. (2009) analyzed 695 articles from 2000 – 2008 in the same journals studied by Lee et al. (2004) with the addition of *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*. The researchers omitted articles, which they considered non-research such as editorials, commentaries, and book reviews. Briefly, the findings indicated a majority of the articles addressed instructional design and individual student learning processes. The authors noted concern over the lack of emphasis placed on other pressing matters such as “...innovation and change management or intercultural aspects of distance learning” (p. 21). The authors grouped educational outcomes with other topics in the category Quality Assurance. Quality Assurance accounted for 41 articles, which was 5.9% of the total articles evaluated.

Bozkurt et al. (2015) completed a content analysis of distance education journals during 2009-2013. In addition to the five journals analyzed by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2009), this research team included *The European Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning* and *The Journal of Online Learning and Technology*. The team did not consider book reviews, editorials, and commentaries in their analysis, which resulted in 861 remaining articles. The findings of a keyword analysis indicated that the most used term is *distance education* as opposed to *online education* or *remote education*. Other interesting keyword finding included the use of “mobile learning.” Some universities are utilizing ‘apps’ to deliver content, which is an increasing trend. The two most frequently used words were ‘education’ and ‘learning.’ The team utilized the same categories developed by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2009) and found similar results. The research was weighted heavily in micro areas of research, which is congruent with the findings of Zawacki-Richter et al. (2009). They suggest an increase in research around topics such as “...individual differences in cognitive processes, learning strategies, and cultural differences” (p. 356). Quality Assurance, which included research on educational outcomes accounted for 23 articles, which was 2.65% of the total articles evaluated.

The preceding content analyses suggest a sparse amount of literature on educational outcomes. All three of the articles categorized educational outcomes with other topics under quality assurance. This indicates less than 12%, 6%, and 3% of the articles analyzed addressed the topic of educational outcomes.

2.3 History of Social Work Education

The profession recognizes the first social workers were “friendly visitors”, who were lightly trained upper-class women (Rauch, 1975). They volunteered their time to visit

families, develop relationships, and try to bring hope to a difficult situation (Putnam, 1887). After the Civil War, there was an increase in social problems and their intensity (Glicker, 2011). Social caseworkers replaced friendly visitors and more training was necessary. Mary Richmond brought attention to this need by presenting a paper on the topic in 1897 at the National Conference of Charities and Correction. At the time, Mary Richmond was the director of the Baltimore Charity Organization Society (COS) (Austin, 1983). Philip Ayres, the assistant director of The New York chapter of the COS, taught the first six-week intensive training session for social workers (Shoemaker, 1998). The curriculum consisted of lectures, site visits, and practical experiences. These summer intensive opportunities continued for years with students attending from all over the United States.

In 1904, the New York COS started the New York School of Philanthropy offering a full year of social work education (Shoemaker, 1998). In 1912, the school added a second year (Austin, 1983). In 1903, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy launched its training program. The Boston School for Social Workers started its program in 1904 in a joint effort of Harvard and Simmons College. All three schools fostered critical thinking bringing in prominent guest lecturers with differing points of view on similar topics. There was disagreement about the direction of social work education. Some wanted a practical skill-based component taught in agencies and others wanted classroom instruction. This debate was rampant in New York with agency-based education ultimately winning the battle (Shoemaker, 1998; Austin, 1983).

A difference in philosophy was also present in Boston. The Boston School split from Harvard. One of the differences centered on the roles social workers could play depending on their sex. The Simmons school focused on the role of a female social worker

demonstrating care and empathy and working with the vulnerable (Shoemaker, 1998). Robert Woods believed there was a place for male social workers as social administrators, political activists, and political leaders. Harvard eventually developed this approach educating male social workers in areas of research, government, and reform (Shoemaker, 1998).

Chicago had its own issues. Edith Abbott joined Julia Lathrop and Sophonisba Breckenridge at the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy (Costin, 1983). They believed females could be in leadership positions and participate in research and social reform. There were disagreements with the founder, Graham Taylor, and while they were on vacation, Abbott and Breckenridge moved the private training school to the University of Chicago (Shoemaker, 1998). It was renamed the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Social Service Administration (Jabour, 2012). The curriculum equipped students to do research, social reform, lead, and casework. There was an emphasis placed on the academic disciplines like sociology and political science.

At the 1915 National Conference of Charities and Correction, Abraham Flexner, acknowledged the strengths of social work, but determined that it was not yet a profession. This presentation as well as the others by Edward Devine, professor at Columbia, and faculty members from the Boston and St. Louis schools marked a pivotal time for social work education. It was at this time that social work education embraced both academic classes and fieldwork. The foundation year consisted of a generalist curriculum with the 2nd year offering opportunities for students to specialize in areas such as medicine or school social work (Austin, 1983). This is certainly consistent with current social work education. However, there was still a lack of agreement in areas of content regarding both fieldwork

and curriculum, amount of time spent in the classroom and in the field, and the amount of supervision students need in the field (Eubank, 1928).

In 1919, the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Workers developed. It was later renamed the American Association of Schools of Social Work in 1921. This organization eventually became the Council on Social Work Education in 1952. Social Work is a profession with a broad scope of practice (CSWE, 2019). Schools of social work first teach general curriculum helping students develop the basic skills, values, and knowledge of the profession. From this foundation, students may choose to specialize in areas of practice.

2.3.1 History of Social Work Distance Education

In the 1990s, journals published several studies on social work distance education. Some of these discussed the use of interactive television as a method of communication between main and satellite campuses or other remote sites. Others addressed the use of the internet as their conduit for education to other locations. The following is short review of some of that early literature on social work distance education.

Siegel et al. (1998) surveyed 429 CSWE accredited social work graduate and/or undergraduate programs in 1996. This was a repeat of a study completed in 1994. The research group received 259 responses from the schools surveyed in 1995 and 238 in 1994. The data analysis revealed a 5% increase in the use of distance education in social work programs over the span of 2 years. Forty-one of the 259 schools (16%) reported using distance education; 90% (37) of those schools were public institutions. Twenty-two percent of the schools using distance education had both BSW and MSW programs housed in large institutions with over 20,000 students. The participants reported problems with adjusting

existing curriculum to a distance format, the availability of training for faculty, a lack of faculty interest in distance education delivery, student adjustment to online education, a lack of university support, and less personal interaction between faculty and student.

At that time in social work education history, 22% of the schools without a distance education component were planning to develop one. Schools were using compression video, satellite transmission, and television to deliver their distance education curriculum. A small amount of programs (4%) were using fiber optics and two other institutions reported plans to upgrade to this.

The survey revealed that in some cases administrators appointed faculty (33%) and in others, faculty volunteered (67%) to teach distance classes. Faculty either self-trained with extra time provided for course preparation and some had specialized training from their institutions. Some faculty received additional support in the form of another faculty member to assist or someone with technological expertise. Faculty reported teaching the following courses in a distance education format: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (51%), Policy (46%), Research (37%), and Methods (24%).

Vernon et al. (2009) surveyed 501 accredited social work programs about their distance education efforts in May of 2006. Distance education was defined as

as any means of delivering part or all of a course or courses online or through the Web, or through television or other media where students neither meet physically as in the traditional classroom setting, nor meet simultaneously via one of the aforementioned distance education media.” (p. 265)

One hundred and thirty-seven (27%) programs responded. The findings indicated that 40% of the BSW and 50% of the MSW program respondents provided online education. The

reluctance to provide distance social work education was not as high as expected. There were 61% of the BSW programs reported offering, developing, or considering developing distance education programs; 83% of the MSW programs reported the same. Most of the classes offered online for the both the BSW and MSW were electives. The other courses were practice, policy and services, human behavior and the social environment, research, diversity, populations at risk/justice, field, and values and ethics. Many of the programs (72% BSW; 56% MSW) reported using the internet to deliver distance education. Nineteen percent of the BSW and 12% of the MSW programs reported using a combined media to deliver the courses. Seven percent of the BSW and 28% of the MSW programs used two-way interactive TV and 2% of the BSW and 4% of the MSW used one way TV as a conduit for the curriculum delivery.

In 2007, East et al. (2014) sent an email to program directors and deans of MSW programs inviting participants to engage in a study regarding online and technology-assisted social work education. One hundred and twenty-one (60%) of the 202 MSW accredited programs with CSWE responded. Sixty-eight percent (82) of the programs indicated having a distance-learning component. Three of the programs offered the MSW degree (a minimum of 60% of courses were offered in a web-based format), 66 offered one or more courses remotely, and 42 offered distance learning on at least one other physical location not on the main campus. Twenty-three schools indicated an interest in exploring the possibility of offering the MSW degree online. Types of technology schools reported using were web-based management systems, web-based/online course delivery, email, other web-based systems such as wikis and blogs, DVD and VHS, and interactive TV.

2.3.1.1 Interactive TV

Thyer et al. (1997) reported outcome findings from two sections of the same required MSW course. Eleven students took the course on the main campus of Georgia State with only nine completing the end of course evaluations. Nine students took the course at a satellite campus utilizing interactive television; eight of those students completed the evaluation. The demographics of the students were similar in race, age, and ethnicity, but the branch campus students were part-time and the main campus students were full-time. Although the sample was small, there was a significant difference found indicating students preferred live instruction.

Coe and Elliott (1999) evaluated the aspects of a direct practice course taught both on-campus and remotely by different instructors. Twenty-nine students took the course on-campus with an instructor. The remaining 47 students were in two different distance sites with different instructors. In most demographic areas, there was no significant differences. One of the areas with significant difference was age with 85.1% of the distance learners and 37.8% of the on-campus learners indicating they were at least 30 years old. The distance learners received instruction both through live interactive satellite television and face-to-face with the faculty member traveling to their location six times for three hours of instruction each time. There were no significant differences found between the distance learners and on-campus students in the areas of grades on objective assignments, final course grades, or perception of their instructors. The study found significance in identification with the school of social work, connection with fellow students, and access to the library. Distance learners did not feel as connected to the university, felt more connected to each other, and had a harder time accessing library resources than the on-campus students reported.

Ligon et al. (1999) assessed student course evaluations of 14-distance education and 122 face-to-face classes between 1994 and 1996. The professors taught the distance education interactive audio and video technology. The evaluations consisted of 20 items rated on a Likert Scale from one (low) to five (high). The courses taught in the distance education format were *Abusive and Neglectful Families*, *Family Treatment*, and *Substance Abuse*. When comparing the means, student course satisfaction scores were higher in the family courses when they were taught face-to-face than when they were taught at a distance. The means of the course evaluations were higher for the *Substance Abuse* class taught in a distance format than the face-to face class.

Additionally, the researchers assessed student perceptions of an *Assessment and Psychopathology with Children and Youth* course in a distance format. Thirty-six students enrolled in the course either on the main campus or at a satellite campus, which met once a week. The instructor would alternate between campuses each week. The biggest concerns noted by the students related to technology. When the professor was at a different site, 25 of 36 felt like the technology hindered their learning experience. Thirty-one of the students felt that the format of the classroom negatively affected their class participation. Twenty-two of the 36 students recommended a future offering of the course using distance learning if the technological issues could be resolved. Another 13 without any stipulations supported the program offering the course again through the same format. Of the respondents, 19 of the 36 would take another distance education class, 12 reported they would not, and four were unsure.

Haga and Heitkamp (2000) provide an assessment of four classes offered using interactive television compared to the same classes offered on campus. The social work

program offered the entire curriculum via this venue experimentally permitted through CSWE. The same instructors did not typically teach both the distance and on-campus courses. However, the collective data was similar in students' perception of the quality of instruction provided in the differing settings. The distance students completed an additional survey regarding their online experience. The overall scores were positive with almost 10% of the students desiring more interaction with the instructors and 10% indicating that they felt there were problems needing attention regarding the overall quality of interaction during the lectures provided via interactive television.

Huff (2000) compared the critical thinking outcomes of MSW students taking a policy course face-to-face versus interactive television. Sixty-two part-time first semester MSW students completed a pretest and posttest measuring critical thinking skills; thirty-eight of those students took the course via interactive television and the remaining 24 students took the course on-campus. There was no significant difference between the pretest scores on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) between the groups. Both groups made significant gains in critical thinking skills as noted by posttest results of the CCTST. However, there was no significant difference between groups. The researcher also compared the midterm grades of the differing groups and found no significant difference.

Kleinpeter and Potts (2003) completed a comparison study between 52 MSW students taking an on-campus course and 26 MSW distance-learning students taking the same practice methods course via interactive TV. Most of the students were female for both groups (82.8% for the distance group and 78% for the on-campus class) and the average age for the distance class was 37.7 and 31.0 for the on-campus class. This

comparison study was a partially replicated study published initially by Kleinpeter and Potts (2000). The program made some adjustments between the 2000 and 2003 studies. Those changes included more use of interactive TV, less face-to-face professor instruction, and increased use of on-site staff as assistant instructors. Both studies indicated no significant difference in student outcomes in the areas of grades, faculty evaluations, and field instructor evaluations.

Litzelfelner et al. (2001) share the results of teaching an introductory practice class for MSW students via interactive TV at two different sites. The instructor taught the classes synchronously – one face-to-face on main campus and the other via compressed video. The distance class had a teaching assistant to help manage the classroom through activities such as group facilitation and highlighting important course concepts.

The students and professor mentioned challenges in the following areas. The room arrangement made it difficult for the students to take notes as the visuals were in the back of the classroom for the face-to-face sessions. The instructor could not see the faces or body language of the distance students. The on-campus students were not as engaged when the distance students asked questions. The on-campus class seemed to enjoy the contributions of the distance students, but it was not reciprocal. The distance students enjoyed it when the professor attended their class in person and desired more face-to-face instruction.

Patchner et al. (1999) compared two groups of students within a MSW research methods course. One group of 13 students received the instruction face-to-face while the other group of eight remotely participated in the same class via interactive television. The course instructor provided face-to-face instruction to the remote group once during the

semester while providing the interactive television experience to the main campus students. The demographics between the two groups were very similar. The only substantial difference was that the distance students were part-time, and the traditional students were full-time. Students' attitudes regarding the method of teaching instruction were positive on both pretest and posttest across both groups. Students' knowledge of research concepts improved significantly for both groups from pretest to posttest. Of the four outcome measures, the only significant difference found was in the results for the mid-term examination. The students in the remote group scored significantly lower. The other scores: final examination, paper, and final course grade did not represent significant differences.

Petracchi and Patchner (2001) utilized the 1996 data from the Patchner et al. (1999) study with the addition of data from a similar course offered in 1998. In 1998, there were 17 students who took the course on main campus in a face-to-face format, and 19 who took the course remotely via interactive television. The professor taught the course simultaneously with the students being able to interact via live television with each other. Again, as in 1996, the professor taught from the remote site on one occasion during the semester with the main campus students taking the class via interactive television. Petracchi and Patchner combined the data from the 2 years, which resulted in 31 students taking the course on the main campus and 27 students taking it remotely. There was no significant difference found between the two groups on outcome measures of two exams, a paper, and the final grade for the course. There was a total of 23 on-campus students and 26 remote students, who participated in the student attitude survey. The results indicated that both groups desired to engage in more interaction with the other group. Eighty-three percent of the face-to-face students felt that the course met their expectations and 77% of

the remote students felt the same. Eighty-six percent of the face-to-face students and 96% of the remote students indicated that they would enroll in another course offered using interactive television.

Petracchi (2000) surveyed students enrolled in distance education classes at two urban schools, University of Pittsburgh (UP) and University of Wisconsin-Madison (UWM). Twenty-two students enrolled in the interactive television course at UP with 16 students completing the questionnaire; 126 of the 260 remote students utilizing prerecorded videotapes participated in the survey. The UP students using interactive television reported having problems with the microphones. One hundred percent of the UP students said they would take a distance-learning course using the interactive television again. The UWM students using the videotapes did not report problems and 75% of those students stated they would take a remote course using the same format in the future. Petracchi admitted a limitation of the study is the small sample of UP students and the low response rate of the UWM class.

2.3.1.2 Internet

Royse (2000) taught two traditional MSW research courses on-campus with 42 students and piloted an internet-based research course with 14 students in 1996. The instructor met face-to-face with the internet-based class on six occasions, two of which were additional meetings requested by the students. The researcher performed a quasi-experimental study using two outcome measures. Royse utilized the Mathematics Research Rating Scale (MARS-R) as a pretest and posttest to measure students' math anxiety. There was no significant difference in the pretest between the two groups. However, the

traditional students showed significant reduction in math anxiety at posttest and the distance learners' anxiety increased slightly, but not significantly. The other measure was the results of a final exam designed and refined by the course instructor. The face-to-face students achieved higher grades than the distance education students did, but the difference was not significant.

The following is a small representation of some of the comments made by the students taking the course via the internet. Several students reported how exciting it was to learn how to use the World Wide Web (WWW). Some reported using the WWW to be life altering. Students reported that it required quite a bit of self-discipline to stay on task since deadlines were not explicitly stated. One student emphasized the importance of reading to do well in the course; saying it was not necessary in past face-to-face classes. Some students acknowledged that the course seemed like an independent study and it was particularly difficult to learn the concepts this way.

The instructor reported his experiences as well. Royse stated he would add more deadlines in the future as online students fell behind in the course and did not respond to his prompts. Email was not a priority in the students' lives at the time and communicating this way caused the professor some challenges. Students did not check their email or did not provide an updated email to the instructor. The instructor found teaching via the internet to be time-consuming but realized that subsequent offerings may not take as much time.

Stocks and Feddolino (2000) also evaluated the results of an internet-based research course. However, the intent of their study was to evaluate the impact of adding more interactive activities in the course on student attitude and behavior. The same instructor taught both sections of the course delivering written lectures with graphics such as charts

and graphs and study questions. Twenty-four students took each course and there were no significant differences in demographics, computer aptitude, or technology skills. Students took the first section in 1997. The instructor modified the course adding more interactive activities such as an opportunity for students to ask questions or make comments on the lecture via a hyperlink and autoscoring with immediate feedback provided to the students after test submission; students took the modified course in 1998. Students indicated higher course and professor satisfaction in the modified course. Additionally, students engaged more actively by posting initial discussion posts related to the course content in the 1998 course.

2.3.1.3 Software

Harrington (1999) evaluated MSW student outcomes of statistics courses offered in two different formats. A professor taught 61 students in a traditional face-to-face classroom in the summers of 1996 and 1997. The same professor facilitated a course of 33 students using software without face-to-face instruction in the summer of 1998. The findings indicated no significant differences in the demographic variables between the groups. The researcher found significance in one's undergraduate GPA and success in the software course. Students with lower GPAs had lower final grades in the software course than those with higher GPAs. Student GPA was not a predictor of final grade in the face-to-face offering.

Dennison et al. (2010) reviewed nine social work journals from 1998-2008 for pedagogical methods. They initially identified 91 studies, but only included 31 in their research. The eliminated studies did not meet the criteria of sound research. Of the 31 studies found, 23 of those articles compared educational outcomes of distance education to

face-to-face instruction. An additional three studies compared three methods with at least one of them being distance education. Dennison et al. (2010) called for an improvement in research in pedagogical social work literature especially in BSW education.

2.4 Current Social Work Education

Berzin et al. (2015) remarked on social work's hesitation to embrace society's technological advances. Social workers are to develop competency in interpersonal skills and there was concern that distance education would not be an effective venue in which to develop these skills. When reviewing the evolution of distance education, some may surmise that social work took longer to delve into this area than some other disciplines. Kurzman (2013) noted that for-profit schools of social work ventured into online education first with other schools initially being reluctant to ford into this area. When Rutgers and University of Southern California started expanding into online social work education, it gained some respect in the academy. Reamer (2013) enumerated various ethical challenges associated with online education including maintaining high caliber and integrity in courses and degrees offered. Zidan (2015) reports an ongoing debate in social work education about the effectiveness of online education. Zidan indicates not all social work educators believe online teaching is as effective as face-to-face education.

2.4.1 Faculty Perception

Levin et al. (2018) sampled 376 social work faculty in the United States regarding their experience teaching online classes and their beliefs about the effectiveness of online social work education. The majority (75%) of the faculty members were white non-Hispanic females with the average age of just over 50 years. Ninety percent of the

respondents had some exposure to online teaching with just over half being tenured or on tenure-track. There was an even distribution across professor rank and the average length of teaching experience was just under 12 years.

The overall findings indicated that faculty found online teaching to be moderately effective as the form of delivery for students to development in the social work competencies. However, those surveyed considered face-to-face teaching a more effective teaching methodology than online teaching cross all the competencies. There was an even greater disparity of faculty perception of online teaching effectiveness on the practice-focused competencies (except for evaluation of practice). Faculty respondents perceived on-campus education "... as being 'very effective' at helping students achieve all social work competencies whereas online education is not perceived as being 'very effective' for any social work competencies" (p.781).

Additionally, the researchers analyzed the results looking for correlations between variables. They found a positive correlation between faculty technological preparedness and perceived effectiveness of online social work education. Faculty, who taught online, had a higher perception of this form of education delivery than those who did not teach online. The findings indicated that faculty on tenure track or tenured had fewer positive perceptions of online education than those who were not in the tenure/tenure track positions. They also found a negative correlation between years of teaching experience and perception of online line teaching effectiveness. Those with longer experience in education had fewer positive perceptions of the effectiveness of online education.

Dennis et al. (2022) conducted an interpretative phenomenological analysis of 17 social work faculty members, who moved from a traditional teaching role to one that was

fully or partially performed through distance education. This study occurred in July of 2019, pre-pandemic. They reported the perspectives of the faculty members as they transitioned to their new roles. The researchers found themes in the narrative accounts of the professors. They categorized the participants by their “affective, attitudinal, and cognitive perspectives about teaching online during the time of the interviews” (p.6). The categories were 1) Grievers - those that grieved the loss of typical classroom, 2) Skeptics - those that were skeptical of the effectiveness of online teaching, 3) Pragmatists - those that accepted the reality of the change, but found no sense of fulfillment in the process, 4) Converts - those that were once skeptical, grievers, or pragmatists, but converted to believing in online education and finding a sense of satisfaction in teaching, and 5) Champions – those who actively believed in the concept of online social work education delivery and were positive proponents of it. The study provides more insight into the process of how the transitions were handled by the universities and makes some future considerations while acknowledging that online educational delivery has increased rapidly since the pandemic.

2.4.2 Program Development

During the years of 2008 – 2018, the *Journal of Social Work Education* and the *Journal of Teaching in Social Work* published 66 articles on the topic of distance education in the university system (Fulmer, 2019). Nineteen (28.79%) of these were on the topic of program development. These articles detailed the process of course or program development, offering suggestions for schools interested in launching similar educational components. Some authors discussed the creation of hybrid educational courses (Aguirre, 2013; Levin & Fulginiti, 2017; Levin, et al., 2013; Loya & Cuevas, 2010; Wilson et al.,

2013; Robbins, 2014; Rautenback & Black-Hughes, 2012; Rodriguez-Keyes & Schneider, 2013). Some discussed the nuisances of MSW and BSW course creation as well as things to consider (Secret & Pitt-Catsoupes, 2008; Tandy & Meacham, 2009; Dawson & Fenster, 2015; Sage, 2013; Levine & Adams, 2013; Stanley-Clarke et al., 2018; Carter et al., 2018). Others discussed creating full programs online (Moore et al., 2015; Flynn et al., 2013; Morris et al., 2013). Two addressed creating distance PhD programs or courses (Bettmann et al., 2009; Kurzman, 2015). One addressed the cost analysis associated with developing a program (Stotzer et al., 2013).

Of these articles, the following three discuss educational outcomes. Robbins (2014) developed an online group class for the University of Tennessee, and the article addressed the method of evaluating student competency was discussed. In the Tennessee program, students must earn a minimum grade of an 80% on assignments. Students have opportunities to redo assignments and turn them in for a higher grade. As a result, 95% of the class met the benchmark of earning at minimum of 80% on each assignment.

Levine and Adams (2013) utilized virtual role-plays in the software program 2nd Life to introduce nine students to case management skills. They conducted a pretest and posttest to determine students' confidence level in case management. Each students' confidence level increased after the use of the role-plays. The researchers did not specify if the increase was significant.

Bettmann et al. (2009) discuss the addition of six telephone seminar sessions for 19 first year doctoral students. Students took the seminar in conjunction with their field placement; the focus of the seminar was to increase student understanding and application

of psychological theory. Students took both a pretest and posttest on their knowledge and understanding. Students showed significant growth in all areas.

2.4.3 Student Perception

Jones (2015) discussed teaching clinical skills online. The article addressed the rigor and time commitment involved in course development and instruction of online clinical courses reporting that the online courses took almost double the amount of time for content delivery and preparation than the face-to-face classes. Jones compared the outcomes of student anonymous course evaluations from three different courses delivered in both an online and face-to-face format. The students evaluated the courses using a Likert Scale from one (low) to five (high). The course ratings were nearly identical. The students in the face-to-face *Gerontology* course scored the assignments with a 4.4, which was the lowest in all categories. In a close second, students in the distance class rated the assignments in the *Diagnostic Assessment* course with a 4.5. Although, the *Diagnostic Assessment* course received two of the highest scores: 1) a 4.9 for instructor enthusiasm in the distance class and 2) a 4.9 for student learning in the face-to-face course.

2.4.4 Faculty Training

Alston et al. (2017) address the training process for faculty teaching online at University of the District of Columbia (UDC), a Historically Black University. Faculty interested in developing courses at UDC first learned how to use Blackboard, develop rubrics, and the best practices of teaching online through the Research Academy for Integrated Learning (RAIL). After faculty complete these pre-requisites, UDC trains their faculty to design and develop courses in-house through their Online Learning Academy (OLA). While enrolled in OLA, faculty receive coaching and individualize instruction to

aid in course design and implementation. Faculty design courses in “chunks,” which allows for focused effort on one part of the course at a time. OLA helps the faculty develop an “instructor presence,” so students feel connected to the instructor facilitating the course. Alston et al. (2017) recognize the importance of strong professional development opportunities for faculty in online social work education and shared UDC’s model to aid other programs considering developing online programs.

2.4.5 International Engagement

Rautenbach and Black-Hughes (2012) describe a collaborative three-faceted international project between the social work programs at University of Fort Hare (UFH) in South Africa and Minnesota State University (MSU) in the United States. These facets were: 1) MSU students completed their field experience in South Africa but were engaged in field seminar with their peers in Minnesota via videoconferencing; 2) UFH and MSU students exchanged emails and engaged in email correspondence for two semesters with one another around topics chosen by their professors; 3) MSU students planning to study abroad in South Africa engaged in email correspondence with a UFH student prior to travel. Student and faculty reported positive outcomes. It was a culturally enriching experience for everyone involved and led to continuing professional and personal relationships.

Forgey et al. (2013) described the use of video conferencing to add an international component to a social work practice class. Professors from both the United States and Ireland engaged in a joint class once during the semester. There were 16 students in Ireland and 25 in the U.S. Students watched each class perform a role-play and engaged joint in discussion. Results of student evaluations were positive reporting a positive cross-cultural

experience. Students also reported a greater understanding of motivational interviewing and international social work.

Critelli et al. (2017) describe an online educational collaboration between the Universidad LaSalle (ULSA) in Mexico and the University of Buffalo (UB) in the United States. The State of New York (SUNY) Center for Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) facilitated the relationship. The social work program at UB collaborated with the law school at ULSA around the topic of human rights for individuals with disabilities. Sixteen of the 28 students, who participated in the class, responded to a survey given via Survey Monkey. Students reported learning a great deal about the differences between country policies and gaining an understanding of the human rights issue from the perspective of a different discipline.

Davis and Harris et al. (2019) studied 48 graduate students from around the world engaged in a course entitled *International Social Work*. The course ran from January until December of 2014 with student representation from the United States (25), Hong Kong (6), South Africa (4), Mexico (11), and Australia (2). The students overwhelmingly enjoyed the class and reported high levels of learning.

2.4.6 Innovations

Campbell et al. (2019) explored the qualitative responses of 81 graduate students taking an online course using a digital whiteboard to foster increased student engagement. There were six sections of the same course offered in spring of 2017. Students engaged in a discussion regarding a logic model exercise. They utilized the digital whiteboard engaging with both students and the professor. As part of the assignment, students answered an open-ended question about their experience with the whiteboard. After the

assignment was complete, the researchers conducted 90-minute online focus groups with a maximum of six students each.

When analyzing the qualitative data, the researchers identified several themes. The most frequent comment revolved around social engagement with 95 responses coded under this theme. Students reported engaging with peers outside of the class around the topic of the project and enjoying the interactions. Some reported developing friendships because of the project. Students provided 60 comments related to the theme of intellectual engagement, 44 about emotional engagement, 17 comments were on the topic of physical engagement, and one on behavioral engagement.

Some students expressed frustration with having to learn new technology. One wanted more immediate feedback from the professor during the activity. Some students felt like they needed to provide technological tutelage for their peers and found this frustrating. In the end, several students expressed thankfulness for the professors' desire to hear their opinions on the project.

Richards-Schuster et al. (2019) from the University of Michigan describe the development and pilot of a massive open online course (MOOC) as a preparatory course for their residential MSW program. The course was not required, but highly encouraged. Just over 83% (332) of the incoming MSW students completed the course and 274 of those finished the end of course survey. A large majority of the students (91%) found the course helpful and 75% found the course experience positive or very positive with another 23% saying it was a somewhat positive experience. Eighty-three percent of the students reported gaining knowledge necessary for understanding the profession. In addition, this free course is open to students all over the world except for only a few countries (edX, 2019). The

researchers report that over 7,000 students from over 181 countries enrolled in the course since 2016 (Richards-Schuster et al., 2019). It speaks to meeting a well-documented need of helping people understand the role social workers play in society.

Goldingay et al. (2018) completed a mixed methods evaluative study of 29 online MSW students, who engaged with a video diary of a simulated client in a practice course. Students completed assignments related to theory, assessment, and self-reflection associated with segments of the diary. The findings of the study demonstrated that 92.4% of the students found the video diary to be helpful in developing an understanding of the foundational concepts of the profession. Almost 90% of the students found the exercise helpful in understanding how theory meets practice. The qualitative results indicated students felt more engaged with the client in the video than in written case studies. When students interacted in online discussion boards regarding the simulated client, there were differences of opinion, which prompted one student to note a lack of class cohesion. They found the video to be realistic in content and client presentation. Students believed it helped them gain understanding of the clients' perspective and helped them gain the perspective of a social worker.

Putney et al. (2019) also discussed the outcomes and process of adding an online client simulation program to two advanced practice MSW electives, *Motivational Interviewing and Alcohol, Drugs, and Social Work Practice*. Students completed a pre-test prior to receiving instruction on the skills taught in the class. After training, students interacted with a simulated client using motivational interviewing techniques or alcohol screening and brief intervention techniques. Students had the option of choosing a number of answers or questions to use with the client; these were examples of open-ended

questions, reflective listening, affirming the client, and summarizing. The software program gave the student a response from the client and the student would continue to interact with the simulated client. There was an online coach, who flagged student answers of concern and affirmed the responses reflective of motivational interviewing. After engaging in these exercises, students completed a posttest on the intervention techniques they used. Thirty-three students took the *Alcohol, Drugs, and Social Work Practice* course and 21 students completed the *Motivational Interviewing* class. Students in both courses demonstrated significant differences in their overall skills from pretest to posttest.

The literature suggests that schools are experimenting with technological innovations and new courses. MOOCs, interactive White Boards, and client simulations are just a few of the more recent advances. Additionally, Case Western Reserve developed a “Flipped” graduate practice course and piloted the use of Google Docs for collaborative projects; student feedback was positive (Holmes et al., 2015). Some schools have discussed the benefits and challenges to using the web-based simulation Second Life in their face-to-face courses (Wilson et al., 2013; Reinsmith-Jones et al., 2015; Washburn & Zhou, 2018). With the advances in technology, academics are expecting more innovative technology.

2.4.7 Outcomes

The author addressed many outcome studies in Chapter 1. As a reminder, in the *Journal of Social Work Education* and *The Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, less than 1% of the publications from 2008-2018 represented BSW educational outcome comparisons between online and residential programs. McAllister (2013) provided a comparison of the University of Southern California’s undergraduate student outcomes between distance and traditional education. No significant difference was found between

groups in student performance, grades, or retention. Lucero et al. (2017) published a study on a macro social work course taught online and residentially. There was no significant difference between groups on educational outcomes. Stauss et al. (2018) evaluated student outcomes in a diversity class taught both online and residentially. They reported no significant difference in educational outcomes. Huerta-Wong and Schoech (2010) evaluated student-learning outcomes regarding the skill of active listening taught both online and residentially. Distance students had higher learning gains than residential students. From the limited studies available focusing on solely BSW education, the evidence supports compatible learning outcomes for students between online and traditional education.

Further, Wretman and Macy (2016) completed a systematic review of articles addressing the assessment of technology-based education from 1997 to 2011. The researchers included studies with relevant comparison groups and objective outcomes. They evaluated 38 studies; eighteen evaluated Web-based (WBI) instruction, 12 interactive TV (ITV), three used both WBI and ITV, and the remainder were hybrid in nature. Seventy-six percent (29) of the studies indicated that the student outcomes of the distance courses were compatible with the face-to-face courses. Three articles (8%) reported significantly better results for the distance courses than the traditional classes. Only six of the studies (16%) reported that the traditional course outcomes were significantly better than the distance versions.

2.5 Summary

The desire for education and personal development is part of the human condition. People desire to grow in knowledge, skills, and expertise. The creation of distance

education has brought opportunity for knowledge expansion to those otherwise unable to access education due to a lack of proximity to institutions of learning.

Social work education started in the late 1800s with short intensive courses in New York. Today it consists of Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral levels of social work education. Being mindful of social justice issues in the form of access to education, social work offered distance education opportunities for students as early as the 1990s (Wilson, 1999). As technology developed, so did the educational delivery methods (Coe Regan & Youn, 2008).

Today social work institutions of higher education offer classes and full social work degrees through distance learning platforms. Most outcome studies report compatible student outcomes between distance and face-to-face education (Wretman & Macy, 2016). However, with the increase in social work offerings delivered through distance methods, there is a dearth of associated research on student outcomes especially for BSW programs (Fulmer, 2019). Afrouz and Crisp (2021) reviewed the literature to find research studies on social work distance education. The researcher identified 200 articles with only 18 meeting the criteria of being empirical studies that reviewed the effectiveness of online education. Four conducted in Australia, one from Canada, and the rest from the United States. Overall student satisfaction and educational outcomes were similar for distance students as well as traditional students. In a number of the studies distance students desired more engagement and communication with their peers and professors. Dennison et al. (2010) reviewed the social work literature from 1998 to 2008 evaluating studies on instructional methods. They found 91 studies but eliminated 60 of them due to not meeting the criteria of "...having used either a single group pre-posttest design or a comparison of two or more groups and

inclusion of a learning outcome measure” (p.399). They also indicated that the BSW research was particularly less rigorous than the MSW. This is a call for more BSW research on instructional methods.

Most of the studies published comparing online and traditional education have small samples (Buchanan & Mathews, 2013; Cummings et al., 2013; Einbinder, 2014; Elliott et al., 2013; Forgey & Ortega-Williams, 2016; Jensen, 2017; Loya & Cuevas, 2010; Lucero et al., 2017; Woehle & Quinn, 2009; York, 2008). Of the few research studies comparing online and traditional education, many compare outcomes of one course or learning activity at one data collection point (Cummings et al., 2013; Einbinder, 2014; Elliott et al., 2013; Forgey & Ortega-Williams, 2016; Huerta-Wong & Schoech, 2010; Jones, 2010; Lucero et al., 2017; Stauss et al., 2018; Woehle & Quinn, 2009; York, 2008). There is a need for more outcome evaluations of distance social work education programs. Students studying remotely have less face-to-face interaction with their classmates and professors. However, when they graduate from a social work program, they can practice in the field face-to-face with their clients. There is a level of responsibility on the part of educating institutions to produce competent social workers. With increased research on social work competency and educational outcomes, programs can engage in more reflective self-assessment and quality improvement, which allows for a more competent social work professional body.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The following information describes the methodology for this exploratory study. It first describes the research design and rationale followed by the research questions raised in the previous chapters. Secondly, it describes the sample, data collection, and measurement of variables. It also describes the procedures used to protect students' confidential information as required by the IRB.

3.1 Research Design and Rationale

As discussed in previous chapters, there are few studies exploring the outcome of BSW distance education on social work competency. Several authors contributed to the body of knowledge about comparison studies involving student educational outcomes for specific courses (Buchanan & Mathews, 2013; Huerta-Wong & Schoech, 2010; Jones, 2010; Loya & Cuevas, 2010; Lucero et al., 2017; Stauss et al., 2018). Many of the comparison studies use one data collection point (Cummings et al., 2013; Einbinder 2014; Elliott et al., 2013; Forgey & Ortega-Williams, 2016; Huerta-Wong & Schoech, 2010; Jones, 2010; Lucero et al., 2017; Stauss et al., 2018; Woehle & Quinn, 2009; York, 2008). Additionally, the sample sizes for most of the research studies are small (Buchanan & Mathews, 2013; Cummings et al., 2013; Einbinder, 2014; Elliott et al., 2013; Forgey & Ortega-Williams, 2016; Jensen, 2017; Loya & Cuevas, 2010; Lucero et al., 2017; Woehle & Quinn, 2009; York, 2008). McAllister (2013) completed a broader comparison study that assessed outcomes across four courses taught both in a residential and distance format. A number of authors concerned with pedagogical research have called for more outcome studies among forms of social work education delivery (Alston et al., 2017; Coe Regan &

Youn, 2008; Crisp, 2018; Cummings et al., 2015; Davis et al., 2019; Litzelfelner et al., 2001; Jones, 2015; Levin et al., 2018; Kurzman, 2013; Lucero et al., 2017; Potts & Hagan, 2000; Quinn et al., 2011; Reamer, 2013; Royse, 2000; Siegel et al., 1998; Thyer et al., 1997; Wilke et al, 2016; Zidan, 2015).

Liberty University (LU) began distance education in 1985. There are over 100,000 students enrolled. What is now called the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) initially accredited LU in 1980 and reaffirmed their accreditation for another 10 years in 2016. In the same year, the Carnegie Foundation recognized LU as a doctoral university. LU is a Christian university committed to academic excellence. It is in this spirit the social work program launched in 2015.

The study is unique in that it is an exploratory study of a private Christian BSSW program offering both residential and distance program options where students can take courses from either program option. Of the studies read following a literature search, none mentioned being from a faith-based institution. As LU is a well-established provider of distance education and the social work program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the research could be of value to both private and public schools as well as those from a faith base.

The design of this study is exploratory in nature. It examines the program option (residential or distance) students designate and the amount of social work distance credits taken by students as possible predictors for educational outcomes. It also explores the demographic and educational variables as possible predictors of educational outcomes.

On October 24, 2019, the Liberty University (LU) Internal Review Board (I.R.B.) approved this study with data safeguarding methods. On February 20, 2020, the University

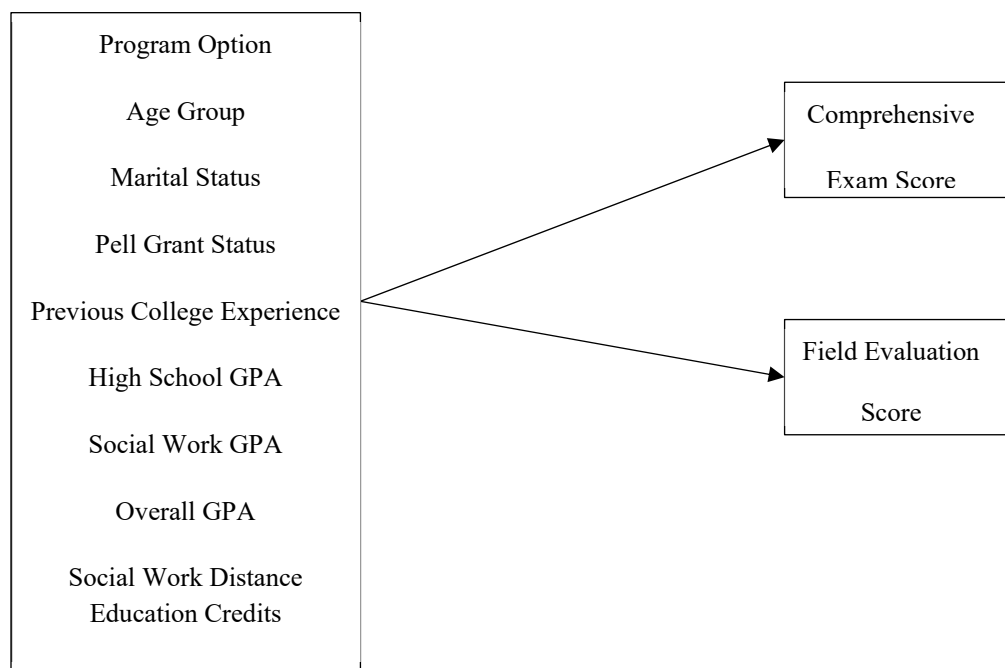
of Kentucky (UKY) I.R.B. reviewed and approved this study. Notably, the UK I.R.B. did not approve the collection of sex, age as a continuous variable, or ethnicity for the study stating there were concerns related to student confidentiality. The initial I.R.B. approval was for the following descriptive and educational variables that were included in the study: age group, marital status, program option, high school GPA, previous college experience, standardized test scores, location, comprehensive exam scores, field evaluation scores, and GPA. On April 13, 2021, the UK Office of Institutional Integrity approved a modification to the original proposal specifying social work GPA and overall GPA as variables in the study.

3.2 Analysis of Data

Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28). Demographic variables and descriptive statistics were summarized to provide a better understanding of the sample. Chi Square analyses were run to determine if there was a significant difference between program option and other categorical variables. Independent Samples *t* tests were conducted to compare the means of the continuous variables grouped by program option when there was normal distribution of the data. Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to compare the means of the continuous variables grouped by program options when the data was not normally distributed. Kruskal-Wallis tests between categorical and continuous variables were used to compare means when the data was not normally distributed among groups. Eta squared coefficients were calculated to determine the differences between categorical variables, the educational outcome variables, and other independent variables in the study. Phi coefficients were calculated to determine the strength of relationships between dichotomous independent variables. Cramer's *V* was

computed to determine the relationship between dichotomous and categorical variables. Eta coefficients were analyzed to determine the strength of relationships between the dichotomous and categorical variables with the dependent variables. Pearson's coefficients were computed to assess the relationship between continuous variables and the dependent variables and to determine the bivariate relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Correlation matrices identified issues of multicollinearity and likely predictors for the multiple regression analyses. Standard multiple regressions were run to explore variables as possible predictors of educational outcomes (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Variables as Possible Predictors of Exam and Field Scores



The goal of social work education is to produce social workers who are competent in their practice by enhancing the well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The comprehensive exam measures students' understanding and application of the social work competencies on an applied and

theoretical level. The social work field experience evaluation measures students' demonstration of the social work competencies in a practicum setting. This exploratory study investigates the predictors of these educational outcomes. Of specific interest is the influence of social work distance education and program option on the educational outcomes. The study's findings may contribute to a better understanding of distance learning in undergraduate programs.

3.3 Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this study.

R1: Is there a difference in students' performance on the comprehensive exam and field competency measures by their selection of program option (residential or online)?

R2: Do the demographic and educational variables in the study serve as predictors for comprehensive exam scores?

R3: Do the demographic and educational variables in the study serve as predictors for field competency evaluations?

3.4 Sample

The study takes place at a new and growing program at a private nonprofit Christian university. The sample consists of undergraduate social work graduates in the newly developed social work program with two options: distance education ($n=114$) and traditional ($n=148$) at a private faith-based university. These students completed the social work program in 2017 ($n=22$), 2018 ($n=101$), and 2019 ($n=139$). Students in both program options are free to take courses through either curriculum delivery method, distance or residential. Students may be in the United States or in other countries while taking courses.

Missing Data. There were 263 sample participants initially. However, there was one case of inaccurate information in the dataset, so the researcher did not include the graduate's information. As in many studies, some categories had missing pieces of data, so the researcher could not include each participant in all the tests.

3.5 Conceptual Definitions Used

Distance Education. Liberty's regional accrediting body, SACSCOC (2019) defines distance education as,

A formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program (p. 1).

Studies sometimes use remote education interchangeably with distance education. The researcher uses the word distance when referring to this educational delivery method.

Online Education. "An approach to teaching and learning that uses the Internet as the primary method to communicate, collaborate, and deliver content" (Cummings, et al., 2015, p.109). The researcher uses the term distance education as a synonym for online education.

Residential Education. An approach to teaching and learning, which occurs inside a classroom with an instructor. This term is used interchangeably in the research in higher education with the term on-campus, traditional, or face-to-face learning. This researcher primarily uses residential education when referring to this type of delivery format in the study.

Social Work Competence. “is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situation in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being...An individual social worker’s competence is seen as developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning” (CSWE, 2015, p.6).

3.6 Data Collection Procedure and Protection of Information

The following is a description of the data collection and student protection procedures.

3.6.1 Demographics

The demographics collected give a descriptive picture of those in the sample. The study includes the program option to determine the category of the student as either distance or the traditional residential. The study includes the variable age category: 18-24, 25-34, or 35 and over. It also includes the variables marital status, location, and previous college experience. The study included other variables such as high school GPA to explore the relationship between previous academic success and competency attainment. Sex, age as a continuous variable, and ethnicity were not approved for release to the researcher.

The researcher collected the student I.D. numbers of the graduated students from the social work department databases. A member of the social work staff team added the departmental information such as comprehensive exam scores, field evaluation data, and Pell Grant status. The staff member provided the information to the university's analytics department and requested the remaining variables: age group, marital status, location, high school GPA, previous college experience, ACT/SAT scores, social work GPA, and overall GPA. The analytics department removed the I.D. numbers and sent it to the researcher.

3.7 Measures

The study explores the relationships between the knowledge, values, and skills acquired by undergraduate social work students as reflected in two outcome variables with analysis involving selected demographic and educational variables. These variables are used to describe the students by selected program option. The demographic and educational variables are:

- a) **Program Option.** Students choose a program option by which to identify within the university's system. The program options are differentiated as either distance or residential education. Students can take classes in either format regardless of their program option designation. Residential students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 to take online classes. Additionally, residential students living on campus must take at least one course on campus each semester. Dummy variables were utilized for statistical analyses (distance = 1 and residential = 2).
- b) **Age Category.** Students ages are collected upon application to the university. The categories approved by UK IRB were 18 to 24, 25 to 34, and 35 and over.

Dummy variables were utilized for statistical analyses (18 to 24 = 1, 25 to 34 = 2, and 35 and over = 3).

- c) **Marital Status.** Marital status was defined as either single, married, divorced, separated, or widowed. For some of the statistical analyses the categories divorced, separated, and widowed were combined. The variable was categorized for utilization in the statistical analyses (single = 1, married = 2, and divorced, separated, or widowed = 3).
- d) **Pell Grant Status.** Students, who received Pell Grants, are in one category. Students without Pell Grants were in another category. Dummy variables were utilized for statistical analyses (no Pell Grant = 1, Pell Grant = 2)
- e) **Previous College Experience.** Students with previous college experience and students without previous college experience. Dummy variables were utilized for statistical analyses (no previous college experience = 1, previous college experience = 2)
- f) **Standardized Test Scores.** Student test scores on the ACT and SAT.
- g) **High School GPA.** Student high school GPA reported on a 4-point scale.
- h) **Social Work GPA.** Student GPA in social work classes taken at Liberty reported on a 4-point scale.
- i) **Overall GPA.** Student GPA in all college courses taken at Liberty.
- j) **Social Work Distance Education Credits.** Students can take classes in both a residential and distance format. This variable represents the amount of social work credits students completed in the distance format.

The main outcome assessments investigated are:

a) **Comprehensive Examination.** The study evaluates the results of a 200 item-comprehensive examination given electronically covering knowledge and values of each of the 2008 CSWE competencies in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

b) **Field Competency.** The study assesses the results of an electronic evaluation completed by field instructors on students' competency levels during the senior field experience over the same years.

These educational outcome assessments are further discussed below in sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2.

3.7.1 Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam encompasses 41 practice behaviors across the 10 social work competencies developed by CSWE (2008) and contains 200 multiple choice test items. The number of items in each competency vary, but generally there are four or five questions on the exam covering each of the practice behaviors. A Cronbach's alpha test of internal consistency indicated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.709$, $N = 262$) for the overall comprehensive exam. A Cronbach's alpha of over .70 is generally recognized as an acceptable level of reliability (DeVellis & Thorpe, 2022; Taber, 2018; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

The faculty originally considered developing the exam at the suggestion of the first commissioner who visited campus from CSWE's Commission on Accreditation. The program heeded the commissioner's advice and adopted the exam as one of its assessment measures. Students take the exam their senior year as an evaluation of their social work knowledge and values. Many of the questions are case based, which was intentional to help maintain the integrity of the test. Students receive their scores immediately upon

submission. In addition to their scores, they obtain a record of their strengths and needs by competency. A 70% is a passing score. When students do not pass, they receive a printout of the areas of needed growth. Two weeks later, students who did not pass can retake the exam.

The faculty primarily responsible for teaching the course content mainly associated with the competency created the associated exam questions. For instance, the professor, who typically teaches *Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, created the questions regarding the following practice behaviors: 1) social work workers utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and 2) critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment. There are a minimum of four questions per practice behavior.

After development, the faculty creator sent the questions to the team for feedback. The faculty adjusted the questions in response to the feedback. Faculty and staff took the exam to find any errors or misleading questions. The program analyzed the results by frequency of incorrect answers. This was a way of addressing inter-rater reliability. Questions identified were re-examined and either re-worded or replaced. This was an attempt to create content validity for the exam.

A similar evaluation took place for the first three times of the test offering in spring of 2017, fall of 2017, and spring of 2018. However, in some cases, faculty made curriculum adjustments in the class. For instance, students struggled with a couple of the questions focused on social justice. Faculty members theorized that the students were not labeling some social problems as social justice issues. Therefore, faculty decided to increase the

frequency of using the term *social justice* and the concepts associated with it when addressing societal concerns in class.

Students complete the comprehensive exam online using Qualtrics, an electronic survey software. Students are aware of the exam date months in advance. A staff member sends each student a link to the exam five minutes prior to the start time. Students completed the 200-question timed exam synchronously from various locations around the world while traditional students took the exam in a computer lab. Staff were physically in the computer lab to provide students with computer support when needed; staff manned the phones for distance students in the case of similar issues. The university's instructional technology helpdesk was also available when the computer concerns were beyond the ability of the social work staff. Students were made aware of the expectation of not utilizing educational resources while taking the exam. The first year the exam was administered students were allotted 2 ½ hours to take the exam. The allotment for the following years was 4 hours aligning with the time limit of the bachelor's level licensure exam, which is 170 questions (SocialWorkLicensure.org, 2022).

Qualtrics separates the results as prompted. A social work staff member separated the results by competency and converted the scores into percentages.

The staff member removed the student names from the collected data to protect the students' identities.

3.7.2 Student Field Competency

In 2017 and in spring of 2018, the field instructors utilized the Social Work Educational Assessment Project (SWEAP) Field Practicum Placement Assessment Instrument (FPPAI) to assess the students' level of competency attainment. Christensen et al. (2015) studied the reliability of the FPPAI over a period of three years. The sample included 457 bachelor's level students. A Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency was performed on the initial cohort of 304 students resulting in a coefficient of 0.96. Additionally, they reported inter-rater reliability among subsamples. One subsample ($n = 43$) of field instructors underwent specific training on the instrument resulting in 90% inter-rater reliability and another subsample ($n = 48$) without training had 84% inter-rater reliability. Additionally, they had another subsample ($n = 62$) evaluate the students and wait 3 weeks and re-evaluate them resulting in test-retest coefficient of .93. Their findings indicate, "... the reliability, validity, and utility of the FPPAI as an outcome measure of the 2008 EPAS competencies, and related practice behaviors" (p.1). According to SWEAP's (2019) website, 92 programs currently use the instrument. The FPPAI utilizes a 9-point Likert Scale.

As the LU program grew, the field team had difficulty with the FPPAI. The FPPAI provided individual codes for each student, requiring that the program had to contact each individual student to provide their specific code for the evaluation. This was a tedious and labor-intensive process for the program. Additionally, at times students had problems with the code and it caused a delay in the submission of field evaluations.

As a result, in the summer of 2018, the field team created its own instrument that itemized each of the CSWE competencies. The instrument was very similar to the FPPAI

with each competency having the practice behaviors listed. There were 10 competencies in the 2008 CSWE EPAS that were evaluated by the FFPAI. One difference from the FFPAI incorporated in the program created form was to separate the 10th competency into four areas: engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation. As a result, the instrument measures 13 different dimensions. Another difference in the program created form was a 7-point Likert scale as opposed to the 9-point Likert scale used by the FFPAI. For this study, the results of a Cronbach's alpha test of internal consistency indicate an acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha = 0.975$, $N = 262$) for the overall instrument. Some sources would argue that this is an excellent level of reliability (Nunnally, 1978; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Lance et al, 2006).

Liberty's field instructors are professional social workers located all over the country who supervise social work students in their practicums. They are not faculty. Field instructor training occurred at the beginning of each semester to help field instructors understand the various expectations associated with the role. Students attend these trainings with their field instructors. The evaluation form is housed in the Field Manual and students have access to the form prior to and during their practicum experiences. During the training, field instructors are provided education on how to utilize the evaluation instrument. Additionally, each student has a faculty field liaison that meets with each field instructor and student twice during a semester. The first meeting addresses questions, learning contracts, and evaluations. The second meeting occurs at the mid-semester point to evaluate student progress and to review student progress on the evaluation that the field instructors will complete at the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, field instructors rated students on the field competency demonstrated in their practicum using a

Likert scale of 1 to 7. Field instructors submitted the evaluation electronically. The staff compiled the data associated with the field instructors' evaluation of students' competency. The analytics department removed the student identification numbers from the collected data to protect the students' identities before providing the information to this researcher.

3.8 Summary

There are few studies comparing entire BSW programs with McAllister's (2013) being the closest, but the study compared the outcomes on only four different social work courses. Additionally, most studies indicated one data collection point as mentioned previously. This study covers a three-year span – 2017, 2018, and 2019. The latest MSW outcome comparison study (Cummings et al., 2019) evaluated both comprehensive exam results and field evaluation results. No BSW studies in the literature review investigated the relationship between program option, social work distance education credits, and comprehensive educational outcomes.

This study adds to the sparse body of knowledge regarding undergraduate social work online education. It presents results from a faith-based school. The measurements are field competency (field instructor evaluations) and objective comprehensive exam scores. As mentioned previously, numerous researchers are calling for more studies in this area in social work education. In a practical sense, the research may inform the program development or assessment procedures of other programs considering distance education.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This chapter describes the findings of the statistical analyses associated with the exploratory study, which focuses on the relationships between demographic and educational variables and two outcome variables in undergraduate social work education. The chapter first describes the demographics, frequency distributions, and descriptive statistics of the sample. Next, it proceeds to address the research questions. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 28 (SPSS) was utilized for the analyses. The three questions being considered are as follows:

R1: Is there a difference in students' performance on the comprehensive exam and field competency measures by their selection of program option (residential or online)?

R2: Do the demographic and educational variables in the study serve as predictors for comprehensive exam scores?

R3: Do the demographic and educational variables in the study serve as predictors for field competency evaluations?

4.1 Sample Characteristics

The demographic variables give a general description of the sample. Liberty University and the University of Kentucky Internal Review Boards approved the collection of the following variables: age category, program option, marital status, Pell Grant status, previous college experience, high school GPA, ACT/SAT score, location, social work GPA, college GPA, comprehensive exam score, and field evaluation score. The researcher requested the use of sex, age as an interval variable, and ethnicity. The University of Kentucky's Internal Review Board was concerned about the confidentiality of the students,

so age category was permitted, but age as a continuous variable, sex, and ethnicity were not. Most students in the program are female. The following information was gleaned from analyzing the demographic information.

4.1.1 Age Category

As indicated in Table 4.1, the sample consisted of 262 undergraduate students. The largest age category identified was 18 – 24 consisting of 55.7% ($n = 146$) of the sample, followed by the 25 - 34 category, accounting for 23.7% ($n = 62$) with 20.6% ($n=54$) of the students being 35 years and over.

Students chose a program option as described earlier, which indicated the mode by which they gleaned *most* of their educational experiences. Slightly more students, 56.5% ($n = 148$) identified as distance learning students and 43.5% ($n = 114$) as residential.

Examining the age category by program option revealed significant differences as illustrated in Table 4.1. Only 23.6% ($n = 35$) of the distance students but 97.4% ($n = 111$) of the residential students were in the age category of 18 to 24 years of age. Whereas 39.9% ($n = 59$) of the distance students appeared in the 25-to-34-year category, only 2.6% ($n = 3$) of the residential students did. Similarly, 36.5% ($n = 54$) of the distance students were over the age of 34 and no residential students were in that category. There were significant differences in the choice of program option by age category ($\chi^2 (2, N = 262) = 142.12, p < .001$) with younger students more likely to be in the residential program and older students more likely to be in the distance learning program. *Cramer's V* (.74, $p < .001$) indicated a high strength of relationship between the two categorical variables.

4.1.2 Marital Status

Most of the students 56.9% ($n = 149$) reported being single, 22.5% ($n = 59$) were married, but 16% ($n = 42$) did not specify their status, and less than 5% reported being divorced ($n = 7$), widowed ($n = 3$), or separated ($n = 2$).

When considering marital status by program option as illustrated in Table 4.1, 39% ($n = 41$) of the distance education students were single, 50% ($n = 53$) were married, 9% divorced ($n = 7$) or separated ($n = 3$), and 2% ($n = 2$) were widowed. The residential program represented a different demographic with 95% ($n = 108$) being single and 5% ($n = 6$) being married.

After combining the categories of divorced, separated, and widowed students to address low expected cell frequencies in the Chi Square calculation, a significant difference was found between the program option chosen by student marital status ($\chi^2 (2, N = 220) = 79.38, p < .001$) indicating significantly more single students chose the residential program with married students more likely to be found in the distance program.

4.1.3 Pell Grant Status

In this sample, 59.5% ($n = 156$) students received Pell Grants; 70.5% ($n = 110$) of which were distance education students and 29.5% ($n = 46$) were residential. There was a significant difference between program option and Pell Grant status ($\chi^2 (1, N = 156) = 30.85, p < .001$). Significantly more students with Pell Grants were found in the distance program.

Table 4.1 Socio-Demographic Variables

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	Percent of <i>N</i> (262)	Percent by Program Option	Program Option χ^2
Age Categories	262			142.12**
18-24	146	55.7		
Distance	35		23.6	
Residential	111		97.4	
25-34	62	23.7		
Distance	59		39.9	
Residential	3		2.6	
35 and up	54	20.6		
Distance	54		36.5	
Residential	0		0.0	
Marital Status	220			79.38**
Single	149	56.9		
Distance	41		38.7	
Residential	108		94.7	
Married	59	22.5		
Distance	53		50.0	
Residential	6		5.3	
Divorced	7	2.7		
Distance	7		6.6	
Residential	0		0	
Widowed	3	1.1		
Distance	3		2.8	
Residential	0		0	
Separated	2	0.8		
Distance	2		1.9	
Residential	0		0	
None Specified	42	16		
Pell Grant	156	59.5		30.85**
Distance	110		74.3	
Residential	46		40.4	
Previous College Experience	136	51.9		10.80**
Distance	90		66.2	
Residential	46		33.8	
Program Option				
Distance	148	56.5		
Residential	114	43.5		

***p* < .01

4.1.4 Previous College

The number of students with previous college experience constituted 51.9% ($n = 136$) of the sample with 66.2% ($n = 90$) being in the distance education option and 33.8% ($n = 46$) in the residential option. There was a significant difference between the program option the student chose and their previous college experience ($\chi^2 (1, N = 136) = 10.80, p = .001$) with students in the distance learning program more likely to have earned prior college credits.

4.1.5 Location

Students in the sample came from 34 different states including both Hawaii and Alaska. Virginia produced the most students ($n = 89$), with North Carolina ($n = 26$), Ohio ($n = 19$), Florida ($n = 15$), and Pennsylvania ($n = 14$) having large representations. Thirty-four percent of the students ($n = 89$) indicated that Virginia was their home state, which is the location of Liberty University. Fifty of those students (56%) were residential students and 44% (39) were distance students. Of the 26 from North Carolina, which borders Virginia in the south, 12 were distance students and the remaining 54% ($n = 14$) were residential students.

4.1.6 SAT/ACT Scores

Table 4.2 provides some additional descriptive statistics of the sample. The collected data contained a limited number of standardized test scores. Applicants to the residential program option were able to submit either SAT or ACT scores. The standardized test scores available to the study were: SAT Reading ($n = 102$, distance 16%, residential 84%) and Math ($n = 103$, distance 17%, residential 83%) as well as ACT

Composite ($n = 67$, distance 19%, residential 81%). Standardized test scores are not a requirement for admission for distance education students at Liberty, so the subsample of distance student scores was much smaller.

An independent samples t -test was performed to assess whether the mean SAT reading scores differed significantly for the 86 residential students compared with the 16 available for online students. Histograms and boxplots were reviewed that SAT reading scores were approximately normally distributed and there were no outliers observed. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = 1.99$, $p = .162$, which indicated no significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the equal variance assumed version of the t test was utilized, demonstrating no significant difference in the mean SAT reading scores, $t(100) = -1.01$, $p = .315$, two tailed. Of the SAT scores reported, the sample mean for reading was 558 ($M = 557.95$, $SD = 77.35$). The mean SAT reading score for residential students ($M = 561.28$, $SD = 80.00$) was approximately 21 points higher than distance students ($M = 540.00$, $SD = 60.11$).

Similarly, an independent samples t -test was performed to assess whether the mean SAT math scores differed significantly for the residential students compared with the online students. Histograms and boxplots were reviewed that SAT math scores were approximately normally distributed; there were one extreme outlier observed amongst the residential student scores. The outlier was excluded from the analysis, which left 85 residential SAT math scores to be compared with the 17 online scores. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = .167$, $p = .683$, which indicated no significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the equal variance assumed version of the t test was utilized, demonstrating no significant difference

in the mean SAT math scores, $t(100) = -1.33, p = .185$, two tailed. Of the SAT scores reported, the sample mean for math was 515 ($M = 515.49, SD = 74.67$). The mean SAT math score for residential students ($M = 519.88, SD = 75.92$) was approximately 26 points higher than distance students ($M = 493.53, SD = 65.76$). Overall, residential students scored higher on the SAT tests than online students, but the differences were not statistically significant and there was a distinct difference in subsample sizes.

An independent samples t -test was performed to assess whether the mean ACT composite scores differed significantly for the 54 residential students compared with the 13 online students. Histograms and boxplots were reviewed that ACT composite scores were approximately normally distributed and there was an outlier observed. Since the outlier was not extreme, it was retained for the analysis. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = 4.37, p = .041$, which indicated a lack of homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the unequal variance assumed version of the t test was utilized, demonstrating a significant difference in the mean ACT composite scores, $t(27.83) = -3.52, p = .001$, two tailed. Of the ACT scores reported, the sample mean was 24 ($M = 23.55, SD = 4.20$). The mean ACT composite score for residential students ($M = 24.2, SD = 4.24$) was approximately 3.5 points higher than distance students ($M = 20.85, SD = 2.73$). It is important to note both the small overall sample and the difference in subsample sizes. Due to the lack of a single standardized score across the whole sample as well as the discrepancy in subsample sizes, this information is provided only for descriptive purposes. Neither SAT nor ACT scores are used in further analyses.

Table 4.2 Standardized Tests, Academic Data, and Program Option

Characteristic	Descriptive Statistics		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
SAT – Reading	102	557.94	77.35
Distance	16	540.00	60.11
Residential	86	561.28	80.00
SAT – Math	103	513.20	77.84
Distance	17	493.53	65.76
Residential	86	517.09	79.78
ACT – Composite	67	23.55**	4.20
Distance	13	20.85	2.73
Residential	54	24.20	4.24
High School GPA	183	3.32**	0.59
Distance	82	3.04	0.67
Residential	101	3.55	0.39
Overall GPA	262	3.54	0.38
Distance	148	3.57	0.37
Residential	114	3.50	0.39
SOWK GPA	262	3.71	0.33
Distance	148	3.71	0.33
Residential	114	3.72	0.33
SOWK Distance Credits	262	28.92**	16.81
Distance	148	42.38	6.35
Residential	114	11.45	7.43
SOWK Residential Credits	262	16.39**	16.69
Distance	148	2.79	5.46
Residential	114	34.05	6.90
Valid N (listwise)	29		

Note. The abbreviation “SOWK” represents the words “Social Work.”

** $p < .01$

4.1.7 GPA

As shown in Table 4.2, the mean high school GPA for 183 students was 3.32 ($SD = .59$). Preliminary data screening indicated that the scores were unevenly distributed. Since the normal distribution of scores is an assumption for utilizing a t test, a nonparametric test was conducted. A Mann-Whitney U test was chosen to assess if there was a significant difference between the means of high school GPA of distance and residential students. It was determined that the 101 residential students' high school GPAs ($M = 3.55, SD = 0.39$) were significantly higher than the 82 online students ($M = 3.04, SD = 0.67$) represented in the sample, $U = 2273.50, z = -5.24, p < .001$.

As shown in Table 4.2, the mean Liberty overall GPA for 262 students was 3.54 ($SD = .38$). Similarly to high school GPA, there was an uneven distribution of data, so a Mann-Whitney U test was performed to assess if there was a significant difference between the means of overall GPA of distance and residential students. Histograms and boxplots indicated that the scores were unevenly distributed, which is what necessitated the use of a nonparametric test. It was determined that the residential students' overall GPAs ($M = 3.50, SD = 0.39$) were not significantly different than the online students' GPA ($M = 3.57, SD = 0.37$) represented in the sample, $U = 27559.50, z = -1.44, p = .149$.

As shown in Table 4.2, the mean SOWK GPA for 262 students was 3.71 ($SD = .33$). Histograms and boxplots indicated unevenly distributed scores, which necessitated the use of a nonparametric test. Therefore, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed to assess if there was a significant difference between the means of social work GPA of distance and residential students. It was determined that the residential students' SOWK GPAs ($M =$

3.72, $SD = 0.33$) were not significantly different than the online students' SOWK GPA ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.33$) represented in the sample, $U = 8167.50$, $z = -0.45$ $p = .655$.

4.1.8 Social Work Distance College Credits

As illustrated in Table 4.2, the average amount of social work credits earned per student through distance education in the overall sample was 29 hours ($M = 28.92$, $SD = 16.81$). Preliminary data screening indicated the scores were unevenly distributed. Since the normal distribution of scores is an assumption for utilizing a t test, a nonparametric test was conducted. The Mann-Whitney U test was chosen to assess if there was a significant difference between the means of social work distance credits earned by distance and residential students. It was determined that the amount of distance social work credits residential students earned ($M = 11.45$, $SD = 7.43$) was significantly different than the amount earned by the distance students ($M = 42.38$, $SD = 6.35$) represented in the sample, $U = 271.5$, $z = -13.58$, $p < .001$.

4.1.9 Residential College Credits

As seen in Table 4.2, the average amount of residential social work credits earned per student in the total sample was 16 ($M = 16.39$, $SD = 16.69$). Similarly to distance college credits, residential college credits were unevenly distributed, so a Mann-Whitney U test was performed to assess if there was a significant difference between the mean amount of social work residential credits earned by distance and residential students. It was determined that the amount of residential social work credits residential students earned ($M = 34.05$, $SD = 6.90$) was significantly different than the amount earned by the distance students ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 5.46$) represented in the sample, $U = 162.0$, $z = -13.58$, $p < .001$.

It is important to note that students at this university can choose either program option, residential or distance, while completing credits through either a distance or residential learning platform. Students choosing the residential program option can take as many distance credits as they desire with the reverse being true as well. The proximity to campus may limit the distance students from taking more residential courses.

4.2 Research Questions

4.2.1 R1: Is there a difference in students' performance on the comprehensive exam and field competency measures by their selection of program option (residential or online)?

Please refer to chapter three for information about the operationalization of the outcome variables comprehensive exam and the field competency rating.

An independent samples *t*-test was performed to assess whether the mean comprehensive scores differed significantly for the 148 students in the distance program option compared with the 114 students in the residential program. Histograms and boxplots were graphed demonstrating an approximate normal distribution with only two outliers in the residential group. Since these were within two standard deviations of the mean, they were not determined to be extreme and were retained in the analysis. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = 8.05, p = .005$, which indicated a significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the equal variance not assumed version of the *t* test was utilized, demonstrating a significant difference in the mean comprehensive scores, $t(260) = -5.119, p < .001$, two tailed. The mean comprehensive exam score for students in the residential program ($M = 169.75, SD$

= 9.234) was about 5 points higher than those in the distance program ($M = 164.64$, $SD = 11.558$, 95% CI [-7.65, -2.59]).

An independent samples t -test was also calculated to determine if mean field evaluation scores were significantly different for the 129 students in the distance program ($M = .83$, $SD = .119$) and the 109 residential students ($M = .80$, $SD = .147$). Histograms and boxplots were demonstrating an approximate normal distribution with four outliers in the residential group. Since these outliers were not extreme, they were retained for the analysis. Distance students scored 3% higher on average than residential students. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = 2.93$, $p = .09$; this indicated no significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the pooled version of the t test was used, which specified no significant relationship between the mean field evaluation scores by program option, $t(236) = 1.58$, $p = .116$, $N = 238$, 95% CI [-.01, .06].

In summary, a significant difference between the mean comprehensive exam scores by program option was revealed. On average, students in the residential program option fared better than those in the distance program on the comprehensive exam. When considering field evaluation scores by program option, there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores.

4.2.2 R2: Do the demographic and educational variables in the study serve as predictors for comprehensive exam scores?

To determine possible predictors of comprehensive exam scores, analyses were conducted to determine which variables had association with the dependent variable and to screen for potential multicollinearity between and among the independent variables and

the dependent variable. Analyses were first run to determine the degree of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, comprehensive exam score. Variables without significant relationships with the dependent variable were not used in further analyses. Secondly, the degree of association amongst the remaining independent variables was assessed to screen for multicollinearity. *Pearson's r*, *Cramer's V*, phi, and eta coefficient tests were run and interpreted in accordance with common practice in the social sciences. The researcher identified the strength of relationships demonstrated by coefficients of 0.00 as no correlation among two variables, +/- 0.01 – 0.30 as a weak association, +/- 0.31 – 0.60 as a moderate correlation, and greater than +/- 0.60 as a strong association between the variables (Healey, 2012). Finally, the possible predictors were identified, and three regression analyses were performed.

4.2.2.1 Variable Relationships with the Dependent Variable

The first step in determining possible predictors of comprehensive exam taken by the researcher was to determine the degree of relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. As illustrated in Table 4.3, marital status and previous college experience had no significant relationship with the dependent variable. These two variables were not included in further analyses. The remaining variables all had weak to moderate associations with the dependent variable. Each of the analyses run to compute these relationships are further discussed below.

4.2.2.2 Program Option.

There are two program options represented in the data set, distance and residential. Dummy variables were used to represent each category, 1 = distance and 2 = residential. As noted previously an independent samples *t*-test revealed a significant difference ($p <$

.001) between the means, $t(260) = -5.119$, $N = 268$ with residential students scoring on average 3% higher on the test than those in the distance option. The eta correlation between program option and comprehensive exam score ($\eta = .233$) was weak with eta square ($\eta^2 = .055$) illustrating that program option accounted for 5.5% of the variance in comprehensive scores. Based on these results, program option was retained for further consideration as a possible variable in the regression analysis.

4.2.2.3 Age Category.

Histograms revealed an uneven distribution of scores, so the use of a nonparametric test was necessitated. A Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to determine if there was a significant mean difference in field evaluation scores by age category. There were three age categories delineated in the study, 18 to 24, 25 to 34, and 35 years and over. Dummy variables were used to represent each group; 1 the youngest group, 2 represented those 25 – 34, and 3 represented those over 34. The overall results of the Kruskal-Wallis indicated a statistically significant difference among groups, $H(2) = 7.224$, $p = .027$. There was a weak eta correlation ($\eta = .176$) between age category and comprehensive exam score with age accounting for 3.1% ($\eta^2 = .031$) of the variance in comprehensive exam score. Age category was retained for further consideration as a possible variable in the regression analysis.

Table 4.3 Correlations between Variables and Comprehensive Exam

Variables	η	r
Program Option	.233**	
Age Category	.176*	
Marital Status	.151	
Pell Grant Status	.185**	
Previous College Experience	.029	
High School GPA		.543**
Overall GPA		.454**
Social Work GPA		.401**
Social Work Distance Credits		-.238**

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

4.2.2.4 Marital Status.

Due to an uneven distribution of scores, a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to determine if there was a significant mean difference in comprehensive scores by marital status. Marital status initially had five categorical attributes with small representation in the divorced, widowed, and separated categories. Those three categories with small representation were combined for the analysis. Therefore, marital status was divided into three categories with 1 representing single persons, 2 representing a married status, and 3 denoting divorced, widowed, and separated. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test indicated no statistically significant difference among groups, $H(2) = 3.366$, $p = .186$.

There was a weak correlation between marital status and comprehensive exam score ($\eta = .151$) with the eta squared coefficient score ($\eta^2 = .023$) indicating marital status accounted for 2.3% of the variance in comprehensive scores. Since there was no significant relationship between marital status and comprehensive exam, marital status was not retained for consideration as a possible predictor of comprehensive exam scores.

4.2.2.5 Pell Grant.

An independent samples *t*-test was performed to assess whether the mean comprehensive scores differed significantly for the 156 students receiving Pell Grants compared with the 106 students who did not. Dummy variables were used to represent the categories: no Pell Grant was represented by the number 1 and having a Pell Grant was assigned the number 2. Upon examination of the histograms and boxplots, there was a normal distribution of scores and two outliers observed. The outliers were not extreme, so they were retained in the analysis. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = 2.71$, $p = .101$, which indicated no significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the equal variance assumed version of the *t* test was utilized, demonstrating a significant difference in the mean comprehensive scores, $t(260) = 3.04$, $p = .003$, two tailed. The mean comprehensive exam score for students with Pell Grants ($M = 165.21$, $SD = 11.17$) was approximately 4 points lower than those without Pell Grants ($M = 169.30$, $SD = 10.03$). The eta coefficient test was performed to determine degree of relationship since the independent variable was dichotomous and the dependent variable was continuous ($\eta = .185$); the eta squared results ($\eta^2 = .034$) denoted a small level of practical significance, accounting for 3.4% of the variance in

comprehensive scores. Pell Grant status was retained for consideration as a possible predictor variable in the regression analysis.

4.2.2.6 Previous College Experience.

An independent samples *t*-test was performed to assess whether the mean comprehensive scores differed significantly for the 136 students with previous college experience compared with the 126 students without previous collegiate experience. Dummy variables were used to represent the two categories: no previous college experience was represented by the number 1 and having college experience was assigned the number 2. Upon examination of the histograms and boxplots, there was a normal distribution of scores and one outlier observed. The outlier was not extreme, so it was retained in the analysis. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = .15$, $p = .702$, which indicated no significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the equal variance assumed version of the *t* test was utilized, demonstrating no significant difference in the mean comprehensive scores, $t(260) = -.47$, $p = .637$, two tailed. The mean comprehensive exam score for students with previous college experience ($M = 167.17$, $SD = 11.03$) was less than 1 point higher than those without college experience ($M = 166.53$, $SD = 10.78$). The eta coefficient test was performed to determine the degree of relationship since the independent variable was dichotomous and the dependent variable was continuous ($\eta = .029$); the results denoted virtually no relationship. Since previous college experience had no significant relationship with comprehensive exam scores and accounted for almost no variance in comprehensive exam scores, previous college experience was not used in the regression analysis.

High School GPA.

As illustrated in Table 4.3, Pearson's coefficient was calculated to determine the strength of the relationship between high school GPA with the dependent variable. A significant positive correlation was found between high school GPA and comprehensive exam scores ($r = .543, p < .001, n = 180$), indicating a moderate association. High school GPA was retained for consideration to determine if it would be included in the regression analysis.

4.2.2.7 Overall GPA.

A Pearson's coefficient was analyzed to determine the degree of relationship between overall GPA and comprehensive exam scores. Overall GPA had a significant moderate correlation with comprehensive exam scores ($r = .454, p < .001, n = 258$). Overall GPA was retained for further analysis to determine if it would be included in the regression model.

4.2.2.8 Social Work GPA.

As illustrated in Table 4.3, Pearson's coefficients were run to determine the strength of the relationship between social work GPA and comprehensive exam scores. The analysis revealed that social work GPA had a significant moderate relationship with comprehensive exam scores ($r = .401, p < .001, n = 258$). SOWK GPA was retained for further analysis to determine if it would be included in the regression model.

4.2.2.9 Social Work Distance Credits.

Pearson correlation was also conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between the number of social work distance education credits earned by students and

comprehensive exam scores. A significant negative relationship was revealed ($r = -.238, p < .001, n = 258$) with comprehensive exam scores. The association was a weak one. The amount of social work distance credits taken by students was retained for consideration as a potential predictor of comprehensive exam scores.

4.2.3 Variable Relationships

To determine possible predictor variables, the next step in the analysis was to determine the degree of associations among the variables that were still being retained for consideration in the regression analysis. When there was a threat of multicollinearity identified, the variable was eliminated from the regression analysis. *Pearson's r*, *Cramer's V*, *phi*, and eta coefficient tests were run in accordance with the type of variables included in the analysis (Warner, 2013). The results of these analyses are included in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Correlations between Possible Predictors and Comprehensive Exam Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Program Option	1.0							
2. Age Category	.74 ^{**3}	1.0						
3. Pell Grant Status	-.34 ^{**4}	.44 ^{**3}	1.0					
4. High School GPA	.43 ^{**2}	.59 ^{**2}	.28 ^{**2}	1.0				
5. Overall GPA	.09 ²	.10 ²	.10 ²	.36 ^{**1}	1.0			
6. Social Work GPA	.03 ²	.06 ²	.14 ^{*2}	.37 ^{**1}	.87 ^{**1}	1.0		
7. Social Work Distance Credits	.91 ^{**2}	.73 ^{**2}	.36 ^{**2}	-.44 ^{**1}	.08 ¹	-.07 ¹	1.0	
8. Comprehensive Exam Score	.23 ^{**2}	.18 ^{*2}	.19 ^{**2}	.54 ^{**1}	.45 ^{**1}	.40 ^{**1}	-.24 ^{**1}	1.0

Note: ¹Pearson's r, ²Eta, ³Cramer's V, ⁴Phi,

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Upon examination of the results, there were strong associations between 1) social work GPA and overall GPA, 2) age category and program option, and 3) social work distance credits and program option. Overall GPA had a stronger relationship with the dependent variable, comprehensive exam score, $r = .45$ than social work GPA did, $r = .40$. Due to the threat of multicollinearity, social work GPA was not retained as possible predictor variable for the first regression analysis. Program option was evaluated next as it had strong associations with both age category and social work distance credits. Due to threats of possible multicollinearity, program option or both age category and social work distance credits had to be eliminated as possible predictors of comprehensive exam scores. Social work distance credits had a slightly stronger association, $r = -.24$ than program option had with the dependent variable, $\eta = .23$. Program option was more closely associated with the dependent variable than age category, $\eta = .18$. However, both associations were weak. The researcher decided to retain social work distance credits and age category as possible predictors of comprehensive exam scores for the first and second regression analysis. For the third regression analysis, overall GPA and program option were retained for the analysis; age category and distance credits earned were highly correlated with program option, so they were not considered as predictors in the third regression analysis due to possible threats of multicollinearity.

4.2.4 Regression Analysis Predicting Comprehensive Exam Scores

After examining the correlation matrix, the variables chosen for the regression analysis were age category, Pell Grant status, high school GPA, overall GPA, and distance social work credits. Program option and social work GPA had strong associations with other potential predictor variables, so they were not retained because of possible

multicollinearity concerns. Additionally, previous college experience and marital status were not included as possible predictors in the regression analysis since the association between the variables with the dependent variable was negligible.

Upon checking for the assumptions for multiple regression analysis, each were met. The dependent variable is continuous and there are more than two independent variables. An analysis of standard residuals was performed to identify outliers; no outliers were identified (*Std. Residual Min* = -2.72, *Std. Residual Max* = 2.27). There was independence of observations as the Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.17. Upon examination, the histogram of standardized residuals illustrated approximate normal distribution. The p-plot demonstrated a linear relationship with most points on or close to the line. The scatterplot of standardized residuals illustrated homoscedasticity. Multicollinearity was not identified through the analysis, as the tolerance scores were above 0.2 and the VIF scores were below 10 (*Age Group*, *Tolerance* = .41, *VIF* = 2.42, *Pell Grant*, *Tolerance* = .81 *VIF* = 1.24 , *High School GPA*, *Tolerance* = .50, *VIF* = 2.00, *Overall GPA*, *Tolerance* = .75, *VIF* = 1.33, *Social Work Distance Credits*, *Tolerance* = .57, *VIF* = 1.75). The assumption of non-zero variances was also met (*Age Group*, *Variance* = .64, *Pell Grant*, *Variance* = .24, *High School GPA*, *Variance* = .35, *Overall GPA*, *Variance* = .14, *Social Work Distance Credits*, *Variance* = 282.70, *Comprehensive Exam Score*, *Variance* = 118.63).

Standard multiple regression analysis was performed using the enter method to determine if the descriptive and educational variables (age category, Pell Grant status, high school GPA, overall GPA, and social work distance credits) predicted comprehensive exam scores. As shown in Table 4.5, age category, high school GPA, overall GPA, and

social work distance credits served as predictors of comprehensive exam scores. Age was identified as a significant predictor ($p = .012$) of higher comprehensive exam scores, $b = 3.68$, $SE = 1.44$, $95\% CI = [0.83 \text{ to } 6.51]$. High school GPA served as a significant predictor ($p < .001$) for higher comprehensive exam scores, $b = 9.10$, $SE = 1.52$, $95\% CI = [6.11 \text{ to } 12.10]$. As expected, higher overall GPA predicted higher comprehensive exam scores, $b = 7.53$, $SE = 1.92$, $p < .001$, $95\% CI = [3.73 \text{ to } 11.33]$. Additionally, social work distance credits predicted lower comprehensive exam scores, $b = -.14$, $SE = .05$, $p = .006$, $95\% CI = [-.24 \text{ to } -.04]$. Pell Grant status was not a predictor of comprehensive examination scores.

Table 4.5 Multiple Regression Analysis Summary of Possible Predictors of Comprehensive Exam Scores

<i>Source</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Comprehensive Exam: $R = .648$, $R^2 = .420$, $MSE = 8.529$, $F(5, 177) = 25.582$, $p < .001$						
Age Category	3.680	1.444	2.549	.012	.830	6.529
Pell Grant Status	-1.815	1.404	-1.293	.198	-4.585	.955
High School GPA	9.103	1.519	5.994	<.001	6.106	12.101
Overall GPA	7.529	1.924	3.914	<.001	3.733	11.326
SOWK Distance Credits	-.140	.050	-2.782	.006	-.240	-.041

An additional regression analysis was conducted without retaining high school GPA in the analysis since utilizing high school GPA lowered the sample ($n = 183$, $N = 262$) by 30%. Initially the analysis of standard residuals was performed (*Std. Residual Min* = -3.52, *Std. Residual Max* = 2.79) with one outlier identified. After excluding the outlier from further analysis, the assumptions were met for multiple regression analysis. The dependent variable was continuous and there were more than two independent variables.

An additional analysis of standard residuals was performed to confirm that there were no additional outliers; no outliers were identified (*Std. Residual Min* = -2.36, *Std. Residual Max* = 2.82). There was independence of observations as the Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.14. Upon examination, the histogram of standardized residuals illustrated approximate normal distribution. The p-plot demonstrated a linear relationship with most points on or close to the line. The scatterplot of standardized residuals illustrated homoscedasticity. Multicollinearity was not identified through the analysis, as the tolerance scores were above 0.2 and the VIF scores were below 10 (*Age Group*, *Tolerance* = .50, *VIF* = 2.02, *Pell Grant*, *Tolerance* = .80, *VIF* = 1.25, *Overall GPA*, *Tolerance* = .97, *VIF* = 1.03, *Social Work Distance Credits*, *Tolerance* = .52, *VIF* = 1.92). The assumption of non-zero variances was also met (*Age Group*, *Variance* = .64, *Pell Grant*, *Variance* = .24, *Overall GPA*, *Variance* = .14, *Social Work Distance Credits*, *Variance* = 282.70, *Comprehensive Exam Score*, *Variance* = 118.63).

Standard multiple regression analysis was performed using the enter method to determine if the descriptive and educational variables (age category, Pell Grant status, overall GPA, and social work distance credits) predicted comprehensive exam scores. As shown in Table 4.6, overall GPA and social work distance credits served as predictors of comprehensive exam scores. Consistent with the previous regression analysis, higher overall GPA predicted higher comprehensive exam scores, $b = 13.89$, $SE = 1.50$, $p < .001$, $95\% CI = [10.93 \text{ to } 16.85]$. Additionally, social work distance credits continued to predict lower comprehensive exam scores, $b = -.15$, $SE = .05$, $p = .002$, $95\% CI = [-.24 \text{ to } -.05]$. Neither Pell Grant status, $p = .58$ or age category, $p = .68$ was a predictor of comprehensive examination scores with this sample ($n = 261$).

Table 4.6 Regression Analysis Summary of Possible Predictors of Comprehensive Exam

<i>Source</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Comprehensive Exam: $R = .542$, $R^2 = .294$, $MSE = 9.034$, $F(4, 256) = 26.654$, $p < .001$						
Age Category	-.412	.991	-.416	.678	-2.364	1.540
Pell Grant Status	-.715	1.274	-.561	.575	-3.224	1.794
Overall GPA	13.889	1.504	9.236	<.001	10.928	16.851
SOWK Distance Credits	-.145	.046	-3.127	.002	-.236	-.054

As this is an exploratory study, the researcher chose to run an additional standard multiple regression model with program option, Pell Grant status, and overall GPA. Program option was highly correlated with both age category and social work distance credits, so those variables were not included in this third regression analysis. Initially the analysis of standard residuals was performed (*Std. Residual Min* = -3.59, *Std. Residual Max* = 2.85) with one outlier identified. After excluding the outlier from further analysis, the assumptions were met for multiple regression analysis. The dependent variable is continuous and there are more than two independent variables. An analysis of standard residuals was performed to identify outliers; no further outliers were identified (*Std. Residual Min* = -2.35, *Std. Residual Max* = 2.89). There was independence of observations as the Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.13. Upon examination, the histogram of standardized residuals illustrated approximate normal distribution. The p-plot demonstrated a linear relationship with most points on or close to the line. The scatterplot of standardized residuals illustrated homoscedasticity. Multicollinearity was not identified through the analysis, as the tolerance scores were above 0.2 and the VIF scores were below 10 (*Program Option*, *Tolerance* = .87, *VIF* = 1.15, *Pell Grant*, *Tolerance* = .87 *VIF* = 1.16,

Overall GPA, Tolerance = .97, VIF = 1.03). The assumption of non-zero variances was also met (Program Option, Variance = .25, Pell Grant, Variance = .24, Overall GPA, Variance = .14, Social Work Distance Credits, Variance = 282.70, Comprehensive Exam Score, Variance = 118.63).

Standard multiple regression analysis was performed using the enter method to determine if the descriptive and educational variables (program option, Pell Grant status, and overall GPA) predicted comprehensive exam scores. As shown in Table 4.7, overall GPA and campus option served as predictors of comprehensive exam scores. Consistent with the previous regression analysis, higher overall GPA predicted higher comprehensive exam scores, $b = 13.92$, $SE = 1.49$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [10.98 to 16.87]. Program option also served as a predictor of comprehensive exam scores, $b = 5.58$, $SE = 1.20$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [3.21 to 7.95]. Consistent with previous findings Pell Grant status, $p = .49$ was not a predictor of comprehensive examination scores.

Table 4.7 Third Regression Analysis Summary of Possible Predictors of Comprehensive Exam

<i>Source</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Comprehensive Exam: $R = .548$, $R^2 = .300$, $MSE = 8.98$, $F(3, 257) = 36.712$, $p < .001$						
Program Option	5.580	1.203	4.637	<.001	3.210	7.950
Pell Grant Status	-.836	1.217	-.687	.493	-3.232	1.560
Overall GPA	13.924	1.493	9.323	<.001	10.983	16.865

4.2.5 R3: Do the demographic and educational variables in the study serve as predictors for field competency?

Analyses were run to determine the relationships between and among the variables and the dependent variable, field evaluation score. Analyses were first run to determine the degree of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, comprehensive exam score. Variables without significant relationships with the dependent variable were not used in further analyses. Secondly, the degree of association amongst the remaining independent variables was assessed to screen for multicollinearity. *Pearson's r* and eta coefficient tests were run and interpreted in accordance with common practice in the social sciences.

4.2.6 Variable Relationships with the Dependent Variable

The first step in determining possible predictors of comprehensive exam taken by the researcher was to determine the degree of relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. As illustrated in Table 4.8, no categorical variables had a significant relationship with the dependent variable. Additionally, high school GPA was not significantly related to field evaluation scores. These variables were not included in further analysis. The remaining variables all had weak associations with the dependent variable. Each of the analyses conducted to compute these relationships are further discussed below the table.

4.2.6.1 Program Option.

There were two program options represented in the data set, distance and residential. An independent samples *t*-test was performed to assess whether the mean field evaluation scores differed significantly for the residential students compared with the

distance students. Histograms and boxplots were reviewed revealing that field evaluation scores were approximately normally distributed. There were three outliers observed, but they were not extreme; the outliers were retained for the analysis. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = 2.93, p = .088$, which indicated no significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the equal variance assumed version of the t test was utilized, demonstrating no significant difference in the mean field evaluation scores, $t(236) = 1.58, p = .116$, two tailed. The mean field evaluation score for the 109 residential students ($M = 82.86, SD = 11.90$) was approximately 3 points higher than the 129 distance students ($M = 80.13, SD = 14.74$). The 95% CI between the sample means ranged from $-.007$ to $.061$. The eta coefficient test was performed to determine the effect size since the independent variable was dichotomous and the dependent variable was continuous ($\eta = .102$); the results of the analysis indicated a weak correlation. The eta squared coefficient ($\eta^2 = .01$) denoted a small level of practical significance, accounting for 1% of the variance in field evaluation scores. Due to having virtually no relationship with the dependent variable, program option was not considered as a variable in the regression analysis.

4.2.6.1 Age Category.

A Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to determine if there was a significant mean difference in field evaluation scores by marital status. Histograms revealed an uneven distribution of scores, so a nonparametric test was necessitated. As mentioned previously, there were three age categories delineated in the study, 18 to 24, 25 to 34, and 35 years and over. Dummy variables were used to represent each group; 1 the youngest group, 2 represented those 25 – 34, and 3 represented those over 34. The overall results of the

Kruskal-Wallis indicated no statistically significant difference among groups, $H(2) = 2.005, p = .367$). The eta coefficient indicated a weak correlation between the variables, ($\eta = .109$) with eta squared ($\eta^2 = .012$) indicating that age category accounted for 1.2% of the variance in field evaluation scores. Since there was no significant difference in the field evaluation scores by age category, the variable was not retained for the regression analysis.

Table 4.8 Correlations between Variables and Field Evaluation Scores

<i>Variables</i>	η	r
1. Program Option	.102	
2. Age Category	.109	
3. Marital Status	.132	
4. Pell Grant Status	.005	
5. Previous College Experience	.061	
6. High School GPA		.039
7. Overall GPA		.284**
8. Social Work GPA		.208**
9. Social Work Distance Credits		.185**

** $p < .01$

4.2.6.2 Marital Status.

A Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to determine if there was a significant mean difference in field evaluation scores by marital status. Marital status initially had five categorical attributes with small representation in the divorced, widowed, and separated categories. Those three categories with small representation were combined for the analysis. Therefore, marital status was divided into three categories with 1 representing

single persons, 2 representing a married status, and 3 denoting divorced, widowed, and separated. Boxplots and histograms revealed an uneven distribution of scores, so a nonparametric test was necessitated. The overall results of the Kruskal-Wallis indicated no statistically significant difference among groups, $H(2) = 1.364, p = .506$. There was a weak correlation between marital status and field evaluation score, ($\eta = .132, \eta^2 = .012$) with marital status accounting for 1.2% of the variance in field evaluation score. Since there was no significant relationship between marital status and field evaluation scores, marital status was not retained for consideration as a possible predictor of field evaluation scores.

4.2.6.3 Pell Grant.

An independent samples *t*-test was performed to assess whether the mean field evaluation scores differed significantly for the 156 students receiving Pell Grants compared with the 106 students who did not. Dummy variables were used to represent the two categories: no Pell Grant was represented by the number 1 and having a Pell Grant was assigned the number 2. The examination of histograms illustrated an approximate even distribution of the data. One outlier was discovered when examining the boxplots. The outlier was not extreme, so it was retained for the analysis. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = 2.50, p = .115$, which indicated no significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the equal variance assumed version of the *t* test was utilized, demonstrating no significant difference in the mean field evaluation scores, $t(236) = 0.08, p = .937$, two tailed. The mean field evaluation score for students with Pell Grants ($M = 82, SD = 0.122$) was the same as those without Pell Grants ($M = 82, SD = 0.141$). The 95% CI between the sample means ranged from -0.033 to 0.036. The eta coefficient test was performed to determine the effect size

since the independent variable was dichotomous and the dependent variable was continuous ($\eta = .005$); the eta squared results denoted no level of practical significance, $\eta^2 = .00$. Therefore, Pell Grant status was not retained as a possible predictor variable for field evaluation scores.

4.2.6.4 Previous College Experience.

An independent samples *t*-test was performed to assess whether the mean field evaluation scores differed significantly for the 136 students with previous college experience compared with the 126 students without previous collegiate experience. Dummy variables were used to represent the two categories: no college experience was represented by the number 1 and having college experience was assigned the number 2. The examination of histograms illustrated an approximate even distribution of the data. Upon examining the boxplots, two outliers were identified; they were not extreme and were retained for the analysis. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed by the Levene's Test, $F = 1.680$, $p = .196$, which indicated no significant violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the equal variance assumed version of the *t* test was utilized, demonstrating no significant difference in the mean field evaluation scores, $t(236) = -.942$, $p = .347$, two tailed. The mean field evaluation score for students with previous college experience ($M = .82$, $SD = .124$) was one point higher than those without college experience ($M = .81$, $SD = .142$). The 95% CI between the sample means ranged from $-.05$ to $.018$. The eta coefficient test was performed to determine the effect size since the independent variable was dichotomous and the dependent variable was continuous, $\eta = .061$; the eta squared results denoted a negligible ($\eta^2 = .004$) level of practical significance. Since previous college experience had no significant relationship

with field evaluation scores and accounted for almost no variance in field evaluation scores, previous college experience was not used in the regression analysis.

4.2.6.5 High School GPA.

As illustrated in Table 4.8, Pearson's coefficient was calculated to determine the strength of the relationship between high school GPA with the dependent variable. No significant association ($p = .615$) was found between high school GPA and field evaluation scores ($r = .039$, $n = 168$). Therefore, high school GPA was not retained as a possible predictor in the regression analysis.

4.2.6.6 Liberty GPA.

As illustrated in Table 4.8, Pearson's coefficient was calculated to determine the strength of the relationship between Liberty GPA with the dependent variable. Liberty GPA had a weak association with field evaluation scores ($r = .284$, $p < .001$, $n = 238$). Since this variable was correlated with the outcome variable, it was considered as a potential predictor of field evaluation scores.

4.2.6.7 Social Work GPA.

A Pearson's coefficient was run to determine the strength of the relationship between Social Work GPA and field evaluation scores. A significant but weak relationship was revealed ($r = .208$, $p = .001$, $n = 238$) between social work GPA and the outcome variable. Since this variable was correlated with the outcome variable, it was considered as a potential predictor of field evaluation scores.

4.2.6.8 Social Work Distance Credits.

A Pearson's coefficient was run to determine the strength of the relationship between the number of social work distance education credits earned by students and field evaluation scores. A significant relationship was revealed ($r = .185$, $p = .004$, $n = 238$) between social work distance credits and the outcome variable. Therefore, social work distance credits were considered as a predictor of field evaluation scores.

4.2.7 Variable Relationships

To determine possible predictor variables, the next step in the analysis was to determine the degree of associations among the variables that were still being retained for consideration in the regression analysis. When there was a threat of multicollinearity identified, the variable was eliminated from the regression analysis. *Pearson's r* was run to determine the relationships between the three remaining continuous variables. The results of these analyses are discussed below and included in Table 4.9.

The analysis revealed a strong association between overall GPA and social work GPA ($r = .872$, $p < .001$, $n = 262$). To determine which variable to retain in the regression analysis, the strength of association between the two variables and the dependent variable was assessed. Overall GPA had a slightly stronger association with the outcome variable, $r = .284$ than social work GPA, $r = .208$. Therefore social work GPA was not retained as a variable in the regression analysis.

4.2.8 Regression Analysis Predicting Field Evaluation Scores

Upon examining the degree of relationships as well as the correlation matrix, some variables were excluded from the regression analysis. The dichotomous and categorical

variables: program option, age category, marital status, Pell Grant status, and previous college experience were analyzed as potential predictors of the outcome variable. None of these categorical variables had significant relationships with the outcome variable, field evaluation scores. Additionally, high school GPA did not have a significant relationship with the outcome variable, so it was not included in the regression analysis. As expected, the results of the correlation analysis identified a potential collinearity issue between overall GPA and social work GPA. Since overall GPA had a slightly higher degree of correlation with the dependent variable, it was retained in the regression analysis. The variables chosen for inclusion in the multiple regression analysis were overall GPA and social work distance education credits.

Table 4.9 Correlations between Possible Predictor Variables and Field Evaluation Scores

	1	2	3	4
Overall GPA	1.0			
Social Work GPA	.872**	1.0		
Social Work Distance Credits	.088	-.054	1.0	
Field Evaluation Score	.284**	.208**	.185**	1.0

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, 2-tailed

Upon checking for the assumptions for multiple regression analysis, each were met. The dependent variable is continuous and there were more than two independent variables. An analysis of standard residuals was performed to identify outliers; no outliers were

identified (*Std. Residual Min* = -2.57, *Std. Residual Max* = 2.18). There was independence of observations as the Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.112. Upon examination, the histogram of standardized residuals illustrated approximate normal distribution. The p-plot demonstrated a linear relationship with most points on or close to the line. The scatterplot of standardized residuals illustrated homoscedasticity. Multicollinearity was not identified through the analysis, as the tolerance scores were above 0.2 and the VIF scores were below 10 (*SOWK distance credits*, *Tolerance* = .993 *VIF* = 1.01, *Overall GPA*, *Tolerance* = .933 *VIF* = 1.01). The assumption of non-zero variance was also met (*SOWK distance credits*, *Variance* = 282.70, *Overall GPA*, *Variance* = .14 , *Field Evaluation Score*, *Variance* = .02).

Standard multiple regression analysis was performed using the enter method to determine if the educational variables (social work distance credits and overall GPA) predict field evaluation scores. As shown in Table 4.9, both the amount of social work distance credits and the overall Liberty GPA served as predictors of field evaluation scores. The more social work credits students took online, the higher their field evaluation scores, $b = .001$, $SE = .00$, $p = .009$, 95% CI = [.000 to .002]. Similarly, higher LU GPA predicted higher field evaluation scores, $b = .095$, $SE = .022$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.052 to .139].

Table 4.10 Multiple Regression Analysis Summary of Possible Predictors of Field Competency

<i>Source</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Field Evaluation Scores: $R = .327$, $R^2 = .107$, $MSE = .126$, $F(2, 235) = 14.054$, $p < .001$						
Overall GPA	.095	.022	4.737	< .001	.052	.139
Social Work Distance Credits	.001	.000	2.625	.009	.000	.002

4.3 Summary of the Results

This exploratory analysis was initiated to answer three research questions. The first explored the relationship between comprehensive exam scores and field evaluation scores with the program options students chose. The results of independent *t* tests indicated that students in the residential program earned higher scores on the comprehensive exam than those in the distance program. When considering field evaluation scores by program option, there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores.

The second question focused on identifying possible predictors of comprehensive exam scores through standard multiple regression analysis. In the initial analysis with a smaller sample, age category, high school GPA, overall GPA, and the amount of social work distance credits were found to be predictors of comprehensive exam scores. Additionally, students, who took fewer social work distance credits earned higher comprehensive exam scores than those that took more. In the second analysis, high school GPA was not considered a possible predictor variable due to the limitation it placed on the data set. High school GPA scores were only available for about 70% of the sample. The

results of the second analysis indicated that overall GPA and the amount of social work distance credits remained significant predictors of comprehensive exam scores.

In the third analysis, program option, Pell Grant status, and overall GPA were the independent variables in the regression analysis to see if they were predictors of comprehensive exam scores. Consistent with the other regression analyses, Pell Grant status did not serve as a predictor of comprehensive exam scores. The results for overall GPA were also consistent with the previous analyses with overall GPA still being identified as a predictor. Additionally, program option served as a predictor of comprehensive exam scores.

The third question focused on identifying possible predictors of field evaluation scores through standard multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated that overall college GPA was a predictor of field evaluation scores. Higher GPA was correlated with higher field evaluation scores. The regression analysis also identified the amount of social work distance credits earned as a predictor of field evaluation scores. The more distance credits students took, the higher their field evaluation scores were.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this exploratory study was to determine possible predictors of social work educational outcomes with specific interest in the influence of distance education and program option (residential or distance) on comprehensive examination scores and field competency at a private faith-based university. More specifically, this study used quantitative data analysis to examine the possible answers to the following research questions: 1) Is there a difference in students' performance on the comprehensive exam and field competency measures by their selection of program option (residential or online)? 2) Do the demographic and educational variables in the study serve as predictors for comprehensive exam scores? 3) Do the demographic and educational variables in the study serve as predictors for field competency? The results of the statistical analyses will be addressed in this chapter. The findings add to the body of knowledge on the relationship between undergraduate social work distance education and educational outcomes. The limitations, conclusions, and ideas for further research will also be considered.

Academia is changing and distance education is more pervasive than ever and even more so since the CoVid-19 pandemic entered the world in 2019. Higher education has seen a marked increase in traditional residential campuses offering distance education course offerings and programs. Professional programs are tasked with offering a virtual educational experience that produces knowledgeable, ethical, and skilled practitioners. This trend is evidenced in social work education as new distance programs are frequently listed on the CSWE website. Research on the effectiveness of these distance programs is sparse. This study took a unique approach as it looked at both the program option the students chose, and the amount of online distance credits students earned as potential

predictors of social work educational outcomes over a three-year period. Most published research in this area of study focuses on comparing outcomes in a particular course at one point in time. In addition, there were no similar published articles from faith-based higher educational institutions. Therefore, this study provides a rare perspective since it drew data from a newly launched BSW at a faith-based private university.

The findings were interesting, and some were unexpected. As evidenced by an independent samples *t* test, there was a significant difference in the mean comprehensive exam scores by program option with residential students scoring higher. Consistent with this, the results of a multiple regression analysis indicated that program option served as a predictor of comprehensive exam scores with residential students scoring higher. Similarly, an additional multiple regression analysis demonstrated that the amount of social work distance education credits students earned also served as a predictor of comprehensive exam scores. The fewer distance credits students took, the higher their exam scores.

As reported, there was a significant difference between program option and Pell Grant status. Since more than 70% of the students receiving Pell Grants were in the distance program along with the observation that online students scored less on average on the comprehensive exam, a predictive relationship between Pell Grant status and the dependent variable was expected. The lack of predictive relationship discovered in the analysis was unexpected.

An independent samples *t* test revealed no significant difference in mean field evaluation scores by program option. An interesting and unexpected finding of a multiple regression analysis was that the amount of social work distance credits earned by students served as a predictor of field evaluation scores; more distance credits lead to a higher level

of perceived field competency. Separate multiple regression analyses resulted in the findings that overall GPA served as a predictor of both comprehensive exam scores and field evaluation scores with higher GPA predicting a greater degree of competency in the field and on the exam.

The results of a multiple regression analysis with a subsample of the data indicated that high school GPA and age category served as predictors for comprehensive exam scores. However, age category was not a predictor of comprehensive exam scores when the larger sample was used for the analysis. This was an interesting finding that will be discussed later.

5.1 Interpretation of the Findings

While students studying online/at a distance may vary by age, marital status, and previous college experience, as a group those students in this study demonstrated a higher level of field competency than those taking fewer distance education classes. Whereas residential students demonstrated a higher level of expertise in theoretical practice situations represented on the comprehensive examination. Each of these findings will be addressed in more detail in the following section.

5.1.1 Theoretical and Applied Competency

The findings in this study regarding residential BSW students faring better on the comprehensive exam than distance students are not consistent with the research on comprehensive examinations in an MSW program. The published studies report no significant difference between MSW student comprehensive exam scores among program options (Cummings et al., 2015; Cummings et al., 2019). BSW programs comparing

comprehensive examination scores by program option were not represented in the literature.

BSW programs are quite different than MSW programs. BSW students earn a minimum of 120 credits covering content in general education and social work competencies. MSW programs are shorter and more advanced in content. MSW students earn 30 to 60+ credits focusing on the social work competencies. This difference in educational content may account for the discrepancy between the research of MSW comprehensive exam results and this study's findings. Additionally, each program develops their own outcome evaluations with some adoptive comprehensive examinations. Naturally, there would be differences between BSW and MSW comprehensive exams. More critical thinking and increased complex problem solving is expected at the MSW level. The expectations of the level of knowledge are different as their scope of practice upon graduation is varied.

Interestingly, in the smaller sample (with high school GPA data), age category and high school GPA were also predictive of higher comprehensive exam scores. Students with higher high school GPA having higher exam scores was not surprising. What could lead to older students having higher scores in the smaller sample, but not in the larger sample? High school GPA was not a required admission criterion for distance students, but it was for residential students. One possibility is that the distance students, who chose to share their high school GPA when applying to the program had a solid high school achievement record. Students without a strong high school GPA may have opted not to disclose it. Since the distance students are older, this may account for the discrepancy in regression findings.

Another question to ponder is what could contribute to the finding that residential students were more likely to do better on the comprehensive exam than distance students? There was a significant difference in the age categories represented among the groups. Students in the distance option were older than those in the residential option. Older students may have more responsibilities; they may have dependents and full-time employment on top of their academic requirements. This may lead to less time to devote to school. Since students who are older are further away from their high school experience, they may have less well-developed test-taking strategies, more test anxiety, or a history of poor test taking in previous educational experiences, which could affect the results of the exam. Significantly more students in the distance option were married than students in the residential option. Having responsibility for more than oneself could lead to less time allotted for studies. Significantly more students in the distance program received Pell Grants than those in the residential programs. Students need to demonstrate financial hardship to receive a Pell Grant to cover educational expenses. Having economic stress could lead to higher cortisol levels and poorer test scores. Upon analysis, each of these variables accounted for some of the variance in comprehensive exam scores. A compilation of the influence of these variables could account for the five-point difference in mean.

Some other factors to consider are student-instructor dynamic, peer interaction, and the content in the distance courses. Students in the distance program do not meet synchronously with the professor and peers in most of the courses. They only meet synchronously with peers and professor in three courses if they take solely distance education classes. Students can ask questions of the professor via email, but anecdotally, it seems that students ask fewer questions in a distance format. This dynamic is different as

well. When students ask questions in the classroom, other students get to hear the answers. When students email the professor a question, the answer may or may not be shared with the entire class. Students in the residential program at times study together. This does not seem as common in the distance program. The content in the distance courses is mostly fixed. The course instructor may post video or written announcements, but these announcements are generally designed to help students be successful in their assignments and do not add curricular material. Whereas instructors in the classroom often supplement the standard curricular material with their own expertise and case examples. Since the instructors in the residential courses created the comprehensive exam and adjunct professors often teach the distance courses, this may have had an influence on comprehensive test scores.

5.1.2 Field Competency

The research findings of this exploratory study found no significant correlation between program option and field competency. However, upon further investigation, the results indicated that students taking more distance courses demonstrated higher field competency than students who had less courses in the distance format. These findings align with the limited research available. Cummings et al. (2015) found MSW students in a non-advanced standing program, who took courses in a distant format scored higher in field competency than students taking residential courses.

Obviously, students in the distance program option would take more credits in a distance format than those in the residential program option. However, there was no significant relationship between field evaluation scores and program option. The amount of distance education credits was a continuous variable as was field evaluation scores.

What could contribute to the finding that the more social work distance credits students took, the higher their field competency scores? As mentioned previously, students taking more distance courses tend to be older than students taking less distance courses. As humans are dynamic beings, wisdom often comes with life experience. This wisdom coupled with the knowledge of social work practice can lead to practice wisdom, which in turn can be reflected in social work competency. More life experience often brings exposure to new ideas, settings, opportunities, and human needs. Older students may have worked at or volunteered for nonprofits, schools, and hospitals, giving them experiences that may inform them about individual, family, and community needs. This may give them a foundation for social work skills and maybe increased interpersonal skills. Students may have developed skills prior to their BSW education giving them an opportunity to build on those skills in their field experiences. Additionally, it takes a great deal of sacrifice for people to go to school later in life as they often have numerous responsibilities, familial, social, and financial. Once the decision to pursue higher education is made, older students are often determined to meet their goals of completing their degree and starting their careers, taking their field experience opportunities very seriously. Some of the students had military affiliation, having served or being the family member of one, who served (LU would not release this data for the purposes of the study). Having military experience, brings confidence in attempting new ways of being and approaching unknown practice settings. Students with prior or current military affiliation are often older than the traditional college student. Additionally, there was a significant difference in marital status with those taking more distance credits being more likely to be married. Living with someone and negotiating an intimate relationship can often lead to personal growth,

problem solving skills, and an increase in interpersonal skills. Having this experience partnered with learning the knowledge and values of the profession can lend itself to increase field competency. When considering Pell Grant status, persevering through socioeconomic stress brings maturity and perspective to one's life. It takes resourcefulness and determination to succeed in higher education with this added burden. Consistent with the Constructivism Theory of Learning, people incorporate their own life experiences and knowledge with the new information they acquire in the classroom. This integration is dynamic and informs decision making and problem solving. It stands to reason that students with varied and more life experiences may perform better in their field placements when they have an opportunity to practice what they learn.

5.2 Implications

Since the researcher evaluated only one BSW program, the information gathered from this study could be helpful to the studied university. The university just launched an MSW program; the results of this study may inform the development of that program. For instance, the comprehensive examination questions will be developed by the subject matter experts that are developing the distance courses in conjunction with the residential faculty, who teach the courses. The type of questions used in the comprehensive exam will be present in the curricular design of each course. The comprehensive exam in the MSW program will be in Canvas, which lends itself better to proctoring, as it provides analytics such as how long students took on a particular question by time stamp. This can be compared with other student data to understand patterns.

Beyond the scope of the studied university, there are possible implications for BSW programs considering creating a distance program option and those with programs already

in existence. Since there is sparse information published on educational outcomes on BSW distance program options, these findings may inform the curricular design of the courses. For instance, if a program is going to use a comprehensive exam as one of their educational outcomes, creating more opportunity for students in the courses to engage with case scenarios with multiple choice answers, so they can familiarize themselves with the style of question on the exam may be helpful.

Additionally, since students taking more distance education credits showed more field competency, it may be useful to incorporate more peer review or supervision into the classroom. Students may benefit from learning from the life experiences of others while incorporating social work values and knowledge into the discussion. Providing opportunities for students to engage with each other across program options on projects such as case study reviews may be beneficial.

Program review is warranted in social work education. CSWE encourages this by having programs publicly publish their outcomes on their webpages. Reviewing the predictors of social work educational outcomes can be useful for programs during program review.

5.3 Limitations

The researcher did not collect the data. The data was retrospective and collected from existing databases within the university. The data was collected first at the department level and passed to the university's analytics department for the rest of the data. When using secondary data, there may be an issue with missing data or reliability of the data itself. During the analysis, it was discovered that there were some missing field evaluation

scores ($n = 238$, versus an expected $N = 262$). There is no reason to believe any of the other data was compromised in any way.

There are several limitations to the study. Primarily, the data collection only involves a single university and is a faith-based one at that. While the sample sizes are not huge, they are larger than most of the published studies. There may be bias represented by self-selection, as students choose the number of classes to take residentially, online, or in which program option to enroll. Due to concerns about the confidentiality of the students, the UK IRB did not allow the researcher to collect the actual age of the students in the sample, sex, or students' ethnicities. Being only able to analyze the data by age category was a limitation of the study. Having age as a categorical variable as opposed to a continuous one may have limited the findings because continuous variables have more statistical power than categorical. There were several dichotomous and categorical variables used in the study representing program option, age category, marital status, Pell Grant status, and previous college experience, which limited the statistical power of the analyses. Also, Liberty University's analytics department would not release the military status of the students. Some of the descriptive and educational variables were excluded from the regression analysis because of the small representation of the whole sample leading to fewer variables for consideration as possible predictors of student outcomes.

The outcome variables were each tested for internal consistency reliability with acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Additionally, the comprehensive exam was tested for face and content validity before students were given the exam. The steps taken for this were addressed in chapter 3. However, more analysis can be done to address validity of the comprehensive exam and the program created field evaluation.

The study utilizes the field evaluation scores to indicate social work field competency. Ideally, social work competency would be determined after graduation when graduates are performing the professional role of a social worker, not a student social worker/intern. This is a limitation as the senior field experience is noted as the signature pedagogy and is a part of the social work education process. However, this field evaluation is a recognized and expected educational outcome for social work education at Liberty University.

Since the data assessed originated from a new program, the findings may not be as useful to established programs. As issues arise in new programs, constant adjusting is necessary for quality enhancement. New programs start off with a smaller group of faculty and staff playing various roles. In established programs, there are generally more faculty who share the load of program improvement. A future study at this institution may be even more useful as the social work program would be more established.

However, the study may be generalizable to other large schools with both distance and residential program options. It may be useful for non-faith-based programs as well with both program options especially as they are creating program options. The importance of compatibility across program options is an important lesson learned through this study. Emphasis on multiple choice test taking in both online and traditional education is important since over 30 states license baccalaureate social workers by examination. A larger sample and access to a better selection of variables could have strengthened the study.

5.4 Opportunities for Future Research

Since this study was limited to one university, a suggested area for future research would be to do a comparative or collaborative study among several universities offering both program options. CSWE in recent years required that schools publish their outcomes by program option on their webpages. Using this data may make for an interesting comparison of educational outcomes between program options.

Using hierarchal regression with more demographic variables and a larger dataset may provide more predictors of social work educational outcomes in distance education. For instance, looking at diversity of ethnicity and socioeconomic status as variables may be informative. Being able to analyze the findings utilizing age as a continuous variable, sex, and ethnicity may produce interesting results. Another interesting variable to consider is the employment status of the students. Students working full-time may fare differently on an exam than those, who do not work or work part-time. Number of dependents would be an interesting variable to consider as this could be related to educational outcomes.

A qualitative study comparing students in different program options on educational satisfaction and professional confidence may inform pedagogical research in social work. Question asking may be an interesting area of pedagogical research. “How often do students in residential classes and those in distance classes ask questions?” may be an interesting research question. Evaluating student perceptions of material learned through pre-tests and post-tests in social work courses would also be interesting. Evaluating end of course surveys that students complete would provide interesting data to analyze especially if quantitative ratings correlated with one or both educational outcome measures in the study.

Another area of future research could be around test anxiety. A comparative study between students in residential and distance program options would be interesting. A possibility could be to provide SAF-T (Sensation Awareness Focus Technique) or guidance through the Box breathing technique used by Navy Seals for students in the distance program to help them calm down prior to the test and evaluate if the use of the techniques helped raise the scores on the comprehensive exam. Prior to the exam, the faculty and staff were available to pray with the students on a WebEx. It would be interesting to measure test anxiety for those who attended prayer as opposed to those, who did not. In the category of test taking, a study on test taking strategies among social work students in differing program options could be interesting. Providing instruction on test taking strategies prior to the exam may provide an increase in scores. Studying this could be interesting.

Since many distance learners are non-traditional students. It may be interesting to do research on what resources help non-traditional students succeed, do a pretest, implement those resources, and do a post-test to measure their effectiveness in the realm of social work education. This could inform social work programs on effective use of scarce resources.

Since the outcome measures were tested for internal consistency of reliability, analysis for validity would be an important next step. If validity can be established, it may be interesting to share the outcome measures with other schools of social work. The results could be collected and shared among programs. This could give a larger pool of data and programs could compare themselves against each other.

Additionally, comparing educational outcomes and curricular design amongst distance programs may inform social work pedagogy. The question of Constructivism

Theory of Learning and how that is or is not encouraged in social work education is also an interesting question to be raised in research. CSWE does not allow for life experience to count toward educational credits. However, consistent with Constructivism Theory, life experience does inform social work practice.

5.5 Conclusion

In a Covid-19 world, distance education became a common component for traditional residential educational settings. Programs scrambled to do what is comfortably done in the traditional classroom in an online format. Other programs seamlessly transitioned due to their institutional knowledge.

Distance education is here to stay and has changed the face of academia. It is important for social work education to produce competent social work practitioners. This study identified predictors of student success in social work education. A strong overall college GPA served as a predictor for both dependent variables, comprehensive exam scores and social work field competency. In this sample, students taking classes primarily in a residential format fared better on the comprehensive exam than those taking classes in a distance format. Students taking more social work distance credits fared better in the area of field competency than those, who took less distance credits.

This study has limited generalizability since the sample is from a newly developed BSW program at a private faith-based university. However, other new programs may find the information helpful. Additionally, other large faith-based institutions may find the findings informative.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. FIELD INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

**Final Field Placement Evaluation &
Meeting**



Student Name:	Semester/Year:	JR or SR Field:
Meeting to Review Field Evaluation: Date, Time, Participants, Location (or WebEx),		
Field Agency Name & Location		
Agency Task Supervisor Name	email	phone
Field Instructor Name (if separate from ATS)	email	phone
Faculty Field Liaison	email	phone

Completion of hours	
Beginning date of Field Experience:	Completion date of Field Experience:

Approximate number of hours per week the student worked:	
Student completed hours as agreed. Yes/No _____. If no, please explain	
Summary of tasks/responsibilities that this student fulfilled during the placement:	

The field evaluation is a highly valuable exercise in each student’s education. It provides critical feedback to individual students to assist in their development as professionals. It also provides helpful information for the Social Work Department as we serve those students individually and as we seek to continually improve our program content and methods to equip our students to become excellent compassionate social workers.

- Final evaluation: The Agency Task Supervisor (ATS) and Field Instructor (FI) will collaborate and complete a final field evaluation to assess the student’s demonstration of practice behaviors associated with each of the core competencies identified by the Council on Social Work Education as essential to generalist social work practice.
- Self-evaluation: As an opportunity for self-reflection and self-correction, the student will complete a self-evaluation, identifying both strengths and areas for future development and will present that to the ATS and FI for review and discussion.
- Meeting: The Agency Task Supervisor and Field Instructor will meet (together or separately) with the student in person (or by WebEx) to provide feedback on his/her performance and discuss the student's progress on learning contract goals, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement as well as recommendations for further development.
- The Faculty Field Liaison will review the evaluation, participate in discussion as is beneficial, and will assign a grade based upon this evaluation.

Please indicate a numerical rating for each area of competency. Also include comments on both strengths and areas for further development in each section.

Rating Scale						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p>Lacking Performance</p> <p>Student shows inadequate application of knowledge, values, skills in the specified competency. Student will require significant development in this area to develop minimal proficiency.</p>		<p>Developing Performance</p> <p>Student shows developing proficiency in application of knowledge, values, skills in the specified competency. Student meets key requirements and expectations but is lacking in others.</p>		<p>Proficient Performance</p> <p>Student shows solid proficiency in application of knowledge, values, skills in the specified competency. Student consistently meets requirements and expectations.</p>		<p>Advanced Performance</p> <p>Student shows superior application of knowledge, values, skills in the specified competency. Student significantly exceeds requirements and expectations.</p>

Please indicate ratings to reflect student performance as follows.

- **Junior field placement interns** should be rated according to expectations of an undergraduate student intern completing junior field placement and preparing for an intensive senior field placement experience (32 hrs/wk)
- **Senior field placement interns** should be rated according to a reasonable standard of professional readiness to enter the field as entry level social workers. This would reflect knowledge and skill desired for a social worker entering the work force and fully prepared to be trained in functions specific to a position or field of practice.

Social Work Competencies	Social Work Practice Behaviors related to each competency	Tasks/Activities that student engaged in to develop competency	Rating for each competency See Rating Scale above on p.2
Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for client access to the services of social work • Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development • Attend to professional roles and boundaries • Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication • Engage in career-long learning • Use supervision and consultation 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>
Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes and manages personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice • Makes ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics and of the International Federation of Social Workers/ International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles • Tolerates ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions 		
<p>Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguishes, appraises, and integrates multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom • Analyzes models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation effectively • Demonstrates effective oral and written communication in working with clients, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues. 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>

<p>Engage diversity and difference in practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes the extent to which a culture’s structures or values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power • Demonstrates knowledge of age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, relationship status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation • Gains sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups • Recognizes and communicates their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences • Effectively views themselves as learners and engages those with whom they work as informants 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>
<p>Advance Human Rights and Social and Economic Justice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination • Advocates for human rights and social and economic justice effectively • Engages in practices that advance social and economic justice effectively 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>

Engage in Research-Informed Practice and Practice-Informed Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses practice experiences to inform scientific inquiry effectively • Uses research evidence to inform practice effectively • Critically analyzes empirically bases research findings and apply them to generalist social work practice 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>
Apply Knowledge of Human Behavior and the Social Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizes conceptual frameworks to guide the process of assessment, intervention, and evaluation • Critiques and applies knowledge to understand the person and environment effectively 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>

<p>Engage in Policy Practice to Advance the Social and Economic Well-Being and to Deliver Effective Social Work Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzes policies that advance social well-being effectively • Formulates policies that advance social well-being effectively • Advocates for policies that advance social well-being effectively • Collaborates with colleagues for effective policy action • Collaborates with clients for effective policy action 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>
<p>Respond to Contexts That Shape Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously discovers, appraises, and attends to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services effectively • Identifies the dynamics of change within organizational structures and communities • Provides leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services effectively 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>

Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantively and effectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities effectively • Uses empathy and other interpersonal skills effectively • Develops a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes effectively 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects, organizes, and interprets client data effectively • Assesses client strengths and limitations effectively • Develops mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives effectively • Selects appropriate intervention strategies effectively 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>

<p>Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates actions to achieve organizational goals effectively • Implements prevention interventions that enhance client capacities effectively • Helps clients resolve problems effectively • Negotiates, mediates, and advocates for clients effectively • Facilitates transitions and ending effectively with clients 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically analyzes, monitors, and evaluates interventions effectively 		<p>Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>Comments: Please include BOTH strengths AND areas for further development</p>

Summary – completed by Agency Task Supervisor and/or Field Instructor

Please recommend a grade for consideration:

A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F

Summary comments:

Student Response

Student response/comments

SIGNATURES:

Student _____ **Date** _____

Agency Task Supervisor _____ **Date** _____

Field Instructor _____ **Date** _____

Field Faculty _____ **Date** _____

- Student is responsible to secure all signatures on completed evaluation and submit to Blackboard.

APPENDIX 2. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

▪ **Social Workers assess client strengths and needs using a bio-psycho-social-spiritual model**

1. When doing a bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment, the bio section would include which of the following information:
 - a. Height, Weight, Age, Gender, Medical status
 - b. Family, Friends, Support systems
 - c. Mental health status, Trauma, Dissonance
 - d. Religiosity, view of god/God, faith
2. When doing a bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment, the psycho section would include which of the following information:
 - a. Height, Weight, Age, Gender, Medical status
 - b. Family, Friends, Support systems
 - c. Mental health status, Trauma, Dissonance
 - d. Religiosity, view of god/God, faith
3. When doing a bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment, the social section would include which of the following information:
 - a. Height, Weight, Age, Gender, Medical status
 - b. Family, Friends, Support systems
 - c. Mental health status, Trauma, Dissonance
 - d. Religiosity, view of god/God, faith
4. When doing a bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment, the spiritual section would include which of the following information:
 - a. Height, Weight, Age, Gender, Medical status
 - b. Family, Friends, Support systems
 - c. Mental health status, Trauma, Dissonance
 - d. Religiosity, view of god/God, faith
5. A client comes to a social worker for services. She reports saying she is having trouble sleeping, is not eating, and is contemplating suicide. The spiritual aspect of the assessment would include:
 - a. The client is contemplating suicide so, spiritual intervention is needed
 - b. The client does not believe in God as He is not mentioned
 - c. The client believes she is her own god and can take her life at any time
 - d. The client has not reported her spiritual views at this time

▪ **Social Workers respect spiritual diversity**

1. A social worker at a child welfare agency is assigned a case that involves a single mother whose three small children were removed due to neglect. In reviewing the case file, the social worker realizes that the family is of a different faith base than the social worker. Which of the actions below is NOT consistent with the social work practice behavior of respecting spiritual diversity?

- a. The social worker discloses his faith to the mother to make sure that the mother knows that he is not in agreement with her faith but will do what he can to provide quality services her and her family
 - b. The social worker refers the client to needed services solely at faith-based agencies that align with the social worker's beliefs
 - c. The social worker requests that the case be referred to another caseworker
 - d. All of the above
2. A social worker at a counseling agency completes an intake assessment with an elderly woman suffering from depression. During the assessment, the woman indicates that she grew up in a Christian home. The social worker is Christian and grew up in a Christian home as well. Which of the following actions DOES demonstrate respect for and being sensitive to spiritual diversity with this particular client?
 - a. The social worker asks the client if she identifies as a Christian today and if so explores what that means to the client
 - b. The social worker affirms the client and tells her that they will start to pray together before each therapy session.
 - c. Both A & B
 - d. None of the above, unless the client specifically asks to talk about religion
3. A meeting date at school was scheduled for a family, who are Muslim, on an Islamic holiday. The meeting was difficult to schedule. The family is concerned about missing the meeting and possibly being discriminated against due to their faith. However, observing this holiday is important to them. The social worker should not:
 - a. Contact the school to ask for an alternative date
 - b. Encourage the family to contact the school and ask for an alternative date
 - c. Explain that it is difficult to schedule all the parties involved, so it is important for the family to attend the meeting on that day.
 - d. Contact the school while with the family asking for an alternative date.
4. A client's spiritual views are:
 - a. Not relevant to social work services
 - b. Private and should not be explored
 - c. Often a reason for psychological conflict
 - d. To be explored during social work assessment

Educational Policy 2.1.1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers

- **advocate for client access to the services of social work;**

1. A meeting date at school was scheduled for a family, who are Muslim, on an Islamic holiday. The meeting was difficult to schedule. The family is concerned about missing the meeting and possibly being discriminated against due to their faith. However, observing this holiday is important to them. The social worker should:
 - a. Work with all parties to schedule the meeting at a time that allows for maximum participation and respect toward the Muslim family.
 - b. File a complaint with the school board about religious discrimination
 - c. Work with the client to gather evidence regarding religious discrimination to get school policies changed
 - d. Educate the parties involved on Muslim holidays and tell the school that this is discrimination
2. A social worker seeks to find family counseling for a family with no personal means of transportation. It becomes apparent during her search that the closest agency to the shelter is a faith-based counseling agency. The social worker has referred clients of all faiths to this agency in the past and has never received a client complaint before. However, the father of this particular family has made it clear that he and his family are atheists. The best course of action for the social worker is to:
 - a. See if there are mobile therapists from other agencies that would be willing to come to their home
 - b. See if the family could walk to the faith-based agency
 - c. Let the family find their own services
 - d. See if the faith-based agency would provide mobile therapy
3. A Bachelors level social worker seeks to find mental health counseling for a client with chronic mental health issues and no health insurance. It becomes apparent during her search that area agencies will not see clients without insurance. The social worker should do all except:
 - a. Seeking options for the client to get health insurance
 - b. Provide counseling to the client
 - c. Seek alternative counseling sources such as churches and free clinics
 - d. Seek alternative living options for the client near free mental health services
4. A local mental health clinic is located in a predominately Hispanic area of the city. However, when Hispanic individuals come for counseling, they usually do not come back a second time. The social worker notices this trend and is concerned. The best course of action for the social worker is to:
 - a. Encourage the mental health clinic to have incentives for clients, who return for the second time
 - b. Encourage the mental health clinic to relocate to a different neighborhood
 - c. Encourage the mental health clinic to mandate training in diversity and consider hiring a Hispanic social worker and another support staff
 - d. Encourage the mental health clinic to have some signs in Spanish in the waiting room

5. A social worker notices that there are a number of after school activities for youth in the area. However, there are high fees associated with those activities, so youth from low-income families are not participating. When attempting to have her clients have access to these services, as a first course of action the social worker would NOT:
 - a. Write a letter to local businesses asking for youth sponsors
 - b. Write a letter to the youth organizations asking for scholarships
 - c. Meet with the community leaders asking for ways for families with low incomes to gain access to the after-school activities
 - d. Picket the after-school youth programs because of their insensitivity to youth needs.

• **□ practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;**

1. Maria is disturbed by an interaction she had with a client, Michael, a 45-year-old male struggling with issues of violence in his home. She felt that she crossed a professional boundary by reacting to Michael's angry outburst in her session and she dismissed him from the meeting due to her fearful reaction to his behavior. To better be able to process her actions Maria should meet with:
 - a. A friend to talk over her frustrations
 - b. Her supervisor to process her feelings and to develop an appropriate plan to continue working with Michael
 - c. Her priest to process how a person of faith should interact with others at work
 - d. Her husband so that she can get the support needed to continue working at her agency
2. A social worker facilitating a support group for those struggling with substance abuse made a joke right before the end of the group session in hopes to end on a lighter note. Unfortunately, some group members responded negatively to the joke and a few reported it to be offensive as they walked out of the session for the day. The group facilitator didn't initially perceive the joke to be offensive but after thinking it through a bit more that evening, she realized that the joke was inappropriate. The next time the group met, the facilitator started the group by apologizing for saying the joke and for offending some of the group members. What social work practice behavior did the social worker demonstrate?
 - a. Personal reflection and self-correction
 - b. Facilitating transitions and endings
 - c. Using research evidence to inform practice
 - d. Assessing client strengths and limitations

3. A social worker facilitating a support group for those struggling with substance abuse made a joke right before the end of the group session in hopes to end on a lighter note. Unfortunately, some group members responded negatively to the joke and a few reported it to be offensive as they walked out of the session for the day. The group facilitator didn't initially perceive the joke to be offensive but after thinking it through a bit more that evening, she realized that the joke was inappropriate. The next time the group met, the facilitator started the group by apologizing for saying the joke and for offending some of the group members. Which of the following responses WOULD NOT be an appropriate way that the social worker can respond:
 - a. Thinking through how to become more self-aware of what an appropriate joke is vs. an inappropriate joke
 - b. Think about how she could educate the group about what it means to be too sensitive
 - c. Think about whether she has some personal biases towards the population group of which she needs to become more self-aware
 - d. Discuss ways to increase her sensitivity toward others with her supervisor
4. Social workers should be aware of the following when working with clients:
 - a. Countertransference
 - b. Transference
 - c. The need to consult with a supervisor if work with the client is ineffective
 - d. All of the above
5. When facilitating a group session, a social worker realizes that he spoke more than the group members. The next session, he should:
 - a. Apologize to the group and do a group activity
 - b. Not speak
 - c. Remember his role as a facilitator and encourage discussion among members
 - d. Bring donuts as a way of apologizing to the group

• **attend to professional roles and boundaries;**

1. Which of the following actions is NOT consistent with the practice behavior of attending to professional roles and boundaries?
 - a. Informing the client about the extent of their professional relationship
 - b. Meeting with the client during the social worker's work hours
 - c. Accepting client gifts only when the gift is something that the social worker could actually benefit from having
 - d. Providing the client an after-hours hotline to contact as necessary
2. In his role as a social worker, Andy often links clients with services. Which social work role is he fulfilling?
 - a. An advocate
 - b. A networker
 - c. A broker
 - d. A facilitator

3. Alicia, a school social worker, regularly conducts Threat Assessments on the children in the school that engage in violent or threatening behaviors on school property or on the bus. When attending to professional roles and boundaries, she shares her finding with:
 - a. The school authorities so they can decide on a course of action for the student
 - b. The child's teachers when they ask if it is safe to have the child in their class
 - c. The local newspaper when they call for information
 - d. Her friends because she is so stressed over the difficult students in her school
4. A client is a professional roofer, and he is well-known in the community for doing excellent work. The social worker has a leak in his roof. If attending to professional roles and boundaries, the best option is:
 - a. Tell the client about his leak and see if the client offers to help
 - b. Ask the client about his leak and see if the client offers to help
 - c. Contact the client's business and make an appointment for the work to be done
 - d. Seek services from another roofer
5. A client reports needing a babysitter in order to go to a job interview. The social worker's daughter is looking for babysitting jobs. The competent social worker would NOT:
 - a. Offer her daughter's babysitting services
 - b. Suggest places for the client to find a sitter
 - c. Help the client find a sitter
 - d. Suggest the client consider asking people in his support system, whom he trusts

· **□ demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;**

1. When grading student course work, professors send struggling students to the Undergraduate Writing Center to improve the quality of their work and to assist them in developing documentation skills. This behavior reflects which expectation?
 - a. Social workers demonstrate professionalism in written communication
 - b. Social workers demonstrate professionalism in behavior
 - c. Social workers demonstrate professionalism in their public interactions
 - d. Social workers demonstrate professionalism in their verbal communication
2. The following are ways that social workers can demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior and communication EXCEPT:
 - a. Being punctual
 - b. Adhering to agency policies and procedures whenever they don't conflict with your personal interests
 - c. Maintaining professional boundaries with clients and colleagues at all times
 - d. All of the above

6. Which of the following are ways that social workers can demonstrate professional demeanor in communication?
 - a. Use empathy and other interpersonal skills when speaking with client
 - b. Use active listening skills to engage their clients
 - c. Maintain a respectful tone when speaking with clients
 - d. All of the above
7. Social workers demonstrate ethical and professional behavior through all of the following ways EXCEPT?
 - a. Integrating faith and practice through a process of ethical reasoning
 - b. Using reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values to maintain professionalism
 - c. Using supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior
 - d. Making personal decisions on behalf of clients in order to ensure that their needs are met
8. Which of the following actions represent a way that social workers demonstrate professional demeanor in appearance?
 - a. Being well-groomed
 - b. Maintaining the dress code requirements of the agency
 - c. Covering tattoos and removing facial jewelry as appropriate
 - d. All of the above

· **engage in career-long learning; and**

1. Sally practices social work in urban Columbus, Ohio. Recently a number of Somalis have settled in the community. Sally realizes that she is not familiar with the cultural norms of Somalis. She chooses to engage in the cultural activities offered, eat in the Somali marketplace, and develop friendships in the community. Sally is demonstrating:
 - a. Ethical reasoning
 - b. Career-long learning
 - c. Ethnocentrism
 - d. Advocacy
2. Mary practiced social work for 45 years. She is a legend in the social work community. Mary never stopped learning. Technology has changed her life and she realize the impact of social media on her clients. In the spirit of career-long learning and her context, one thing Mary could do is:
 - a. Take a cruise to learn about other countries
 - b. Go sky diving to learn about adrenaline rushes
 - c. Take a technology class that focuses on social media
 - d. Take a webinar on using excel spreadsheets

3. Zack is working with the Hispanic population in NYC. He understands Spanish better than he can speak it. In the spirit of career-long learning and his context, Zack could:
 - a. Practice his pronunciation
 - b. Take a course on conversational Spanish
 - c. Challenge himself to only speak in Spanish when conversing with his friend, who is fluent in the language
 - d. All of the above
4. Maria is a new social worker. She just finished her degree at Liberty University and is excited to start her first job working with children in rural Kentucky. On her first day of work, she realizes she has no understanding of the Appalachian culture and feels like she is incompetent. Maria is frustrated with her social work education and contacts one of her professors out of frustration. The professor encourages Maria to learn from her clients. In what ways can Maria do this?
 - a. Read a novel set in Appalachia
 - b. Join a quilting club that one of her clients attends
 - c. Search the internet to learn about Appalachian art and music
 - d. Ask her clients questions and show humility

• **□ use supervision and consultation.**

1. Being consistent in demonstrating the practice behavior of seeking supervision and consultation when dealing with an ethical dilemma is beneficial in which of the following ways?
 - a. It can help the process of recognizing and managing personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice
 - b. It can assist in identifying the benefits and challenges of the potential resolutions
 - c. It can be helpful in identifying relevant policies, procedures, and laws to consider
 - d. All of the above
2. Supervision and consultation in practice is for the purpose of:
 - a. Discussing issues that arise with clients
 - b. Focusing on workers' areas of strengths
 - c. Talking through workers' areas of needed growth and challenges
 - d. A and C
3. Mark is faced with an ethical dilemma. His client is receiving welfare assistance and working for a construction company, who is paying him secretly. His client has 5 children and is able to feed, clothe, and house them with both of these streams of income. Mark is not sure if he should report his client for welfare fraud. What would be Mark's first course of action?
 - a. Consult with his supervisor
 - b. Try to get his client to turn himself in for welfare fraud
 - c. Encourage his client for being creative in finding a way to provide for his family
 - d. Report his client for fraud

4. Tanya is a new social worker. She has developed a strong rapport with one particular client. The client refers to Tanya as her best friend. Tanya enjoys spending time with this client and finds herself laughing, joking, and sharing personal stories with her client. Her supervisor informs her that the case needs to be transferred to another unit because the client is progressing so well. When Tanya informs the client, the client is upset and starts taking steps backwards in her progress. Tanya is not sure if it is because the client is having a hard time with the transition or if she is trying to keep Tanya as a worker. What is the best course of action for Tanya from the choices listed?
 - a. Inform the client that her case will be transferred to another worker regardless of the progress she makes or doesn't make in the hopes of seeing the client continue to progress in treatment
 - b. Discuss the complexities of her client relationship with her supervisor in an effort to get perspective and advice
 - c. Ask for the case to be transferred to another worker because Tanya realizes she crossed personal boundaries
 - d. Take the client out for coffee and have a heart-to-heart discussion with her since they are so close
5. Rasheeda just started working with a population of clients that are a different ethnicity than she is. Rasheeda realizes that she is not developing rapport as quickly as she has with other population groups. She talks with her supervisor, who advises her to try harder. Rasheeda takes her supervisor's advice, but still isn't connecting. She notices another social worker in the community, who is developing strong therapeutic alliances with the community members. Of the options listed, the best course of action for Rasheeda is:
 - a. To join a book club in this community in an effort to gain the trust of the members
 - b. Ask a leader in the community to mentor her
 - c. Consult with the social worker who is successfully engaging the community
 - d. Ask to be reassigned to another community since there is already an effective social worker present

Educational Policy 2.1.2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision making.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

• **recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;**

1. When making professional practice decisions, the following are some appropriate ways that can help social workers recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide their practice EXCEPT:
 - a. Process issues that arise in supervision
 - b. Consult with knowledgeable colleagues
 - c. Consult with friends who know you well
 - d. Consult agency policies and the NASW Code of Ethics
2. A teenage client is considering dropping out of school to support his mother, who is unhealthy and unable to work. Kiara is his social worker, and she is concerned that he will never finish school. Kiara values family, but her family stressed the importance of education. The client's values are clear as he values his family more than his education at this time. The best course of action from the choices listed for Kiara is
 - a. To discuss the options fully with her client and his mother, while leaving the decision up to the family
 - b. To discuss the pros and cons of leaving school making sure the client's mother recognizes the sacrifice that her son would be making if he left school
 - c. To convene a multidisciplinary meeting asking the professionals to stress the importance of education to the client and his mother
 - d. To find work for the client to do while still in school
3. Which of the following are not one of the 6 core social work values?
 - a. Self-determination
 - b. Dignity and respect of a person
 - c. Service
 - d. Competence
4. When a client has different values than a social worker and the social worker demonstrates respect for the client's values, this reflects which core social work value?
 - a. Self-determination
 - b. Dignity and respect of a person
 - c. Service
 - d. Competence
5. Carla just started working with a population of clients that are not familiar to her. Carla realizes that she is not developing rapport as quickly as she has with other population groups. She talks with her supervisor and consults with a colleague that has navigated this community with ease and expertise. Carla's efforts reflect her desire to build which core social work value?
 - a. Integrity
 - b. Service
 - c. Competence
 - d. Valuing human relationships

· **make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles;**

1. A social worker who makes ethical decisions that seek to promote the right of clients to self-determination is demonstrating the following practice behaviors:
 - a. Social workers make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics
 - b. Social workers develop mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes
 - c. Social workers use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
 - d. A and B only
2. Lea is a new social worker. She has developed a strong rapport with one particular client. The client refers to Lea as her best friend. Lea enjoys spending time with this client and finds herself laughing, joking, and sharing personal stories with her client. They often go to the movies and have coffee dates outside of work. Lea's complex relationship with this client has resulted in:
 - a. A dual relationship
 - b. Transference
 - c. A therapeutic alliance
 - d. An ethical dilemma
3. The NASW Code of Ethics does NOT refer to which of the following as clients?
 - a. Individuals
 - b. Families
 - c. Organizations
 - d. Animals
4. The NASW Code of Ethics is to be viewed as:
 - a. A set of policies outlining best practices and approaches
 - b. A guide that offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making
 - c. The law protecting clients from social work misconduct
 - d. A code that ranks which values and principles are most important
5. What is another code of ethics that social workers can consider?
 - a. International Federation of Social Workers
 - b. National Association of Faith-Based Social Workers
 - c. International Social Work Advocacy
 - d. London Federation of Social Workers

• **tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and**

1. Craig is faced with an ethical dilemma. His client is receiving welfare assistance and working for a moving company, who is paying him secretly. His client has 5 children and is able to feed, clothe, and house them with both of these streams of income. Craig is not sure if he should report his client for welfare fraud. According to the The NASW Code of Ethics, what should Craig do?
 - a. Report the fraud
 - b. Remove the children
 - c. Pray for wisdom
 - d. No clear answer is present in The NASW Code of Ethics
2. Since the NASW Code of Ethics allows for ambiguity, it gives freedom to the social worker to consider nuances when making decisions. A framework for making ethical decisions was addressed. On what theory was the comprehensive framework developed by Bernard Gert based?
 - a. Common morality
 - b. Common ground
 - c. Bioethical morality
 - d. Interactional approach
3. Paternalism:
 - a. Is valued in social work practice
 - b. Violates the NASW Code of Ethics
 - c. Must be warranted and justifiable when used by social workers
 - d. Is unwarranted and unjustifiable when used by social workers
4. A rural social worker lives in a very small community. She goes to church with many of her clients and watches their children in the nursery. She enjoys going to the potlucks and interfaces with her clients in this setting. However, she does not treat them as clients and the other members of the church are unaware of her relationship with these individuals outside of the church atmosphere. The social worker starts a small group in her home and a number of her clients come to the small group. What conflict is represented by this situation?
 - a. A paternalistic one
 - b. A dual relationship
 - c. An informed consent issue
 - d. A competency issue

• **apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.**

1. A social worker provides counseling for a 17-year-old male client suffering from depression. During a counseling session, the client admitted to the social worker that he was under the influence of crystal meth. The social worker offers to enroll him in a program for adolescents with both mental illness and substance abuse issues. The client agreed to participate but made it clear that he does not want his parents to know about his drug use. The social worker is unsure whether she is allowed to refer the client to a substance abuse program

without obtaining parental consent. Which one of the following strategies WOULD NOT assist in arriving at a principled decision in how to address this issue?

- a. Seek supervision and consult with knowledgeable colleagues
 - b. Examine agency policy about disclosure of information to parents of underage clients
 - c. Find out how the parents feel about people who struggle with substance abuse
2. A social worker provides counseling for a 17-year-old male client suffering from depression. During a counseling session, the client admitted to the social worker that he was under the influence of crystal meth. The social worker offers to enroll him in a program for adolescents with both mental illness and substance abuse issues. The client agreed to participate but made it clear that he does not want his parents to know about his drug use. The social worker is unsure whether she is allowed to refer the client to a substance abuse program without obtaining parental consent. Which of the following professionals would be considered knowledgeable colleagues to consult with about this ethical dilemma?
- a. Other clinicians at the agency who have experience working with underage clients
 - b. Legal counsel to determine whether there are any legal concerns to consider in making a decision
 - c. Colleagues who are parents of teenagers
 - d. A and B only
3. Considering the moral rules, which of the following is not one?
- a. Do not be paternalistic
 - b. Do not cause pain
 - c. Keep your promises
 - d. Do not deprive of pleasure
4. While at church Stephanie is approached by an older church member inquiring about a client at the group home where Stephanie works. The older woman, Carol, is the aunt of a resident just admitted to the home. How should she proceed in this situation?
- a. Let Carol know that her niece is doing well and has adjusted to the program
 - b. Let Carol share personal details about the nieces past and explain why she thinks the girl has been removed from her home
 - c. Offer to pray with Carol over the family situation
 - d. Let Carol know that due to confidentiality she is not in a position to talk about any of her residents and does not acknowledge the presence of the niece in her program

5. A teenage client is considering dropping out of school to support his mother, who is unhealthy and unable to work. Kiara is his social worker, and she is concerned that he will never finish school. Kiara values family, but her family stressed the importance of education. The client's values are clear as he values his family more than his education at this time. Kiara advises the client to stay in school and he complies. His mother is not able to meet the family's needs for proper nourishment and housing. The client and his siblings are placed in foster care. Kiara violated which moral rules?
 - a. Do not deprive of freedom
 - b. Keep your promises
 - c. Do not be paternalistic
 - d. Do not cheat

Educational Policy 2.1.3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

• □ distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom;

1. Josiah is a new social worker at a group home for people with disabilities. He has not worked with this population in the past. To best prepare for his first day at work, Josiah could:
 - a. Watch I Am Sam
 - b. Read journal articles on best practices with people, who have disabilities
 - c. Go running and biking in an effort of starting good self-care techniques
 - d. Go visit the home unofficially to get an understanding of the house dynamics
2. Clyde is preparing to work with teenagers facing grief and loss. He read journal articles on best practices, consulted with an expert in the field, and reflected on his own losses. Clyde is:
 - a. Integrating research-based knowledge, gaining practice wisdom, and being self-reflective
 - b. Concerned that his own losses may impact his practice
 - c. Considering intervention strategies
 - d. Over-preparing
3. How does distinguishing, appraising, and integrating different sources of knowledge contribute to social work practice?
 - a. It increases the knowledge base of the social worker
 - b. It gives a well-founded basis for practice
 - c. It keeps the social worker up to date on effective interventions
 - d. All of the above

4. When a social worker goes for continuing education, it is supporting which practice behavior?
 - a. Social workers demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues
 - b. Social workers use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
 - c. Social workers recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice
 - d. Social workers distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom
5. When social workers have a number of years of practice experience, they generally:
 - a. Gain practice wisdom
 - b. Get burned out
 - c. Change practice settings
 - d. Retire

• **□ analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and**

1. A social worker attends a continuing education seminar on the topic of youth delinquency. The presenter suggests that youth delinquency is a result of evolution. As a result, the presenter provides interventions that promote competition and survival of the fittest. The social worker has been working with this population for a number of years and has a great deal of practice wisdom. Additionally, he himself presents on a very different model of intervention that is evidence informed. He is open to learning, so he often goes to seminars on this topic. The social worker does not agree with this intervention strategy. The social worker is:
 - a. Analyzing a model of assessment
 - b. Analyzing a model of prevention
 - c. Analyzing a model of intervention
 - d. Analyzing a model of evaluation
2. In piloting a comprehensive exam for undergraduate social work students, the social work program will use the results to analyze the effectiveness of the program. When the results are used this way, it is being used as a(n):
 - a. Evaluative measure
 - b. Intervention
 - c. Accreditation standard
 - d. Preventive measure
3. Each student's comprehensive exam results will be tabulated and used to determine a student's level of competency in the area of practice behaviors. This information will be used to determine if there are further areas of growth suggested for individual students. When used this way, the exam results are being used as a(n):
 - a. Evaluative measure
 - b. Intervention
 - c. Accreditation standard
 - d. Preventive measure

4. A social worker attends a continuing education seminar on the topic of mental health diagnoses. The presenter suggests diagnoses themselves actually lead to mental health issues. As a result, the presenter does not diagnose. The social worker has been working with this population for a number of years and is concerned that espousing this will limit client access to services due to insurance companies not paying for treatment without a diagnosis. Additionally, he himself has seen clients experience relief when they receive a diagnosis and a corresponding intervention. He is analyzing:
 - a. A model of assessment
 - b. A model of prevention
 - c. A model of intervention
 - d. A model of evaluation
5. Social workers often use a SWOT method of assessment. SWOT stands for:
 - a. Social Work Opportunity for Treatment
 - b. Sealed with Optimal Therapeutic Interventions
 - c. Social Work Options for Treatment
 - d. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

• □ demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

1. While completing an initial assessment with a teenager who had experienced sexual abuse, a social worker at a mental health agency would paraphrase what the teen stated at various points during the assessment.
 - a. To demonstrate empathy
 - b. To confirm that the interviewer has understood the respondent's statement or feelings
 - c. To demonstrate a non-judgmental attitude
 - d. To confront the client about statements that are conflicting
2. A school social worker is preparing to speak to a group of first-generation immigrant students and their families about the ESL program and other support services the school offers. The school social worker will also develop a presentation handout. What are some areas to consider when seeking to demonstrate effective oral and written communication at this meeting?
 - a. Enlisting the support of translators to co-present the information
 - b. Having the written handouts interpreted in the most common languages spoken in the local community
 - c. Research the most culturally appropriate way to greet the students and their families at the meeting
 - d. All of the Above
3. When a social worker is challenging clients, they may
 - a. Confront a client's appearance of work
 - b. Bring up taboo subjects
 - c. Directly discuss obstacles
 - d. All of the Above

4. Using social work "jargon" is appropriate with which population?
 - a. Multidisciplinary teams
 - b. Clients
 - c. Organizations
 - d. Social work colleagues

Educational Policy 2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers

· □ recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;

1. A social worker at a residential facility finds out that there is an agency policy of having residents submit in writing suggestions for ways the agency could improve their services to clients. Knowing that some of the residents have literacy challenges, she consults with leadership in order to reevaluate this policy and explore the addition of a focus group to receive verbal feedback from residents. Which of the following practice behaviors is NOT relevant to this particular scenario?
 - a. Social workers recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power
 - b. Social workers tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts
 - c. Social workers negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients
 - d. Social workers engage in practices that advance social and economic justice
2. The levels of bureaucracy and paperwork that some under-resourced families have to go through in order to get services are an example of:
 - a. The protestant work ethic
 - b. The influence of the Elizabethan Poor Laws on U.S. society
 - c. Culture's structures and values oppressing, marginalizing, and alienating individuals
 - d. Culture's structures giving privilege and power to certain individuals
3. Joe received a mailing inviting him to join the local co-op. When Joe joined the co-op, he was welcomed with open arms. Joe began to notice there were very few if any races represented at the co-op besides Caucasian. When asked, the director explained that the mailing was sent only to homeowners rather than those who rent. Joe's situation is an example of:
 - a. Selective approval
 - b. Gerrymandering

- c. Culture's structures giving privilege to some
 - d. Overt racism
4. Madeline is concerned that her client is being marginalized by the education system. Her client needs additional support, and the school system will not evaluate her. Madeline is concerned about this but does not want to mis-analyze the situation. Madeline could
- a. Seek the advice of her supervisor
 - b. Consider alternative reasons for the school's refusal to evaluate her client
 - c. Speak to others receiving services in the district about their experiences
 - d. All of the above

• **gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;**

1. A social worker seeks to find family counseling for a family without transportation. It becomes apparent during her search that the closest agency to the shelter is a faith-based counseling agency. However, the father of this particular family has made it clear that he and his family are atheists. The social worker has a faith herself and believes this agency would be a good choice for this family as she believes their beliefs are harmful. The social worker needs to:
 - a. Move forward with the referral to the faith-based agency since it is in the best interest of the client
 - b. Eliminate the faith-based agency as an option
 - c. Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of her personal biases and values
 - d. Trust her instinct since she has gained wisdom
2. Taylor had a number of negative interactions as a child with his grandmother. She was violent and verbally abusive. He is assigned to work with a family, who is caring for their elderly grandmother. Taylor immediately does not care for the grandmother. Taylor should:
 - a. Consider his own experiences and seek to eliminate their influence on his perception of the grandmother
 - b. Seek alternative living arrangements for the grandmother
 - c. Evaluate the family for signs of abuse
 - d. Get in home support for the care of the grandmother
3. Bobby is fluent in Portuguese, so he was assigned a family, who is not fluent in English. They speak Portuguese. Bobby grew up enjoying time with his extended family from Portugal. He loves the culture. When he arrives in the home, there are a number of disconcerting things. However, Bobby chooses to ignore them. This is an example of:
 - a. Getting the full story before jumping to conclusions
 - b. Using practice wisdom
 - c. Personal biases impacting professional judgment
 - d. The social worker needing therapy

4. When a social worker feels uncomfortable around particular population groups, it is important for the social worker to consider:
 - a. One's personal history
 - b. One's family influence
 - c. One's experiences
 - d. All of the above
 5. Self-awareness of one's personal biases is important in order to:
 - a. Select the population in which one will be most competent
 - b. Share them with a supervisor
 - c. Grow in interviewing skills
 - d. Develop a plan to eliminate them
- **Social workers integrate faith and practice through a process of ethical reasoning and critical thinking**
1. Spiritual assessment can be conducted:
 - a. Using a spiritual narrative
 - b. With those of varying religious backgrounds to better understand one's culture
 - c. A and C only
 - d. All of the above
 2. In the realm of practice the following should be taken into consideration:
 - a. A client's faith and beliefs
 - b. The social worker's religious beliefs
 - c. The difference in religious beliefs between the client and the social worker A and B only
 3. In working with a client:
 - a. Faith can be integrated into one's practice work, even in a secular setting Spiritual diversity must be respected
 - b. Interventions can be faith-based to match client's goals
 - c. Faith issues should only be brought up by a client
 - d. All of the above except D
 4. Which of the following is a spiritual assessment discussed by Hodge?
 - a. Spiritual Culture Maps
 - b. Spiritual Ecomaps
 - c. Spiritual Behavior Maps
 - d. Spiritual Genomaps
 5. A client comes to a social worker for services. The client is having difficulty reconciling his attraction to someone of the same sex with his Christian faith. He reports says that he is having trouble sleeping, is not eating, and is contemplating suicide. The social worker is a Christian:
 - a. The social worker should refer the client to a gay social worker for support
 - b. The social worker should offer to contact the clients pastor for support
 - c. The social worker should share Biblical passages regarding sexuality with the client
 - d. The social worker should assess the client's suicidal contemplation

• **recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and**

1. Mya is a new social worker straight out of Liberty University's social work program. She is young, does not have children, and is not married. She is assigned her first family. Mya is really excited. She reads the family's file and sees that the family is headed by a 35-year-old single mother of 4. Mya loves children and has a great deal of respect for single mothers. When she arrives at the home, the mother of the children asks Mya what she could possibly know about her life and tells her she will be useless. As a competent social worker, Mya would initially:
 - a. Recognize and communicate her understanding of the differences between her life and her client's life
 - b. Tell the client about her social work education, so the client would feel confident in her abilities
 - c. Tell the client about her aunt, who is a single mother, and how she has great respect for single mothers
 - d. Educate herself on the challenges faced by single mothers
2. Sarah is a social work client with a hearing impairment. She has experienced marginalization, oppression, and alienation from mainstream society. Her social worker, Ming, is encouraging her to confront her landlord about not keeping up with the maintenance issues in her apartment. Sarah has put in a number of maintenance requests with no response, but her neighbors are getting repairs done by the Landlord. Sarah explains this to Ming. Ming instructed Sarah to be firm this time when she requests a repair. Sarah claims she is. Ming is not responding as Sarah would like. Ming is NOT:
 - a. Empathizing with Sarah
 - b. Advocating for Sarah
 - c. Recognizing the differences between her life and Sarah's
 - d. All of the above
3. Matthew is a young Caucasian social worker, who is working with an older African American gentleman, Tyrone. Tyrone and Matthew are very different from each other but have found ways to connect. Matthew enjoys listening to Tyrone's stories about his family and is saddened by the discrimination that Tyrone has experienced. Matthew admittedly has not had the same life experiences. Matthew
 - a. Realizes the generation gap between himself and Tyrone
 - b. Recognizes the differences in their life experiences
 - c. Empathizes with Tyrone
 - d. All of the above

4. Samuel is a young Caucasian social worker, who used to work with an older African American gentleman named Tyrone. Tyrone and Samuel are very different from each other. They were not able to connect. Samuel felt Tyrone was stuck in the past and blamed Whites for past discrimination. Samuel felt like Tyrone was making him feel guilty over things he did not do. Tyrone felt like he was being marginalized by Samuel as well as oppressed because Samuel would not acknowledge his story. Tyrone would benefit:
 - a. From interaction with a social worker, who was older
 - b. From interaction with a social worker of his own race
 - c. From interaction with a social worker, who empathized with him
 - d. From interaction with a social worker, who recognized and communicated that she understood how being different from majority culture impacted him
5. Samuel is a young Caucasian social worker, who used to work with an older African American gentleman named Tyrone. Tyrone and Samuel are very different from each other. They were not able to connect. Samuel felt Tyrone was stuck in the past and blamed Whites for past discrimination. Samuel felt like Tyrone was making him feel guilty over things he did not do. Tyrone felt like he was being marginalized by Samuel as well as oppressed because Samuel would not acknowledge his story. Samuel could grow in which area of competency development?
 - a. Client advocacy
 - b. Recognizing and understanding the impact of difference
 - c. Interpersonal skill
 - d. Oral communication

• **view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.**

1. Matthew is a young Caucasian social worker, who is working with an older African American gentleman, Tyrone. Tyrone and Matthew are very different from each other but have found ways to connect. Matthew enjoys listening to Tyrone's stories about his family and is saddened by the discrimination that Tyrone has experienced. Matthew has learned so much from Tyrone. Matthew:
 - a. Is not serving in a social work capacity with Tyrone. He has forgotten his professional role
 - b. Has identified with Tyrone as a father figure
 - c. Views himself as a learner and engages with Tyrone as an informant
 - d. All of the above
2. A social worker is new to a community advocate position in a city where she does not reside. Which of the following actions demonstrate the practice behavior of viewing herself as a learner and engaging those with whom she works as informants?
 - a. Attending community meetings to gather information about the needs of the community
 - b. Hosting a community meeting to let the community know who she is and how she feels she can help them

- c. Sending a brochure to different community agencies about the services the social worker provides
 - d. A and C
- 3. A social worker is new to a community advocate position in a city where she does not reside. Which of the following actions is NOT an example of demonstrating the practice behavior of viewing herself as a learner?
 - a. Asking community informant about their experiences with past community advocates
 - b. Researching community-level data to identify the demographics of the community residents
 - c. Offering to serve on a community board to advise community officials on common challenges faced by inner-city communities
- 4. Mya is a new social worker straight out of Liberty University's social work program. She is young, does not have children, and is not married. She is assigned her first family. Mya is really excited. She reads the family's file and sees that the family is headed by a 35-year-old single mother of 4 named Tabitha. Mya loves children and frequently babysits. When Tabitha first meets Mya, she is concerned about her age and lack of experience. Tabitha tells Mya this and Mya responds by talking about her babysitting experiences. Tabitha listens, but does not respond. A therapeutic alliance does not seem to be built. What happened to cause this chasm?
 - a. Mya's age
 - b. Mya's lack of experience in social work
 - c. Mya's expertise with children caused Tabitha to feel guilty for needing help
 - d. Mya's assertion of her childcare expertise
- 5. Sarah is a social work client with a hearing impairment. She has experienced marginalization, oppression, and alienation from mainstream society. Her social worker, Ming, wants Sarah to move forward and not dwell in the past. She believes Sarah's previous experiences are not relevant to her current situation. Considering the competency of clients being informants, Ming is not:
 - a. Letting Sarah grieve
 - b. Capable of advocating for Sarah Seeking supervision and consultation Learning from Sarah

Educational Policy 2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

• **□ understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;**

1. Non-prejudiced discriminators
 - a. May alienate someone for business purposes
 - b. May alienate someone because they don't like their kind
 - c. May oppress someone because of the color of their skin
 - d. May marginalize someone because of their age
2. Prejudice discriminators
 - a. May oppress someone because of political gain
 - b. May not include others due to peer pressure
 - c. May exclude someone due to their own past experiences with someone similar to him
 - d. May not include others for business purposes
3. Prejudice Non-discriminators
 - a. May include others because it is politically correct even though they do not like their kind
 - b. May include others and treat them poorly
 - c. May not include others due to their own past experiences with someone similar to them
 - d. May alienate someone for political purposes
4. An institution has the policy of including representatives from a number of groups in decision making. Molly is responsible for choosing the committee. Molly is a social worker at the institution and is excited about having a diverse committee. When the committee convenes, it is clear that some members do not want to hear others' opinions. However, when Molly's supervisor is present, this dynamic does not occur. When Molly's supervisor is present, the members not wanting to hear others are reflective of:
 - a. Non-prejudice discriminators
 - b. Prejudice discriminators
 - c. Non-prejudice non-discriminators
 - d. Prejudice non-discriminators
5. Sarah is a social work client with a hearing impairment. She has experienced marginalization, oppression, and alienation from mainstream society. Currently her Landlord is marginalizing her. Her social worker, Ming, doesn't see the situation as Sarah does. Ming isn't:
 - a. Recognizing Sarah's need for assimilation
 - b. Recognizing this form of oppression
 - c. Recognizing Sarah's need to vent
 - d. Recognizing society's need for reform

• **□ advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and**

1. A social worker at a Day Treatment Program for elderly patients determines through speaking with her patients that there is a transportation barrier to getting to the agency. She consults with her supervisor about the issue and finds out that the problem stems from the limitation of the state-funded transportation. Which of the following action plans to address this issue provide an example of the practice behavior advocating for human rights and social and economic justice?

- a. The social worker took the lead to contact the State agency governing the implementation of the transportation services to discuss her agency's concerns.
 - b. The social worker mobilized the Day Treatment Program staff as well as other agencies that serve this population to send letters to their state representative advocating for a change in the policy to expand state-funded transportation.
 - c. The social worker convinced agency management to allocate funds for the purchase of a van to transport clients to and from the day treatment program.
 - d. All of the above
2. A social worker who manages a refugee resettlement agency determines after surveying her staff and convening several meetings with community partners and clients, that refugee clients are consistently being rejected for mental health services due to the agencies not wanting to offer an interpreter. Knowing that this behavior is against civil rights laws, the social worker sets out to convene a meeting with local mental health agency representative to educate them on the law and explore ways to resolve this matter. This is an example of all of the social work practice behaviors described below EXCEPT:
- a. Social workers apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions
 - b. Social workers understanding the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination
 - c. Social workers negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients
 - d. Social workers advocating for human rights and social and economic justice
3. A client is need of a car loan. She has great credit history and lives modestly. She goes to apply for the loan and is rejected by a bank with good interest rates. She ends up going to a less than reputable business for the loan. The interest rates are exorbitant. The social worker has heard about this bank rejecting others of modest means for loans. Sue, the social worker, dresses in the style of her client and applies for a loan herself. She too is rejected. Sue has never been rejected for a loan. Her credit history is also very strong. Sue schedules a meeting with the bank management to discuss her concerns. Sue is
- a. Advocating for credit lines
 - b. Advocating for economic justice
 - c. Utilizing her powers of persuasion
 - d. Using her macro skills

4. Sarah is a social work client with a hearing impairment. She has experienced marginalization, oppression, and alienation from mainstream society. Currently her Landlord is marginalizing her. After consulting with her supervisor, Ming, Sarah's social worker, devises a plan with Sarah to confront the Landlord. This is an example of:
 - a. Policy
 - b. Advocacy
 - c. Assessment
 - d. Scientific inquiry
5. An institution has the policy of including representatives from a number of groups in decision making. Molly is responsible for choosing the committee. Molly is a social worker at the institution and is excited about having a diverse committee. When the committee convenes, it is clear that some members do not want to hear others' opinions. Molly recognizes the marginalization that is taking place and confronts the members on the behavior. Molly is:
 - a. Serving in her role as broker
 - b. Performing outside the role of a social worker
 - c. Advocating for social justice
 - d. Letting her personal interests cloud her professional judgment

• **engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.**

1. Social workers engage in practice that advance social and economic justice. Which of the following scenarios represent this competency?
 - a. A new social worker recognizes the inequality of school supplies offered in different schools within the same district. She starts a fundraiser to provide school supplies to the under-resourced schools.
 - b. A social worker at a rural mental health clinic notices the need for transportation for under-resourced clients to get their medication. He organizes volunteers to provide transportation.
 - c. A social worker at a hospital notices that a number of people without health insurance are going to the emergency room for non-emergency services. She organizes a committee of community leaders to explore the possibility of having a free clinic in the area.
 - d. All of the above
2. Calling attention to social and economic injustice and developing programs to advance justice is:
 - a. A core social work value
 - b. A social work competency
 - c. A social worker's role
 - d. All of the above

3. Social workers who advocate for healthcare for clients are demonstrating which of the following competencies?
 - a. Social workers use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
 - b. Social workers gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups
 - c. Social workers engage in practices that advance social and economic justice
 - d. Social workers critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment
4. Bob is concerned about the way his boss is treating his fellow social worker, Sonya. The boss is flirtatious and touches Sonya in very intimate ways. Sonya has started to be absent from the office frequently. When Bob asks Sonya about it, she reports being sexually harassed by their boss. Bob encourages Sonya to file a complaint and he asks the administration for permission to do staff training on sexual harassment.
 - a. Bob is attempting to eliminate his personal biases
 - b. Bob is attempting to advocate for Sonya
 - c. Bob is attempting to save Sonya's job
 - d. Bob is attempting to engage in practices to advance social justice.
5. When advocating for human rights, a macro social worker needs to have:
 - a. Good interpersonal skills as seen in negotiating and working with coalitions
 - b. Comprehensive knowledge of all human rights issues
 - c. Have experience in policy writing
 - d. Work experience with therapy group

Educational Policy 2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

· **use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and**

1. While attending the Barker Adoption Foundation Conference, Travel attended the workshop “Embracing Open Adoption: A panel of Birth and Adoptive Parent Perspectives.” In his experience at the Christian adoption agency he worked for he had conflicting views on whether open adoptions were beneficial for the birth family and the birth child placed in the adoptive home. He had seen successful open adoptions and others that had been a failure due the behavior of the birth parent. When he left the training, he decided to develop a study on the topic. This is an example of:
 - a. A social worker demonstrating practice experience informing scientific inquiry
 - b. A social worker demonstrating professional communication
 - c. A social worker demonstrating professional boundaries
 - d. A social worker demonstrating faith in practice

2. Diamond works in Chicago as a social worker. She has taken notice of a trend of student success in a particular neighborhood. Diamond decides to study the neighborhood dynamics to see if this is replicable throughout the city. This is an example of:
 - a. A social work advocating for social justice
 - b. A social worker demonstrating practice experience informing scientific inquiry
 - c. A social worker demonstrating professional boundaries
 - d. A social worker demonstrating faith in practice
3. When practice experience informs scientific inquiry, it is:
 - a. Complicated for the practitioner
 - b. Applicable to the field of practice of the social worker
 - c. Biased research
 - d. Due to grant requirements
4. Sylvia is curious about the impact that play can have on the senior citizens' behavior. Her supervisor encourages her to read current literature on best practices. After reading one particular study, Sylvia decides to do a baseline test of stress levels and then uses bubbles and Play Doh with the senior citizens at the nursing home, where she is the social worker. Sylvia tests the stress level of the participants after the activities to see if there is a significant difference. This is an example of
 - a. A social work advocating for social justice
 - b. A social worker demonstrating scientific inquiry informing practice experience
 - c. A social worker demonstrating professional boundaries
 - d. A social worker demonstrating faith in practice

• **use research evidence to inform practice.**

1. A social worker who manages a domestic violence shelter attends a social work conference and learns of a new evidence-based practice that has demonstrated positive outcomes for the population that she serves. She decides after exploring the practice further, that she would like to implement this new form of practice at the shelter. This is an example of which of the following social work practice behaviors
 - a. Using practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
 - b. Using research evidence to inform practice
 - c. Using practice wisdom to inform your work
 - d. None of the above
2. A social worker who manages an adult day care center decides to explore whether the case management services offered at the agency are resulting in improvements in client access to needed services. He facilitates several focus groups with the center participants to inquire about this as well as explore whether they perceive that the center activities are beneficial to them. This is an example of which of the following social work practice behaviors:
 - a. Using practice experience to inform scientific inquiry
 - b. Using practice wisdom to inform your work
 - c. Using research to inform practice

- d. None of the above
- 3. When Keisha began working at the local department of social services she underwent an extensive training in her field of child protective services. She felt that there was a great deal of material covered throughout her training and was surprised to learn that she would be expected to continually attend conferences and trainings on a regular basis. What is the reason that Keisha would be expected to continually go to training's?
 - a. The agency doesn't think the staff does their job well
 - b. Social workers should use research evidence to inform practice
 - c. It is a state mandate
 - d. The families don't trust the social work staff
- 4. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a form of treatment that is considered evidence informed. Scott, a clinical social worker, decided to go to get trained on this intervention. He found it very effective with his clients. This is an example of:
 - a. The utilization of practice wisdom
 - b. Social workers use research evidence to inform practice
 - c. Social workers using practice to inform research
 - d. A social worker practicing outside his scope of practice

Educational Policy 2.1.7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers

· **utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and**

- 1. The interactional model of social work practice is an example of:
 - a. The common morality framework
 - b. A theoretical approach
 - c. Freudian framework
 - d. A medical model approach that incorporates systems theory
- 2. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development is an example of:
 - a. A conceptual framework to guide assessment
 - b. A paradigm of common morality
 - c. A moralistic expectation of behavioral milestones
 - d. A framework from which understanding of human cognitive development can be understood
- 3. Erikson's stages of psychosocial development include:
 - a. Oral vs. Anal
 - b. Trust vs. Mistrust
 - c. Conventional vs. Pre-Conventional
 - d. Integrity vs. Guilt

4. Ainsworth and Bowlby are known for their theories of:
 - a. Psychosocial development
 - b. Human development
 - c. Attachment
 - d. Generativity
5. Which theorist is having a stage labeled Integrity vs. Despair?
 - a. Freud
 - b. Bowlby
 - c. Kohlberg
 - d. Erikson

• **□critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.**

1. Which is the best representative of aspects of the Life Course Perspective?
 - a. Families, Groups, Schools
 - b. Time, Environment, Groups
 - c. Time, Environment, Person
 - d. Culture, Social Movements, Person
2. Skills that a child, who is from a minority ethnicity, must acquire in order to survive and thrive developmentally in his white foster home are referred to as:
 - a. Prosocial behavior
 - b. Personality factors such as easy temperament
 - c. Assimilation
 - d. Bicultural or multicultural competence
3. Which of the following is exercised on the group level when a multidisciplinary team meets to help meet a client's needs?
 - a. Group agency
 - b. Proximal agency
 - c. Proxy agency
 - d. Collective agency
4. What behaviors would a child display if he were successfully navigating the industry vs. inferiority stage of psychosocial development?
 - a. Tying his shoes, riding a bike, solving problems
 - b. Raising his hand in school, asking for help, feeding himself
 - c. Developing close friendships, loving unconditionally
 - d. Trusting his caregivers, crying when upset, comforting himself

Educational Policy 2.1.8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers

• **analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and**

1. Mike, a social worker in an urban area, took note of a high crime area. He noticed few policemen patrolling at night. When the city council wanted to increase taxes for more police officers, Mike proposed a policy of increasing night patrols. Mike demonstrated which social work competency
 - a. Formulating and advocating for policies that advance social well-being
 - b. Understanding how difference impacts life experiences
 - c. Understanding how the environment impacts human behavior
 - d. Professional communication
2. A homeless tent community is going to be dismantled. A social worker could BEST help advocating by:
 - a. Talking to the homeless residents to find out their needs
 - b. Going to the mayor and city council and telling them they are wrong to do this
 - c. Taking a homeless resident with you to a city council meeting to share concerns and give possible solutions
 - d. A and C
3. Policy can be analyzed by:
 - a. Looking at the history of the policy, strengths, and limitations, and collecting data to evaluate its effectiveness
 - b. Surveys, cost-benefit analysis, and interviews of client populations
 - c. Both of the above
 - d. Neither of the above
4. Which of the following would be instrumental in influencing the policy process?
 - a. Political action committees
 - b. Interest groups
 - c. Political parties
 - d. All of the above

• **collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.**

1. Mike, a social worker in an urban area, took note of a high crime area. He noticed few policemen patrolling at night. Mike started a neighborhood watch group with community members. When the city council wanted to increase taxes for more police officers, the community group proposed a policy of increasing night patrols. Mike demonstrated which social work competency
 - a. Formulating and advocating for policies that advance social well-being
 - b. Understanding how difference impacts life experiences
 - c. Collaborating with clients for effective policy action
 - d. Professional communication
2. It is important in policy advocacy to:
 - a. Be knowledgeable about your policy issue
 - b. Be articulate and “speak to your audience,” addressing issues relevant to whom you are speaking
 - c. Collaborate with clients and colleagues
 - d. All of the above

3. In advocating for policy change, which of the following is TRUE?
 - a. People with differing values can actually work together on a policy if they can unite under a common cause
 - b. People with differing values should never work together because they won't get along
 - c. One must speak their mind about all their personal beliefs when working with someone on a policy issue
 - d. All of the above
4. In advocating for policy change, it is important to solicit clients' input about:
 - a. Their past experience of the policy/services
 - b. The impact on the clients that the proposed change is anticipated to have
 - c. The impact on the clients if no change is made
 - d. All of the above

Educational Policy 2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers

· **□continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and**

1. What areas of social media need to be monitored by the professional social worker to demonstrate professionalism?
 - a. Personal Facebook account
 - b. Personal Twitter
 - c. Personal Instagram account
 - d. All of the above
2. An expectation in the field is that a social worker should stay current on emerging societal trends to provide relevant services which could be accomplished through all of these except:
 - a. Conferences
 - b. In-Service training's
 - c. Touring established welfare facilities
 - d. Online Continuing educational courses
3. As residents are placed in a state funded program for juvenile delinquency, statistics are kept on the charges they are facing. The social worker reviews the information to:
 - a. Track trends within the community and changes within the delinquent population served
 - b. See where the juvenile attend school
 - c. Learn about the resident's family background
 - d. See if the resident is in a gang

4. The social worker at Harvest House, the local homeless shelter, daily sits and eats with individuals from the shelter to develop a better understanding of their needs and learn about the resources they have received locally. The worker does this because:
 - a. She likes the clients the agency works with
 - b. She is working to continuously discover the changing resources available and needs of the clients to provide relevant services
 - c. The state mandates that she interact daily with the client population
 - d. She does not have enough on her case load to keep her busy on a regular basis

• **provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.**

1. When a social worker brings together members of other agencies to discuss an issue that impacts clients in an effort to bring about policy changes within an agency or a local or national level, he or she is acting as:
 - a. Facilitator
 - b. Organizer
 - c. Mediator
 - d. Negotiator
2. As a key social work value, social justice will involve all of the following EXCEPT:
 - a. Advocating and confronting oppression
 - b. Being an opponent of discrimination
 - c. Participating in institutional inequalities
 - d. Defending against aversive racism
3. As Janelle develops the independent living program for Homes of Hope she looks toward locating funding pools that will provide sustainable resources for service provision to the clients. Which resource would not meet that expectation?
 - a. Grants
 - b. Local & state funding
 - c. Private donors
 - d. The lottery
4. Anthony is a director of a small social work organization that provides services to support at-risk families in his community. The agency currently has a contract with the city for a “Fatherhood Initiative” program. The city has offered to double the contract during the next fiscal year. To determine whether he should accept the doubled contract, Anthony should consider:
 - a. Whether they have, or can recruit, sufficient staffing to serve additional clients
 - b. Whether they can continue to provide high quality services if they increase the program
 - c. Whether the staff who are disenfranchised could benefit from a raise
 - d. Both A & B

Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)–(d)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)—Engagement

Social workers

· **substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;**

1. Jacob is a new social worker at a nursing home. He has not worked with the geriatric population in the past. To best prepare for his first day at work, Jacob could:
 - a. Watch Grumpy Old Men
 - b. Read journal articles on best practices with senior citizens
 - c. Visit his grandparents
 - d. Watch docudramas on nursing homes
2. When social workers are assigned a new client, it is important to read all available documentation, have conversations with former social workers, tune into the client's experience as well as one's own biases, consult with their supervisors. This is a way of:
 - a. Organizing client data
 - b. Advocating for the client
 - c. Preparing for action with clients
 - d. Acknowledging Client strengths
3. In working with communities, it is important to build relationships with respected members and develop a rapport with the leaders. This is a way of:
 - a. Substantively and effectively preparing for action with communities
 - b. Developing a therapeutic alliance
 - c. Tuning into the population
 - d. Implementing policy change
4. A social work facilitating groups should effectively and substantively prepare for action by:
 - a. Being flexible
 - b. Using a laissez faire style of leadership
 - c. Preparing activities and conversation starters
 - d. Preparing an educational lesson

• **□ use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and**

1. A social worker's first goal with clients is to:
 - a. Build a therapeutic alliance through showing warmth by active listening
 - b. Build a therapeutic alliance by assessing problem areas and setting goals
 - c. Build rapport though challenge a client
 - d. Build rapport through intervention techniques
2. Which of the following are NOT considered empathetic skills?
 - a. Reaching for feelings
 - b. Displaying understanding of clients' feelings
 - c. Prodding
 - d. Putting clients' feelings into words
3. The empathetic skill of asking the client to share the affective portion of her message is:
 - a. Building the therapeutic alliance
 - b. Reaching for feelings
 - c. Putting the clients' feelings into words
 - d. Searching for common ground
4. Helping a client break down a complex issue into smaller parts in an effort to address the issue in manageable bites.
 - a. Reaching inside the silence
 - b. Partializing problems
 - c. Tuning into to concerns
 - d. Building rapport

• **□ develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.**

1. Which of the following is not part of sessional contracting?
 - a. Exploration of problem identification
 - b. Partializing problems
 - c. Tuning In
 - d. Identifying "handles for work"
2. The most dangerous threat to effective work is
 - a. The illusion of work
 - b. Ethical challenges between the agency employers and NASW ethics
 - c. Picking the wrong client issue to focus on
 - d. Not dealing with authority issue between worker and client
3. In regard to treatment planning, clients should:
 - a. Be involved with the worker to develop mutually agreed upon goals
 - b. Agree on goals that the worker has set for them
 - c. Make their own goals, even if they don't coincide with the agency goals
 - d. B and C

4. The overlap between the client's needs and the services offered by the agency is called:
 - a. Clarification
 - b. Reaching
 - c. Common Ground
 - d. Tuning in

Educational Policy 2.1.10(b)—Assessment

Social workers

• **□ collect, organize, and interpret client data;**

1. A biopsychosocial spiritual assessment completed by a social worker in coordination with a client is a way of fulfilling which competency
 - a. Social workers collect, organize, and interpret client data
 - b. Social workers demonstrate effective oral and written communication
 - c. Social workers develop mutually agreed upon goals and focus of work
 - d. Social workers are learners
2. A genogram is a record of:
 - a. Eco-systemic interactions
 - b. Family dynamics
 - c. Cultural strengths
 - d. Biological implications
3. An Ecomap is a pictorial view of:
 - a. The systemic interactions of society
 - b. The familial support system
 - c. Social support and strength of connections
 - d. Eco-systemic aspects of communities
4. A SWOT is an assessment of:
 - a. Groups
 - b. Families
 - c. Communities
 - d. Individuals

• **□ assess client strengths and limitations;**

1. The best time for a worker bringing up a client's strengths is:
 - a. Before the client shares their needs and priorities
 - b. Towards the middle and definitely at ending sessions
 - c. Mostly at termination to celebrate their successful completion goals
 - d. Only clients should name their own strengths
2. An example of Bulhan's indicators of oppression assessment could be seen with which of the following individuals?
 - a. An elderly woman not being able to gain employment due to her age
 - b. A man with intellectual disabilities being institutionalized long-term
 - c. A person of color not being accepted into a civic organization due to race
 - d. All of the above

3. Which of the following assessments gives a picture of family history with quick data about family members?
 - a. Eco-map
 - b. Spiritual life map
 - c. Genogram
 - d. Family tree
4. What population(s) does the resiliency theory apply to?
 - a. Families
 - b. The elderly
 - c. Children
 - d. None of the above
 - e. All of the above

• **□ develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and**

1. The purpose of sessional contracting skills is to develop:
 - a. A treatment plan
 - b. Mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives
 - c. An ending time
 - d. Rapport
2. Brenda is a social worker in Lynchburg. She has been working with families for 22 years. She is strength based and has a good amount of practice wisdom. When training a new social worker, she encourages the social worker to go to the first session with the family with a treatment plan developed. This is NOT demonstrating the following practice behavior.
 - a. Sessional contracting
 - b. Developing collaborative interventions
 - c. Developing mutually agreed-on goals and objectives
 - d. Selecting appropriate intervention strategies
3. A social worker facilitating groups would help the members decide on session goals. This facilitation skill is indicative of the competency:
 - a. Social workers facilitate transitions and endings
 - b. Social workers select appropriate intervention strategies
 - c. Social workers effectively and substantively prepare for practice
 - d. Social workers develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives
4. In community assessment, social workers have an objective view and sometimes assess community needs without consulting the members. This is an example of failing to demonstrate which competency?
 - a. Developing practice-based research and research-based practice
 - b. Advocating for the best policy interventions
 - c. Developing mutually agreed-on goals and objectives
 - d. Selecting appropriate intervention strategies

• **select appropriate intervention strategies.**

1. After completion of a bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment with an adult male who immigrated to the United States with his family three years ago, the social worker at a mental health agency takes some time to develop a case plan. What is appropriate to consider in identifying appropriate intervention strategies for this particular client?
 - a. The desires of the client
 - b. The client's background/culture
 - c. The social worker's professional assessment B and C only
 - d. All of the above
2. A social worker at a foster care and adoption agency is assigned to work with a single father to address poor parenting behavior with the goal of reunifying the father with his 5-year-old child. The father is taking parenting classes and has monitored, weekly visitations with his child at the agency. However, he has recently started to have a harder time getting to and from the agency due to unreliable transportation. The father has adult siblings in the area but have not been in communication with them in over 6 months. The father admits to hitting his child at least twice because the child "only crawls around when he should be walking by this time." Given that the priority of the foster care and adoption agency is to address safety, permanency and well-being needs of children, what is the first area that should be explored in order to identify appropriate intervention strategies?
 - a. Explore whether the father is interested in rebuilding a relationship with his siblings in order to build the support network for him and his child
 - b. Explore whether the child has a physical or developmental impairment
Explore whether the father's car situation is temporary or whether he could benefit from the agency-sponsored bus pass
 - c. Explore the father's need for a physical
 - d. Explore the child's relationship with his caseworker
3. When working with collective populations, social workers should select interventions involving family and/or community. This is example of which competency?
 - a. Social workers facilitate transitions and endings
 - b. Social workers select appropriate intervention strategies
 - c. Social workers effectively and substantively prepare for practice
 - d. Social workers develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives
4. Individual therapeutic sessions are usually most effective with clients, who are:
 - a. Hispanic
 - b. Asian
 - c. Caucasian
 - d. Eastern European

Educational Policy 2.1.10(c)—Intervention

Social workers

· **initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;**

1. Deb, a macro social worker, was contracted by an agency to do program assessment. Deb found some areas in which the organization could make changes to increase client success rates. This assessment would likely involve all of the following EXCEPT:
 - a. Identifying the mission and goals of the organization
 - b. An evaluation of client outcomes and recommendation of actions to achieve organizational goals
 - c. Mediating on behalf of individual clients
 - d. A description of the client population, staff qualifications and intervention strategies
2. Brian, an administrative social worker, is employed by Catholic Charities. He notices that some new clients are not receiving the same resources as previous clients have received. Brian brings this to the attention of the social workers engaged in direct practice and finds out that some donations have ceased. In an effort to achieve the organizational goal of providing adequate resources, Brian
 - a. Contacts previous clients to ask for donations
 - b. Contacts a number of faithful supporters of the organization and lets them know of the need
 - c. Donates goods himself
 - d. All of the above
3. As a result of the SWOT Assessment, a number of organizational goals were identified. The social workers develop a plan of action to meet these goals. Of the following, which would not be conducive to meeting the organizational goal of increasing services?
 - a. Securing funding from grants to support the programs
 - b. Increasing the number of volunteers serving clients
 - c. Reducing social work salaries
 - d. Hiring more social workers
4. An organization has the goal of increasing productivity of its social workers. Which of the following may enhance social work productivity?
 - a. Increase the salary of social workers
 - b. Provide company vehicles for social workers
 - c. Hire staff to help with the paperwork completed by social workers
 - d. Hire more administration

• **□implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;**

1. The DARE program offered in elementary schools across the nation was an effort to prevent drug use. Much like this program, social workers engage in preventive interventions. Which of the following program would NOT be considered a preventive intervention?
 - a. Juvenile detention facilities
 - b. Early intervention services
 - c. Youth leadership development
 - d. Students Against Drunk Driving
2. Awareness programs for sex trafficking are aimed at prevention. This is representative of which social work practice behavior.
 - a. Social workers help clients solve problems
 - b. Social workers increase client resiliency
 - c. Social workers provide appropriate intervention strategies
 - d. Social workers implement prevention interventions
3. Youth Against Violence is an example of an organization focused on:
 - a. Prevention
 - b. Intervention
 - c. Evaluation
 - d. Assessment
4. Sheree is developing a suicide prevention program for her local youth community outreach program. This program might include all of the following except:
 - a. Peer support groups
 - b. Drivers education classes
 - c. Educational workshops
 - d. Mentoring

• **□help clients resolve problems;**

1. What does the "demand for work" involve?
 - a. A social worker encouraging a client to do their best work in the workplace
 - b. A social worker creating work for the client to do to help fix their problem
 - c. A social worker encouraging the client to work on the issue at hand, putting effort into solving their problem
 - d. All of the above
2. Goal setting involves:
 - a. The client setting their own goals
 - b. The client and the worker mutually setting goals
 - c. The worker setting goals for the client
 - d. None of the above
3. A social worker is working with a client to figure out how to solve their issue with poor time management. They come up with a list of possible ideas. This intervention is called

- a. Brainstorming
 - b. Reframing
 - c. Providing educational data
 - d. None of the above
4. Types of intervention to help clients solve their problems include all BUT:
- a. Alternative interpretation (reframing)
 - b. Providing resources
 - c. Homework assignments
 - d. All the above would be considered interventions
5. Susi social worker has a client whose mother has dementia. Work with the client should include (find the BEST answer):
- a. Forming a therapeutic alliance, contracting, and social worker setting goals for the client and finding client resources for her mother
 - b. Forming a therapeutic alliance, contracting, and social worker and client setting goals together and mutually working on a plan for locating resources
 - c. Setting goals for the client and finds her client resources for her mother

• **negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and**

1. In doing an intake on the Smith family at the local homeless shelter Adrian found that the family did not have the necessary ID with them to be admitted to the shelter for the night. Adrian contacted her supervisor and shared the family's situation and requested that the requirement be waived for the night with the plan to obtain the correct documentation in the morning. After their discussion, the supervisor did approve the admission. This is an example of:
 - a. Boundary crossing
 - b. Advocacy
 - c. Rule breaking
 - d. Intake planning
2. When a conflict arises between two residents in a nursing home the social worker calls both parties together to air their concerns. During their discussion, they are able to resolve the conflict and both parties felt heard and supported. This is an example of the social worker applying _____ techniques.
 - a. Intake and assessment
 - b. Discharge planning
 - c. Negotiation and mediation
 - d. Prevention interventions

3. When a social worker writes letters or send e-mails to state and national congressmen in support of bills and policies that will enhance the lives of all people, including the clients, he or she is:
 - a. Demonstrating his or her brokerage skills
 - b. Demonstrating advocacy efforts
 - c. Revealing his or her ability to communicate in written form
 - d. Indicating his or her ability to mediate for clients
4. A social worker oversees the assessment process in which a 6-year-old autistic student is determined to have academic needs that cannot be met by his current school placement. In fact, it is doubtful that any school in the district can provide the appropriate education. Advocacy for this student refers to the following activities, EXCEPT:
 - a. Researching the student's legal rights and the responsibility of the school district
 - b. Meeting with the parents of the child to help them prepare for a meeting with the district representatives
 - c. Representing the child's interests in a legal proceeding to secure the right programming
 - d. Providing counseling to the child to help him process his feelings about the placement

• **facilitate transitions and endings.**

1. A social worker has been a therapist for a 12-year-old foster child for over a year. They meet every other week. This child has made much progress in working through abandonment issues. The social worker recently decided to interview for a supervisory position at a counseling agency closer to her home. The HR director at the new agency just called to offer her the position and she accepted. She will start her new position in one month. What IS NOT an appropriate way to help facilitate ending treatment with this particular client and prepare her for the transition to a new therapist?
 - a. Engage the client planning for a celebration to assist with closure and offer a time to celebrate the progress the client has made with this particular social worker
 - b. Let the client know about the transition and allow for opportunities for the client to discuss their feelings about it
 - c. Try to include the new therapist in the final sessions so that the child could become familiar with this new person
 - d. Continue to meet with the client every other week even after moving on to the new position until the client is ready to have a new therapist
2. What is it called when feelings regarding termination are avoided?
 - a. Resistance
 - b. Ambivalence
 - c. Transitioning
 - d. Denial

3. During an ending session, both client and worker will experience the following emotions EXCEPT:
 - a. Effortless expression of feelings
 - b. Stages of grief
 - c. Wish for continued work
 - d. Pain
4. A client relationship is forced to be terminated as the social worker is moving to a different agency. The social worker and client worked together for three sessions. During these sessions, the client was inactive but cooperative. Therefore, not much was achieved. This is an example of:
 - a. A transitional relationship
 - b. Passive aggressive behavior
 - c. Indirect communication
 - d. A relationship that never began

Educational Policy 2.1.10(d)—Evaluation

Social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

1. A social worker at a community hospital plans to implement a new program that seeks to offer new parents the opportunity to participate in a brief infant parenting education session with a pediatric nurse before they take their child home for the first time and then for a few months thereafter. She wants to determine if this intervention increases parents' feelings of being prepared to effectively care for their child and decreases the number of child fatalities due to poor parenting skills. This scenario is an example of which social work practice behavior.
 - a. Social workers apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions
 - b. Social workers practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development
 - c. Social workers recognize the extent to which a culture's structures may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power
 - d. Social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions
2. In weekly supervision Matrice uses her time to discuss each case with her supervisor to process the progress made with each client and to develop new working goals. This is an example of:
 - a. Evaluating interventions
 - b. Developing professional identity
 - c. Reviewing policy issues
 - d. Evaluating ethical practice dynamics

3. Critical thinking in social work is essential because of the following:
 - a. It requires that you learn to question theories and assumptions about people's behaviors and actions
 - b. It is a requirement of the curriculum
 - c. It is a good mental exercise for problem solving for your clients when they are in a crisis
 - d. It is great for assignment and presentations for social work students
4. Social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions by the use of:
 - a. Professional supervision
 - b. Participating in community team meetings designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the agency services
 - c. Meeting regularly with the clients being served by the agency to assess their progress with their case plans
 - d. All of the above
5. Deb, a social worker, was contracted by an agency to do program assessment of one of the new interventions it is using with youth. Deb is fulfilling the social role of:
 - a. A program evaluator
 - b. An assessor
 - c. An auditor
 - d. A broker
6. The Corning Infant adoption agency wants to assess their ability to meet the needs of the birth parents they serve. They use client interviews and satisfaction surveys to assess success. This information is used to _____;
 - a. justify raising adoption fees
 - b. monitor and evaluate interventions
 - c. develop macro policy
 - d. evaluate clients
7. When funding streams change it is essential for the social worker to critically analyze, monitor and evaluate their program _____.
 - a. To consider merging with another agency
 - b. To advocate for alternative resources
 - c. Better compete with other agencies
 - d. To develop intake procedures
8. In the treatment of alcoholism, a social worker's standard approach based on the disease model includes all of the following EXCEPT
 - a. Enhance self-esteem so he can mobilize the client's strengths.
 - b. Challenge faulty thinking
 - c. Help the client remain sober by developing alternative ways of coping with stress
 - d. Develop ways for the client to continue to drink moderately.

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- Zidan, T. (2015). Teaching social work in an online environment. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 25(3), 228-235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2014.1003733>

VITA

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EDUCATION

M.S.W., Marywood University, Scranton, Pennsylvania, May 1996.

B.S., Baptist Bible College, Clark Summit, Pennsylvania, May 1990.

CURRENT ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

January 2020 – Present Founding MSW Program Director

July 2019 – Present Professor of Social Work

PAST ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

July 2015– 2020 Lead Chair of the Department of Social Work

July 2014 – 2019 Associate Professor of Social Work / Founding
BSSW Program Director

Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

July 2009 – June 2014 Associate Professor of Social Work

August 2008 – June 2011 Assistant Director of the Social Work Program

January 2004 – June 2009 Assistant Professor of Social Work

University of Kentucky, Lexington, VA

August 2011 – December 2013 Teaching Assistant

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2005 – Present International Social Work Consultant/Therapist
Dominican Republic, Greece, Spain

2004 – 2014 Mental Health Consultant/Supervision
Cedarville, Ohio

2001 - 2003 Independent Social Work Contractor
Private Clinical Practice
Ambridge, Pennsylvania

1998 - 2000 Director of Domestic and International Adoption
Bethany Christian Services
Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania

1994 – 1998 Residential Treatment Social Worker/MH Clinician
Bethanna Christian Children's Home
Southampton, Pennsylvania

1992 – 1994

Therapeutic Foster Care Social Worker and
Program Developer
Bethanna Christian Children's Home
Southampton, Pennsylvania

HONORS AND AWARDS

Honorary Member Phi Alpha National Honor Society 2020 Liberty University Chapter
Employee of the Month, March 2016, Liberty University
Employee of the Month, September 2015, Liberty University
Faculty Advisor of the Year Award 2010, Cedarville University
Honorary Member Phi Alpha National Honor Society 2010 Cedarville University
Chapter
Faculty Award 2009, Influencing State Policy
Excellence Award 2009, Cedarville University
Excellence in Teaching 2008, Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education
(SOCHE)
Honorary Member Phi Alpha National Honor Society 2005 Cedarville University
Chapter
Foster Care Social Worker of the Year 1993, Foster Parent Association of Bethanna
Christian Children's Home

PUBLICATIONS

Blind Peer Reviewed Publications

- Fulmer, C.K. (2017). Proposing problem-based learning as an effective pedagogical technique for social work education. *International Journal of Educational and Pedagogical Sciences*, 11(5), 1262 - 1265.
- Fulmer, C.K. (2013). A fish out of water: A seasoned professor from a small private university discusses her first experience as a teaching assistant at a large state university. *Perspectives in Social Work Journal*, 9(2). 5-8.
- Fulmer, C. K. (2006). *American treatment modalities of reactive attachment disorders*. Published in the proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health.
- Firmin, M. & Fulmer, C. K. (2004). Perspectives on adoptive children experiencing more life conflicts than non-adoptive children. *Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal*, 7(4), 275-284.

Invited Publications

- Contributing Editor (2021) *So you want to be a social worker: A primer for the Christian student* (Revision). St. Davids, PA: NACSW.
- Fulmer, C.K & Furj-Kuhn, J. (2014). Christian missionary work/workers in human services delivery. *The Encyclopedia of Human Services and Diversity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fulmer, C.K. (2014). History of U.S. immigration law. *The Encyclopedia of Human Services and Diversity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.