

MEASURING STUDENT PERCEPTION OF ETHICS INSTRUCTION IN SOCIAL
WORK PROGRAMS AT THE BSW AND MSW LEVEL

by

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ABSTRACT

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Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) programs lack a universal method to teach ethics, and it is at the discretion of the program to determine the type of ethics education received. The purpose of this research was to determine the level of ethics instruction received by graduating students at the BSW, advanced standing (BSW and MSW), and two-year MSW level (two years of graduate education) by asking students their perspective on their ethics education. This study involved a demographics and ethical questionnaire, The Nathanson and Giffords Ethics Scale (NGES) that allowed students to report their perception of ethics in their programs. Results indicated significant differences were present, with BSW students scoring significantly better than advanced standing and two-year MSW students on the NGES. This finding was not correlated with perception of ethics training. Implications are discussed in terms of future research directions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“What social workers do is based on values, and social work ethics are social work values in action” (NASW Illinois Chapter, 1997, para. 5). The backbone of any profession is the maintenance and adherence to its ethical principles. Ethics education, therefore, must be clearly defined and measurable. While extensive literature can be found on the topic of social work ethics, research on the perceived level of ethics education received by the bachelor’s or master’s student is limited. Research needs to determine if differences exist between bachelor’s of social work (BSW), advanced standing, and two-year master’s of social work (MSW) students in terms of perceived ethics preparation. While the Council for Social Work Education (CSWE) defines the accreditation standards for bachelor and master of social work programs, no clear measure of ethical competency exists for graduating BSW or MSW students.

“Ethics education in social work has been a frequently debated topic throughout social work’s history” (Reamer 2006; Joseph & Conrad 1983; Strom-Gottfried 2000). Prior research in social work ethics has focused on defining ethics and values in education and determining what practices should be followed and prohibited. This research took the importance of social work ethics a step further and asked students what their perspective was on their ethics education. To date, there is little research that focuses directly on the student’s perception of ethics instruction in social work programs.

The purpose of the present study was to determine if differences exist between

graduating BSW, advanced standing, and two-year MSW students. Differences were measured in terms of student perception of their ethics training from their social work program in relation to their responses given to a list of ethical scenarios found in professional practice. Results from this study may encourage others to conduct future studies that measure student's perception from multiple accredited social work programs. Accredited social work programs may be educating students about ethical dilemmas, but students may need more instruction to better utilize the skills they have learned. By taking a closer look at the structure of ethics education in BSW and MSW programs, research findings may support modified teaching methods and advances to current ethics instruction in social work programs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review defines relevant terminology to the present study. In particular, it explains the evolution of ethics in social work, details the involvement of social work associations in ethics education and addresses some of the most common violations associated with BSW and MSW licensure. Additionally, it analyzes the arguments for discrete ethics courses and pervasive ethics teaching models and discusses various BSW and MSW studies related to students' ethics education.

2.1 Definitions

- Ethics: “A system or code of morals of a particular profession.” In social work, it includes moral reasoning, questions and concerns about the obligations and duties of the social worker. “Moral reasoning in social work is about making the distinction between right and wrong in how one conduct’s social work practice” (NASW Illinois Chapter, 1997, para. 1).
- Values: A type of belief that is central to one’s belief system. Values in social work are deeply rooted in a fundamental set of core values including service, social justice, dignity and worth of a person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence that ultimately shape the social worker’s mission and priorities (NASW Code of Ethics; Morales & Schaeffer, 2004).
- Ethical dilemmas: Occur when two or more values are in conflict. Ethical dilemmas in social work are scenarios where social work values conflict with one

another. “For example, a client’s confidentiality rights clash with social worker’s duty to protect third parties from harm” (Reamer, 2014, para. 21).

- **Ethical decision-making:** Includes a series of concepts and steps for social workers to consider. Steps can include identifying key conflicting ethical issues, identifying the groups or individuals involved, weighing the benefits and risks, examining reasons for and against the course of action, considering relevant literature and consulting with colleagues and experts. Ethical decision-making necessitates the best clinical judgment of the social worker (Reamer, 2014, para. 7).

2.2 History of the Code of Ethics

Promoting ethics and values in social work started from the birth of the profession. The practice of applied and professional ethics in social work began in the 1920s (Reamer, 2006, p. 1). Early pioneers like Jane Addams, Ellen Gates Starr, and Mary Richmond paved the way for the development of social work as a profession (Reamer, 2014, para. 1). In the 1920s, to ensure every current and future social worker would follow the ideals representative of the profession, the first unofficial Code of Ethics was drafted (Reamer, 2014, para. 3). This first version of the Code of Ethics discussed some of social work’s core values related to “client dignity, worth, privacy and right to self-determination” (Reamer, 2014, para. 3). While monumental for its time, it was not until 1960 that the American Association of Social Workers, the largest organization of social workers at the time, developed the first formal Code of Ethics (Reamer, 2006, p. 2). In 1960, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) developed its first Code of Ethics with 14 principles concerning “respect for privacy of

clients, appropriate professional service in public emergencies, professional responsibility over personal interests, to contribute to knowledge, skills and support welfare programs” (Reamer, 2006, p. 2). Since the adoption of this first formal Code of Ethics, eight subsequent revisions have occurred, each version addressing more values and principles associated with the social work profession (NASW, 2014). Today, the purpose of the Code of Ethics is to “summarize broad ethical principles that reflect the profession’s core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice” (Reamer, 2006, p. 9).

Some of social work’s earliest literature focused on teaching values and ethics in social work programs. *The Teaching of Values and Ethics in Social Work Education* written by Muriel Pumphrey (1959) detailed a “comprehensive curriculum or conceptual template for ethics education [that focused on] what extent professional values and ethics [were] conveyed to social work students” (Reamer, 2014, para. 10). Pumphrey (1959) saw the necessity in educating future social workers about the importance of the Code of Ethics and advocated for more time to be dedicated to ethics education in social work programs. Her vision for social work ethics was later mirrored by a Hastings Center report, *The Teaching of Social Work Ethics*, conducted by Marcia Abramson and Frederick Reamer (1982) that argued, “social work education programs need[s] to considerably strengthen their efforts to teach content on professional values and ethics” (Reamer, 2014, para. 12). During the time the Hastings Center Report was published, the focus on discussing ethical dilemmas in professions was expanding to “medicine, nursing, law, journalism, engineering, business, criminal justice, public policy and social work” (Reamer, 2014, para. 12). Several decades later, a CSWE publication of *Teaching*

Social Work Values and Ethics: A Curriculum Resource, written by Elaine Congress, Phyllis Black, Kimberly Strom-Gottfried (2009), also advocated for more emphasis on teaching ethics in social work programs (Reamer, 2014, para. 13).

2.3 Modern Ethics Instruction

Since the first formal Code of Ethics in 1960, “ethics education in the professions has been transformed. What was once superficial and cursory treatment of the subject has evolved into a much more deliberate, comprehensive effort to educate professionals about compelling ethical issues that inevitably arise” (Reamer, 2014, para. 16). However, social workers today face unprecedented challenges that previous social workers could not *and* did not anticipate. For example, the presence of HIV/AIDS, social media interactions, the presence of licensing boards, potential lawsuits, and suspensions have all contributed to a growing number of ethical dilemmas and scenarios social workers face in the field (Reamer, 2006, p. 1). Through the increasing number of ethical dilemmas, the likelihood for Code of Ethics violations and legal issues arise. Common risks associated with Code of Ethics violations are related to “client confidentiality, informed consent, boundaries and dual relationships, conflicts of interest, delivery of services, digital and online communications, documentation, termination of services, and practitioner impairment” (Reamer, 2014, para. 27). While mandatory ethics education for licensed social work practitioners and ethics trainings are forms of preventative measures, ensuring future social workers report a level of confidence to face ethical dilemmas in professional settings remains a topic for discussion (Reamer, 2014, para. 29).

Prior literature on measuring student perception of social work programs has

included: overall college experience, job satisfaction, the perception and understanding of the social work profession, application of academic specialization to the workplace, job history, social work's image amongst college professions, and asking students their perceptions and attitudes about sexual contact with clients in professional settings (Dennison, Poole & Qaqish, 2007; Aguilar & Williams, 2005; Richman & Rosenfeld, 1988). Previous research has not directly asked students their perception of overall ethics training in their social work programs and related this to against an ethics questionnaire. Measuring student perception of ethics instruction and the level of preparation to face ethical dilemmas, as the result of their social work programs, is what the research in this study aimed to measure.

2.4 Social Work Associations Involved with Ethics Education

1. Social Work Profession-National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

The NASW is the governing body of social work that unifies social workers nationally by its policies, standards and principles outlined in its Code of Ethics. The purpose of the NASW is to “enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards and to advance sound social policies” (NASW, 2014). Discussion on the importance of ethics and values is found in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Ethics are seen more as universal rules intended for society to live by and values are beliefs about right and wrong based on personal value systems (Congress, Black & Strom-Gottfried, 2009, p. IV).

2. Social Work Education-Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

“A key impetus to strengthened ethics education in social work is the CSWE's

Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards” (Reamer, 2014, para. 17). The CSWE is the accrediting body of social work education that determines if the ethical principles and values defined in the NASW Code of Ethics are taught in every accredited BSW and MSW program (Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), 2012). The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) are the guiding policies and standards for accredited social work programs to follow. By enforcing the EPAS, the CSWE ensures that those who graduate from an accredited program are competent and educated social workers. Accreditation is important because it means the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognizes it. According to CHEA, the CSWE meets the standards and accreditation guidelines consistent to the expectations of academic excellence, responsibility and procedures of ongoing practice that are required To be an accrediting body of social work programs (CSWE, 2010 CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures). In other words, accreditation of a social work program is necessary for the degree to be nationally recognized.

In terms of ethics education in accredited social work programs, the CSWE does not specifically require an actual ethics course to be taught but rather ethics education is to be infused throughout the entire BSW or MSW curricula (EPAS, 2003). As stated in their EPAS under Educational Policy 2.1.2, “Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision making.” One manner in which this is done is through “applying [the] standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics” (CSWE, 2012). While the Code of Ethics is seen as a universal teaching instrument for ethical social work practice, researchers advocate for supplemental instruction to accompany the teaching of the Code of Ethics (Dolgoff &

Skolnik 1996; Doyle et al, 2009; Reamer & Abramson, 1982). Other forms of ethics instruction include reviewing social work and the law, role-playing and debates on common social work dilemmas, and discussing current events in the social work field (Reamer & Abramson, 1982).

2.5 Code of Ethics Violations

Frederick Reamer, a professor and researcher at the School of Social Work at Rhode Island College, and potentially the leading scholar in the field of social work ethics, stated that Code of Ethics violations occur mostly by “mistake” by “talented, conscientious, and dedicated practitioners” (Reamer, 2011, para. 1). Reamer reported most social work ethics violations are “not complex ethical dilemmas involving conflicts among professional duties, such as choosing between a client’s right to confidentiality... Instead these are situations where good social workers slip on the proverbial banana peel and violate ethical standards” (Reamer, 2011, para. 1). Reamer’s expert opinion on social work ethics is supported by his research on public policy, criminal justice, social worth ethics and professional ethics (Reamer, 2011, para. 14). His research includes but is not limited to: *The Teaching of Social Work Ethics* (1982), *The Philosophical Foundations of Social Work* (1993), *Social Work Values and Ethics* (1995), *Ethical Standards in Social Work: A Review of The NASW Code of Ethics* (1998), *Ethical Standards in Social Work: A Review of The NASW Code of Ethics* (2006), and *Boundary Issues and Dual Relationships* (2012).

According to a national report by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the most common violations of the Code of Ethics by licensed social workers are: commitment to clients, conflicts of interest, privacy and confidentiality, sexual

relationships, unethical conduct of colleagues, client records, dishonesty, fraud and deception and misrepresentation (NASW, 2014). Another study conducted nationally by Strom-Gottfried (2000) analyzed all NASW Code of Ethics violations from 1986-1997. Her research indicated that out of 267 cases involving Code of Ethics violations, 160 violations identified poor practice, 107 violations involved sexual activities, 86 violations were related to social worker competency, 77 violations involved dual relationships, 70 violations involved poor recording keeping, 65 violations involved general boundary violations, and 51 violations involved social worker honesty (Strom-Gottfried, 2000, p. 253-254).

Another study (Daley & Doughty, 2006) analyzed all ethics complaints filed to the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners (TSBSWE) from 1995-2003. Their data indicated that the most common ethics complaints for BSW licensees were related to boundary issues, poor practice, and honesty. The most common ethics complaints for MSW licensees were related to honesty and confidentiality (Daley & Doughty, 2006). Researchers stated the cause for BSW violations might be related to student reluctance to tell their supervisor about ethical dilemmas, which may increase the likelihood of violations occurring (Daley & Doughty, 2006). Researchers also stated contributing factors to these violations were possibly related to bachelor's and master's level social worker job titles. BSW level social workers tend to work more in public settings with more involuntary clients, thus the rate for client dissatisfaction and complaints is higher (Daley & Doughty, 2006). BSW level social workers also tend to work more in rural areas, which have higher risks of dual relationships (Daley & Doughty, 2006).

In a 2013 report on the Disciplinary Trends for the Professional Licensing and

Certification Unit for the Texas Department of Health, the TSBSWE reported the most common violations of the Code of Ethics were: failure to provide standard of care (28%), unlicensed practice (25%), and unprofessional conduct (20%) (TSBSWE, Disciplinary Trends, 2013). Other violations worth noting were related to criminal history (9%), non-compliance (9%), and sexual misconduct (3%) of a social worker (TSBSWE, Disciplinary Trends, 2013). According to the TSBWE, these violations are the most common violations statewide. Other states may encounter more violations in one area than others. Upon request, the TSBWE will allow some of these case files to be viewed however, specific details regarding these violations are not viewable publically.

2.6 Pervasive Ethics Model versus Discrete Ethics Course

Social work departments are granted the authority to determine the manner in which they teach ethics in their social work programs. Two common approaches are the pervasive ethics model, which infuses ethics material throughout the entirety of the social work program curriculum without a specific ethics course; and the discrete ethics course, which focuses social work ethics into one course as opposed to only incorporating ethics material throughout the social work program curriculum (Morelock 1997; Joseph & Conrad 1983). Morelock (1997) surveyed 60 out of the 110 accredited MSW programs in the United States as of July 1, 1993; 60 programs were selected with regard for representation of all 50 states (p. 77). With a response rate of almost 90% ($N=53$), one third of those programs reported offering a discrete ethics course ($n=16$) (Morelock, 1997, p. 78). While most accredited social work programs use the pervasive ethics model, some researchers propose the inclusion of an ethics course in accredited social work curriculums because of the specific attention given to ethics (Reamer & Abramson,

1982; Congress, 1993; Morelock 1997; Aguilar & Williams, 2005; Rice, 1994, Reamer, 2006).

One study conducted by Joseph & Conrad (1983) used an Ethical Content Scale that asked students questions “related to their understanding of the values and principles of ethical content using a Likert type scale” (p. 63). Researchers also used an Ethical Model Scale that “sought to determine the student’s ability to engage in ethical analysis and decision making using a Likert type scale” (Joseph & Conrad, 1983, p. 63). Both ethics scales were used in the form of a questionnaire. Comparison groups consisted of two phases; Phase 1 consisted of master’s students randomly assigned to take the discrete ethics course ($n=19$) and a random selection of different master’s students who were assigned to courses that followed the pervasive teaching model ($n=20$) at the National Catholic School of Social Service at the Catholic University of America. Phase 2 consisted of students from another Catholic school of social work that randomly assigned master’s students to the discrete ethics course ($n=33$) and randomly assigned a different set of master’s students ($n=99$) classes that followed the pervasive teaching model (Joseph & Conrad, 1983, p. 65). Results determined that the students in both phases who were exposed to the ethics course were “significantly more proficient with ethical content than [were] the students...who did not have the [ethics] course [as well as] the students...who experienced the integrated or pervasive model” (Joseph & Conrad, 1983, p. 67).

Graduate faculty from the Indiana University School of Social Work incorporated an Immersion Course in their MSW program ($N=79$) that focused on teaching students social work values and ethics (Lay, Khaja, McGuire & Gass, 2008). In an attempt to

create “an innovative and responsive curriculum,” graduate faculty designed an ethics course in the social work program to “maximize [student] learning of the content of foundation coursework and [that goes] beyond to the concentration level” (Lay et al., 2008, para. 7).

In order to determine the educational preparedness of students who entered the master’s program, graduate faculty analyzed the undergraduate degrees of the students entering the program. Their analysis found “over 80% of admitted master’s students did not have an undergraduate degree in social work...The largest number of students came from the disciplines of psychology and sociology...[and] 52% came from disciplines as diverse as English, general studies, philosophy, wildlife management, art history, accounting, business, and engineering” (Lay et al., 2008, para. 3). Graduate faculty found that students who entered into their MSW program universally had a desire to help people, but their undergraduate disciplines did not focus on ethics in the social work profession (Lay et al., 2008). To determine if a specific course in ethics provided better ethics education compared to a pervasive model, a content analysis of student evaluations of the course was conducted. Results indicated students felt the Immersion course: prepared them for graduate school, discussed diversity of perspective for social work practice, discussed personal reflection and critical thinking. and discussed values and ethics of the profession as evidenced by student responses in the course evaluations (Lay et al., 2008).

Conversely, a study conducted by Morelock (1997) surveyed 60 accredited MSW programs ($N = 60$) and found that less than one third of MSW programs taught ethics in a discrete course format (p. 78). By administering a two-page questionnaire to MSW

students measuring student preparedness in social work ethics, teaching a discrete course compared to the pervasive ethics model showed no differences (Morelock, 1997). Measurable variables included overall placement of ethics in the program curriculum, instructional materials and approaches used in ethics courses(s), faculty attitudes, and faculty role modeling. Results indicated there were no significant differences between student scores in programs with discrete ethics courses and student scores from programs that follow the pervasive model. However, students who did take an ethics course reported more discussions on moral philosophy (Morelock, 1997).

2.7 Comparing BSW and MSW Programs

A study assessing BSW and MSW student members from the Florida chapter of NASW ($N = 280$) found significant differences between the attitudes of sexual contact with clients and the students' perceptions on ethics training in their coursework. Aguilar & Williams (2005) found 90% of BSW students reported a similar amount of coursework dedicated to content on ethics, whereas only 71% of MSW students reported a significant amount of coursework dedicated to ethics content (Aguilar & Williams, 2005, p. 59). BSW students were more also likely to report feeling prepared to deal with sexual feelings toward clients compared to MSW students (Aguilar & Williams, 2005, p. 66). Researchers also found that BSW students were more likely to report that their field placement prepared them for dealing with sexual advances by clients compared to MSW students.

Research conducted by Rice (1994) found that social work programs are helping students develop competency in social work values (p. 134). By comparing entry-level BSW students to business students in a sample pool, Rice (1994) found that both groups

of students had the same relatively “low adherence to social work values of self-determination and social justice” (p. 134). However, when comparing data between graduating business students and BSW students, the BSW students demonstrated an increased understanding in social work values. These results indicated that BSW programs are preparing students for MSW level coursework (Rice, 1994, p. 134). Rice stated “values socialization is crucial at the BSW level” to ensure MSW students have the “skills necessary to carefully analyze, evaluate, and implement ethical strategies when faced with value conflicts [for] advanced, autonomous professional practice” (Rice, 1994, p. 135).

Other social work educators have administered questionnaires to assess ethics in BSW and MSW programs to determine the level of preparedness of individual social work students (Congress, 2001; Joseph & Conrad, 1983; Reamer & Abramson, 1982). An ethics scale, known as the Nathanson and Giffords Ethics Scale (NGES), created by Nathanson, Giffords & Calderon (2011) “provide[d] outcomes assessment data demonstrating adherence to curriculum standards set forth the Council on Social Work Education” (p. 133). The NGES was drafted from the Social Work Value Inventory (SWVI) developed by Pike (1996) and served the purpose of “assessing development of ethical awareness among students and alumni of social work programs with significant implications for social work education” (Nathanson et al., 2011, p. 140). For purposes of this study, the current research instrument is reprinted with permission from part one of the NGES to compare student perception of ethics instruction to student responses to a list of ethical scenarios (See Methodology).

Creators of the NGES developed a two-part questionnaire consisting of 18

demographic questions and a list of 18 ethical scenarios. Part one of the questionnaire asked for general information and part two had participants decide whether the ethical scenario reflected social work values or personal values. Researchers used a cross-sectional descriptive design and collected data from students entering their MSW program (entry cohort), students graduating from the MSW program (exit cohort), and those students who graduated within the past year (alumni cohort). A sample size of 178 was achieved by administering the questionnaire to one suburban and two urban campuses. Their results indicated out of the total number of participants, those students from the suburban campuses performed better overall compared to the two urban campuses. Researchers suggested that different types of schools, whether urban or suburban, “may require emphasis of different content areas in the ethics curriculum [thus] supporting why some out performed others” (Nathanson et al., 2011, p. 140). Statistical significance also existed between the total score on the ethics questionnaire between the entry cohort and exit cohort supporting the idea that “social work alumni are more socialized to the ethics of the profession when compared with entering students” (Nathanson et al., 2011, p. 140). Researchers attributed these differences to be “the result of socialization to certain ethical standards that take place as the students are progressing through the program, [and] the effect of work experience post graduation” (Nathanson et al., 2011, p. 140).

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

This literature review detailed the evolution of social work ethics since the first Code of Ethics and discussed teaching discrete social work ethics courses versus the integrative model for ethics education. It also described the purpose of the NASW is to

establish the ethical principles and standards of the social work profession through its Code of Ethics, while the CSWE ensures the ethical principles and standards are practiced by social work programs.

Research in social work ethics has demonstrated the values and principles that define social work as a profession; it has also identified student perception of their overall education in social work programs. Research has defined the most common violations associated with bachelor's and master's level social workers. It has also evaluated the performance of students in terms of their ethical problem solving skills in response to ethical dilemmas. Where research in social work ethics has yet to explore is the relationship between the perception of students in social work programs and their response to ethical dilemmas. While research in social work has provided countless examples of ethical dilemmas and Code of Ethics violations, there are no studies that indicate student's perception of their ethics training in relation to their responses to ethical dilemmas found in professional settings. Identifying where students feel most and least competent in their ethical problem skills may lower the Code of Ethics violations that occur and overall may produce more competent and confident bachelor's and master's level social workers.

2.9 Current Study

While regulatory boards of social work identify the importance of ethics education in the social work curriculum, the issue remains of whether students perceive themselves to be as ethically prepared as the social program determined them to be. Determining student perception of their ethics training and measuring that perception with an instrument designed to measure student's abilities to solve ethical dilemmas was

the objective of this research. This study analyzed student responses to ethical scenarios found in professional settings and compared student responses on perceived level of preparation from their social work courses (See Appendix C, D & E). Using this as a research framework, the following research questions and hypotheses were identified:

Research Question 1: How do BSW, advanced standing and two-year MSW students compare in their perception of ethics training in social work programs? Hypothesis 1: Advanced standing students will report the highest level of preparation in terms of their perception of ethics training because of their undergraduate and master's degree.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between student perception of ethics training and their score on the NGES? Hypothesis 2: Students that report a high level of preparation in terms of their ethics training will score higher on the NGES in all three groups.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional survey design with one independent variable (IV) and two dependent variables (DVs). The IV was status in social work program, with three distinct groups: BSW, advanced standing MSW, and two-year MSW students. The DVs were overall perception of ethics training, as well as total score on the ethical dilemmas questionnaire as measured by the NGES. This study used a convenience sampling method that invited students from advanced social work classes from the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work to participate in a two-part questionnaire.

3.2 Participants

BSW participants were current undergraduate students in their final year at UTA currently enrolled in Field Seminar II. MSW participants were current graduate students enrolled in the two-year MSW program with undergraduate degrees other than BSWs (referred as two-year MSW student/participant). Advanced standing participants were current graduate students who had their undergraduate degree in social work (BSW) and therefore had only a one-year master's program to complete (UTA, 2014). Advanced standing students differ from two-year MSW students in that their program is one, rather than two, years in length (CSWE, 2012, M3.2.3).

Students were recruited during selected social work class times. The BSW

classes that were selected to participate in the questionnaire were three Field Seminar II courses. Students enrolled in Field Seminar II have a graduation date expected within that semester or the following semester after completion of the course. The MSW classes selected to administer the questionnaire were those classes that were considered to be advanced, second year courses and thus would have a greater likelihood to have graduating MSW students. The MSW courses that were selected to administer the questionnaire were Integrative Seminar, Brain and Behavior, Cognitive and Behavioral Therapy Seminar, Women and Family Policy, Social Policy and Mental Health, and Direct Practice with Aging.

Professors of every selected BSW and MSW course consented approval before the principle investigator was allowed to administer the survey to the classes (See Appendix H). Only those students enrolled in one of the professor consented courses were invited to participate. All participants provided their voluntary consent (see Appendix G), as well as, the study was approved by the UTA Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A & B).

The questionnaire was only administered one time in the designated BSW and MSW classes. The questionnaire was not administered to the same class more than once. Only the students enrolled in one of the designated BSW or MSW classes and in attendance the day the questionnaire was administered were invited to participate in the study. BSW and MSW class sizes ranged from 20-27 enrolled students, as indicated by each class's professor. Every student in attendance at the time the questionnaire was administered was given the opportunity to participate in the study. A student who was enrolled in the course, but not there on the day the questionnaire was provided was not

given another opportunity to participate in this study.

Inclusionary criteria for completed surveys had to have students who 1) consented yes to participate in the study and 2) indicated an expected graduation date. Students who did not indicate an expected graduation date, who did not provide consent, and who chose to not participate, were automatically excluded. Students who answered all, most or a partial amount of questions but consented yes and indicated a graduation date of fall 2014 were included in the results. As this study aimed to measure perception of ethics training from social work courses in relation to scores on the NGES from graduating students, only the students who indicated a graduation date of fall 2014 were included in the preset study findings.

Out of 348 students (114 BSW and 234 MSW) expected to graduate in fall 2014, 174 BSW and MSW students responded to the questionnaire. This indicated that of 348 BSW and MSW students, 50% were given the opportunity to participate ($N=174$ students). Out of the estimated number of students enrolled in the designated BSW and MSW classes (214 students), 81.30% responded to the questionnaire. Of the total number of students that responded to the questionnaire (174 students), 43.67% were included in the study ($N=76$); 44 were BSW students, 18 were advanced standing students and 14 were two-year MSW students.

3.3 Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of two parts. Part one of the questionnaire asked general socio-demographic information including: age, gender, cultural affiliation, and expected graduation date. There were two versions of part one: (1) a BSW student version (see Appendix C) and (2) an advanced standing/MSW student

version (see Appendix D). Both versions were identical except for items specifically assessing information pertaining to the participant's respective BSW or advanced standing/MSW program. As such, questions on the BSW student version were tailored specifically to BSW students (e.g., planning on obtaining LBSW, rate BSW courses taken), and similarly, questions on the MSW student version were tailored specifically to students enrolled in the MSW program (e.g., undergraduate degree, MSW degree specialization, planning on obtaining LMSW, rate MSW courses taken). Additionally, some items on the advanced standing/ MSW student version were directed specifically at advanced standing students, including rating both BSW *and* MSW courses taken.

Part two of the questionnaire was the NGES (Nathanson et al., 2011; see Appendix D). All three groups of participants (e.g., BSW, advanced standing, two-year MSW) received an identical NGES. The NGES was administered to provide a comprehensive score of ethical ability. The NGES provided a list of 18 ethical scenarios. In each scenario, students were asked to rate what they believed was the most ethical response using a 5-point Likert scale. Moreover, each scenario has a competing value judgment in which the ethical decision may not always align with one's personal values. In particular, the nine identified value conflicts are as follows: empowerment versus enabling, self-determination versus need to protect, respect for human dignity versus intolerance, diversity versus homogeneity, promotion of social justice versus individual self-interest, social responsibility versus individual responsibility, confidentiality versus disclosure, equal access to service versus discriminatory provision of service, and social welfare versus individual welfare (Nathanson et al., 2011, p. 135). Despite this, only one preference responds to the "ethically correct" answer as outlined in the NASW Code of

Ethics. To assess for internal consistency in this study, Cronbach's α was calculated for the 18 questions from part two of the questionnaire for each student category (BSW, advanced standing, and two-year MSW). Results indicated an acceptable reliability of the survey with a reliability of .667. This measure of reliability was less than the Cronbach's α calculated for the NGES study which reported a good reliability of .7 to .84 (Nathanson et al., 2011).

3.4 Procedure

Students were informed about the general purpose of the study, the minimal to no risk involved and were provided consent forms that asked whether or not they wanted to participate in the study (see Appendix F). Students were told they would answer a series of questions that asked for general information and their response to a list of ethical scenarios using a five-point Likert scale. Students were allotted approximately 10 to 15 minutes to respond to the questionnaire and were informed of no educational incentive involved with their participation. Students were provided the email address of the principle investigator if they had further questions and were informed they would not be penalized for choosing not to participate or to not complete the full survey (see Appendix G).

Once finished, students were instructed to place their questionnaire form in a designated sealed folder in the front of the room. Students that consented yes or no to their participation, or had completed or partially completed forms were instructed to turn in their questionnaires to the folder. To account for the possibility that some students may be administered the questionnaire more than once due to being enrolled in more than one of the designated classes for this study, students were informed to turn in a blank

questionnaire into the sealed folder. The principle investigator exited the room after the questionnaires were administered and waited in the hallway until the last questionnaire was completed. Upon completion of the questionnaires, a student from the classroom sealed the folder and brought it outside the classroom where the principle investigator collected it.

3.5 Measures for Data Analysis

In order to interpret some of the research findings, measures for certain questions require further explanation for the data to be calculated. To account for the students who did not answer every question, skipped questions, and/or chose multiple answers when asked to select one, the following measures indicate how the results were interpreted for these questions.

All socio-demographic variables were analyzed in their original form except for age, where some categories were collapsed due to too few respondents in any given category (see Table 1). Some categories for race/ethnicity were also collapsed due to too few respondents in any given category. Collapsing the categories where no age and race/ethnicities were reported allowed for a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to be conducted. All missing data were treated with listwise deletion.

The items with lowest percentage of missing data (0%) were the race/ethnicity and gender items; as well as, the question of LBSW or LMSW licensure (0%). The item with the highest percentage of missing data (14.84%) was the item that asked advanced standing and two-year MSW students to indicate the amount of ethics instruction in their MSW classes. Students who indicated the level of ethics instruction in some of the classes but not all were counted towards the results. Only the cases with no response

provided were excluded from the results. All missing data were treated with listwise deletion.

A question on the BSW and advanced standing/two-year MSW student versions of the questionnaire asked students to indicate the amount of quality ethics instruction in their courses by circling the numerical rank by the course. BSW courses were listed on the BSW version of the questionnaire and BSW and MSW courses were listed on the advanced standing/two-year MSW student version of the questionnaire. BSW courses were listed on the advanced standing/two year MSW student questionnaire to account for the students who had their undergraduate degree in social work, thus had taken BSW courses. Ranks included 0=Never Discussed, 1=Rarely Discussed, 2=Sometimes Discussed, 3=Often Discussed, 4=Very Frequently Discussed and X=Did Not Take the Course. Some students did not circle an answer choice for every class listed. This could indicate students did not take the course, did not remember if they had taken the course, or perhaps could not remember the name of the course they took. To account for this, the data were not counted for these classes and thus, not included in the results. However, their data was still counted for the classes they did rank. Results must be interpreted with caution, as some scores may be lower for one class, which may be due to the lack of data available for that individual class. A score of between 2-3 was determined desirable by the principle investigator for each individual BSW and MSW class listed. This was determined by the guidelines listed by the CSWE, which require discussion of ethics to be infused throughout the course curriculum (EPAS, 2003). A score of 2-3 indicated ethics were “sometimes” to “often” discussed in the list of classes provided.

Students were asked to rank a list of ethical areas from most to least competent, with 10 being most competent and 0 being least competent, using each number only once. Due to the number of students who misread the directions or recorded the same number multiple times, clinical judgment was used to determine scores for most and least competent. The principle investigator determined that the answer choices given the rating of a 9 or 10 would be included in the “most competent” category and those students who selected a 0 or 1 for their answer choices would be counted towards the “least competent” category. For the students that repeated the same number multiple times, the principle investigator counted the number towards the total if the numbers were 9 or 10 for most competent or 0 or 1 for least competent. In the event, the student responses that had neither a 9 or 10 for most competent and/or 0 or 1 for least competent, the principle investigator counted the highest number in the data set for most competent and the lowest number in the data set as least competent. Results must be interpreted with caution.

To calculate NGES scores on part two of both versions of the questionnaire, participant’s data were entered into an excel spreadsheet where the means and standard deviations were calculated. To account for the items that were reversed scored (questions 3, 9, 12 and 18), the function for DVAR was entered into the appropriate cells to estimate the variance of the NGES scores. For the students who did not respond to all 18 scenarios listed on the NGES, the questions were not counted in the results. Accounting for each student’s missing data would have caused their mean score to be significantly lower than the students who did answer every question, which would have provided inaccurate results. As such, students who did not respond to all 18 scenarios were not

counted towards the total NGES scores for each student category (BSW, advanced standing, and two-year MSW students).

3.6 Analytic Plan

To answer research Question 1, the principle investigator conducted chi squared analyses to determine if differences in perception existed across socio-demographic variables. To account for smaller sample sizes, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to see if there was a difference between students' perception of their ethics instruction between groups (BSW, advanced standing, two-year MSW). Results were interpreted with findings from student scores on the NGES.

To answer research Question 2, the principle investigator conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to see if there was a difference between student perception and NGES score. Chi squared analyses were conducted to see if differences in age, gender and culture were related to student's perception in their ethics training and their NGES scores. To examine the role perception of ethics training played in overall NGES scores, Pearson's correlations were conducted. A post hoc test was conducted to determine the significance of findings. Results interpreted the relationship between student perception of ethics training in their social work program in relation to their scores on the NGES.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Socio-demographic Analyses

To assess if differences in student category (e.g., BSW, advanced standing, two-year MSW) were present based on self-reported socio-demographic variables, three chi-squared analyses were conducted for categorical variables (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, gender). No significant differences were found based on age $X^2(2, n = 67) = 9.276, p = .159$, based on race/ethnicity $X^2(2, n = 60) = 7.236, p = .300$, or found based on gender $X^2(2, n = 76) = 1.757, p = .415$. As such, we can infer that the three categories are statistically homogenous based on gender, age, and race/ethnicity and have no inherent bias on the outcome measures.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Information Based on Category in Social Work Program
($N=76$).

Variable	BSW ($n = 44$)		ADV ($n = 18$)		MSW ($n = 14$)		χ^2
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Race/Ethnicity							7.236
American Indian/Alaskan							
Native ^a	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	
Asian	2	5.9%	1	8.3%	1	7.1%	
Black/African American ^b							
American ^b	10	22.7%	6	33.3%	0	0.00%	
Hispanic Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ^c	14	41.2%	2	16.7%	1	7.1%	
White	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	
Other	15	44.1%	8	66.7%	11	78.6%	
Gender	3	8.8%	1	8.3%	1	7.1%	1.757
Male	6	13.6%	1	5.6%	3	21.4%	
Female	38	86.4%	13	94.4%	11	78.6%	
Age							9.276
21-25	22	56.4%	11	61.1%	2	20.0%	
26-30	14	35.9%	5	27.8%	4	40.0%	
31-35 ^d	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	2	14.3%	
36-40	2	5.1%	1	5.6%	2	20.0%	
41-45 ^e	3	7.0%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	
46-50	1	2.6%	1	5.6%	2	20.0%	
51-55 ^f	0	0.0%	0	0.00%	1	7.1%	
56-60 ^g	0	0.0%	0	0.00%	1	7.1%	
61-65 ^h	0	0.0%	0	0.00%	0	0.0%	
66-70 ⁱ	0	0.0%	0	0.00%	0	0.0%	

* $p < .05$

The following groups were excluded from the chi-squared analyses: American Indian/Alaskan Native^a, Black/African American^b, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander^c due to lack of measurable data. The following age ranges were excluded from the chi-squared analyses: 31-35^d, 41-45^e, 51-55^f, 56-60^g, 61-65^h, 66-70ⁱ due to lack of measurable data.

4.2 Outcome Measures

To determine if significant differences in NGES scores were present based on student category, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect based on category ($F(2, 67) = 18.18, p < .0009$, partial $\eta^2 = .35$); see Table 2). Because significance was found, post-hoc Tukey tests were conducted.

Results indicated that BSW students scored ($M = 70.88$, $SD = 6.85$) significantly higher than MSW ($M = 64.38$, $SD = 4.84$; $p = .013$) and advanced standing ($M = 59.12$, $SD = 8.30$; $p < .0009$) students. However, no significant difference was found in ethics questionnaire scores between MSW and advanced standing students ($p = .105$) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Between Group Differences for NGES and Perception of Ethics Training ($n=70$).

Variables	BSW ($n = 40$)		ADV ($n = 17$)		MSW ($n = 13$)		<i>F</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
NGES score	70.88 ^a	6.85	59.12	8.30	64.38	4.84	18.18***
Perception of ethics training	3.74	.90	3.65	1.17	3.93	1.00	.32

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

^a Post-hoc tests revealed participants in the BSW category had significantly higher scores than those in the MSW and ADV categories.

Note. BSW = Bachelors of Social Work, ADV = Advanced Standing student; MSW = Master's of Social Work; NGES = Nathanson and Giffords Ethics Scale.

Additionally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if significant differences were present in perception of ethics training between categories. Results did not find a main effect for student category based on perception of ethics training ($F(2, 71) = .32$, $p = .726$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$). As such, there was no statistically significant difference in perception of training between BSW ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .90$), MSW ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.00$), and advanced standing ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.17$) students.

Furthermore, to examine the role perception of ethics training plays in overall NGES scores; Pearson's correlations were conducted. Results did not find a significant relationship between the two variables, $r = .03$, $p = .829$, indicating that perception of ethics training was not related to overall ethics questionnaire scores.

4.3 Additional Descriptive Findings

The following reported data are additional descriptive findings based on descriptive, non-inferential tests. Analyses were not based on inferential tests due to either or all of the following: (1) Inferential tests were not necessary due to it being a univariate, descriptive analysis, (2) sample size was insufficient to conduct inferential analyses, (3) participants misunderstood the question resulting in missing or modified data, and/or (4) too much missing data resulted in requisites not being met to conduct parametric, inferential analyses.

Advanced standing students all reported their undergraduate degree was in social work ($n=18$) and two-year MSW students reported their undergraduate degrees ($n=14$). Using clinical judgment to determine relatedness and unrelatedness to the field of social work results determined 47% of the sample ($n=14$) had undergraduate degrees in a related field to social work. Results determined to be related to social work included Habilitation of The Deaf, Psychology, Women's Studies, and Child & Family Studies. Thirty-five percent of the sample ($n=14$) had unrelated degrees to the field of social work including Philosophy, Math, Radio Television & Film, Fine Arts, Spanish, and Science. Eighteen percent of the sample did not specify what their bachelor's degree was in and one student reported they had a master's degree in an unspecified field (See Figure 1).

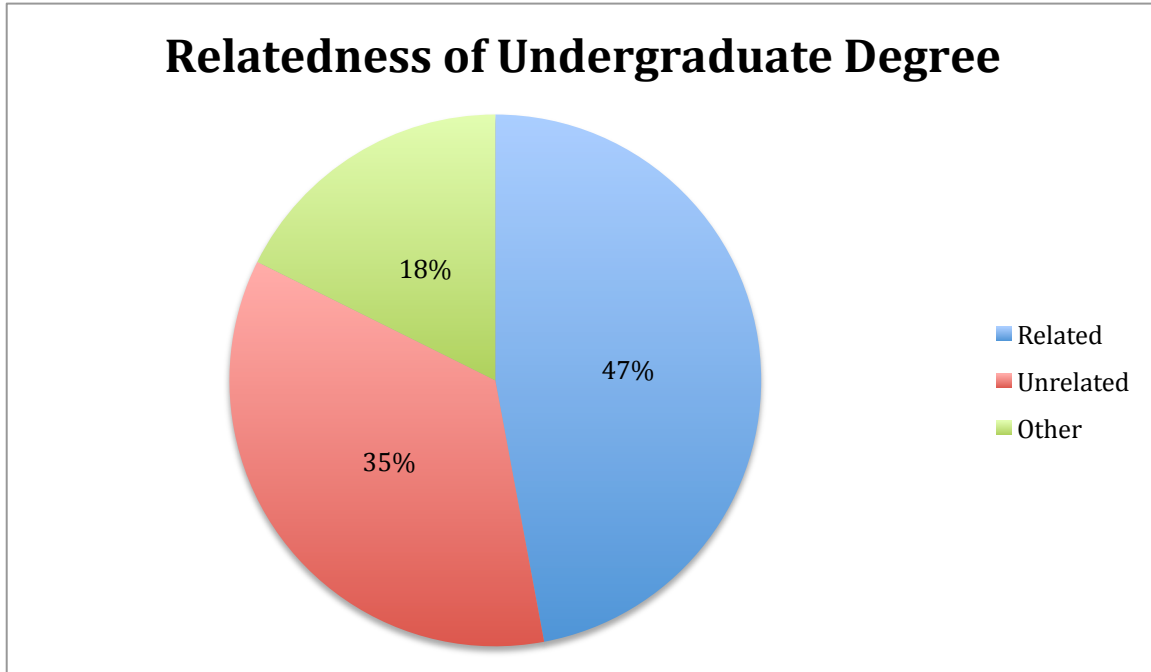


Figure 1. Relatedness of undergraduate degree as reported by two-year MSW students in the MSW program ($n=14$).

Part one of the advanced standing/two-year MSM student questionnaire asked students to indicate their area of specialization. Students in the master's program have the option to major in the following topics: Child and Family Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Administration and Community Practice, Aging Services, Health Services, or a combination of the majors listed (see Figure 2). Out of the number of advanced standing students ($n=18$), approximately 66.67% selected Child and Family Services, 22.22% selected Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and 11.11% selected Administration and Community Practice. Out of the number of two-year MSW students ($n=14$), approximately 57.14% selected Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, 35.14% selected Child and Family Services, 7.14% selected Administration and Community Practice, 7.14% selected Health Services, and 7.14% selected other.

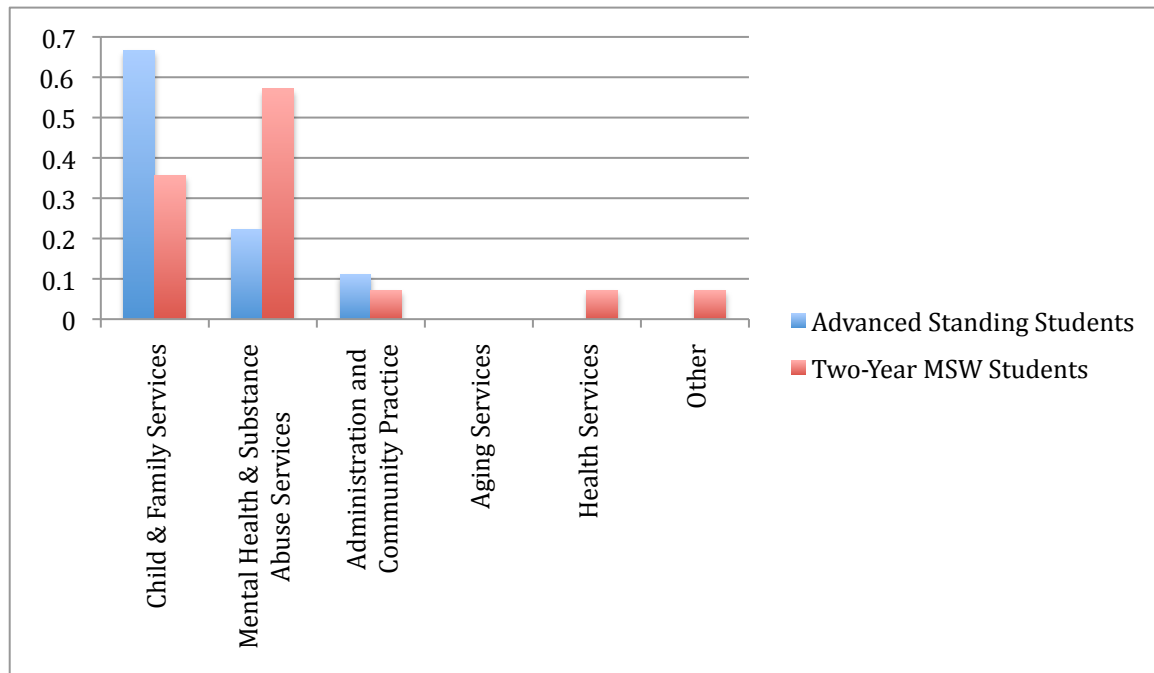


Figure 2. Degree of specialization for advanced standing and two-year MSW students in the MSW program. Advanced standing ($n=18$) and two-year MSW students ($n=14$).

Part one of both versions of the questionnaire asked students to indicate what was the most significant contribution to their ethics education. Sample choices included class in-class activities (e.g. group discussion, role-playing activities), professor (e.g. instruction and presentation on ethical content), field placement, assignments (e.g. papers, projects, self-assessments) and lecture. Results indicated out of the sample ($n=75$), 42.1% of students indicated field placement as the most significant contribution to their ethics education, 36.84% indicated in-class activities, 13.15% indicated assignments, 11.84% indicated professor, and 1.31% of students indicated lecture (see Figure 3). Of the total of BSW students in the study ($n=43$), 40.90% indicated in-class activities as the most significant contribution to their ethics education, 38.63% indicated field placement, 15.90% indicated professor, 6.8% indicated assignments and 2.27% indicated lecture. Of the total of advanced standing students ($n=18$), 50% indicated field placement as the most significant contribution to their ethics education, 33.33% indicated

in-class activities, and 27.77% indicated assignments. Of the total of two-year MSW students ($n=14$), 42.85% selected field placement as the most significant contribution to their ethics education, followed by 28.57% that indicated in-class activities, 14.28% that indicated professor and 14.28% that indicated assignments.

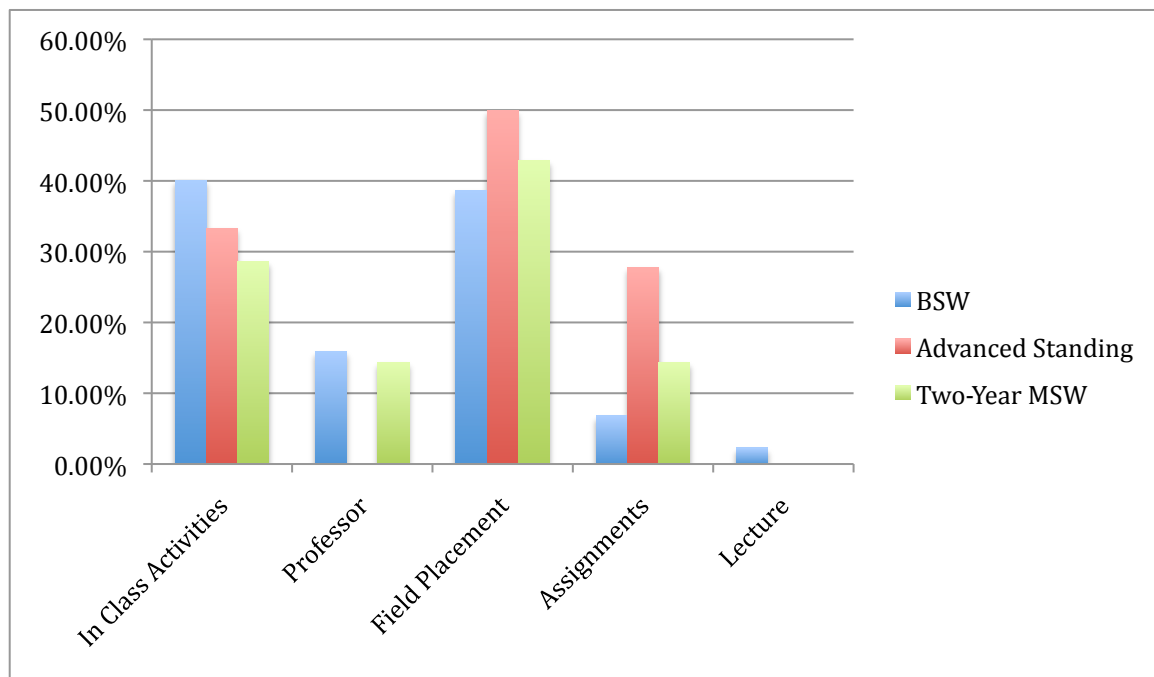


Figure 3. Most significant contribution to ethics instruction in social work classes as perceived by BSW, advanced standing and two-year MSW students. BSW ($n=43$), advanced standing ($n=18$), and two-year MSW students ($n=14$).

*Percents do not add up to 100% indicating multiple items as the “most significant.”

The BSW student version of the questionnaire asked BSW students ($n=44$) if they planned on obtaining their licensed Bachelor of Social Work license after graduation (LBSW). Results indicated that 40.90% said yes they did plan obtaining their license, whereas 29.54% reported no they did not plan on obtaining their license, and 29.54% reported they were unsure. The advanced standing/two-year MSW student version of the questionnaire asked advanced standing ($n=18$) if they (1) had their LBSW license and (2) if they planned on obtaining their LMSW license after graduation. (1) Results indicated 5.55% of advanced standing students had their LBSW license and 94.44% did not have

their LBSW license. (2) Results indicated that 100.00% of students reported on obtaining their LMSW license after graduation. Two-year MSW students ($n=14$) were also asked if they planned on obtaining their LMSW license after graduation. Results indicated 92.85% of the sample indicated they planned to obtain their LMSW license and 7.14% of the sample did not.

On the advanced standing/two-year MSW student version of the questionnaire, advanced standing student participants ($n=18$) were asked which program they received the most ethics instruction and discussion (see Figure 4). Results indicated 72.2% of students reported their BSW program provided them with the most ethics instruction, whereas 16.60% of the sample indicated their MSW program provided them with most ethics instruction; 11.1% of the sample indicated other.

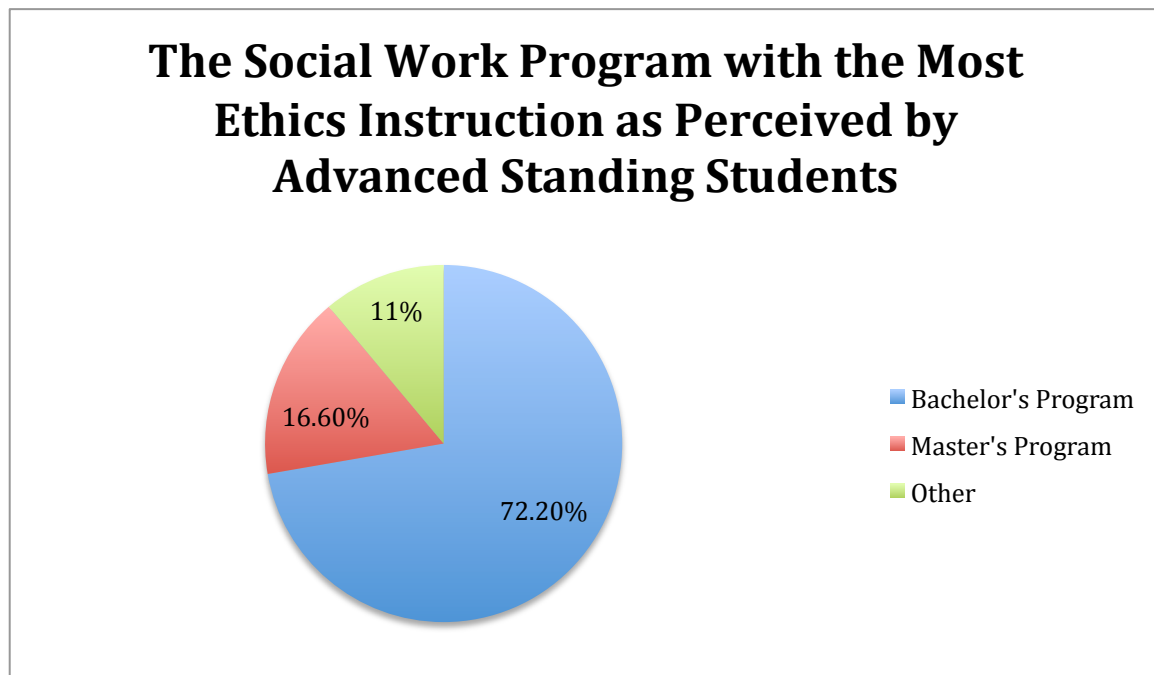


Figure 4. The most significant ethics instruction as perceived by advanced standing students ($n=18$).

Means were calculated for each student category (BSW, advanced standing and two-year MSW student) in relation to their bachelor's and master's level courses. BSW

and advanced standing student responses were combined for comparison as both had taken BSW courses (see Figure 5). Advanced standing and two-year MSW student responses were combined for comparison as both had taken MSW courses (see Figure 6).

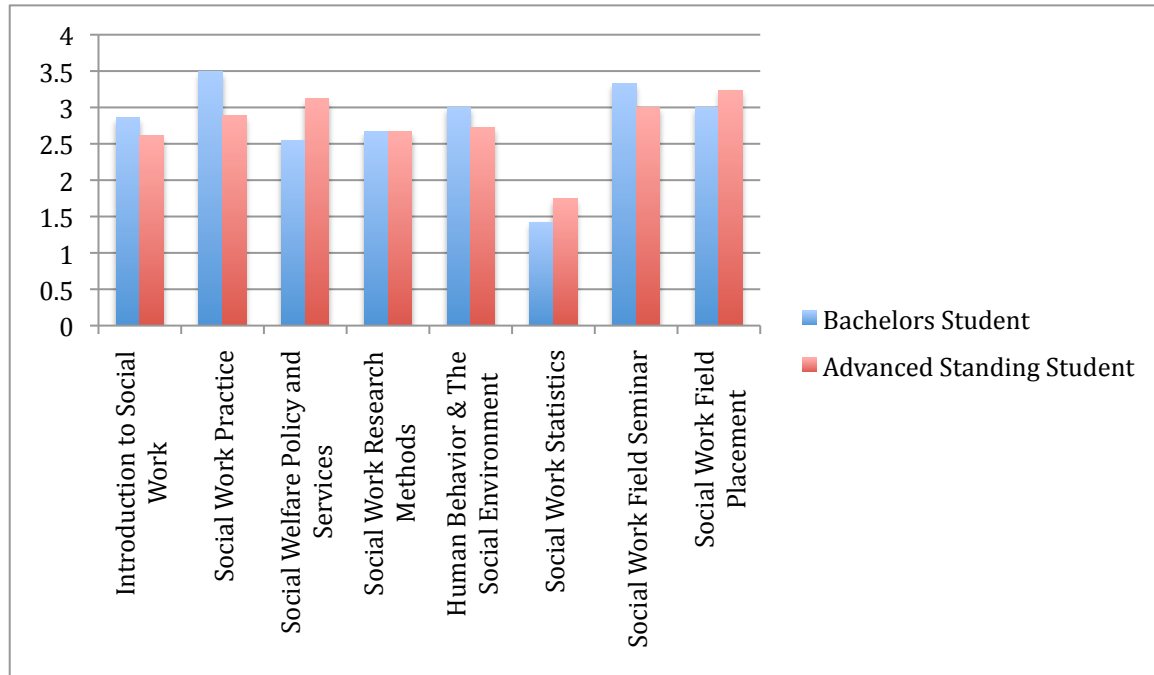


Figure 5. Comparing BSW and advanced standing student perception of BSW level courses. BSW ($n=43$) and advanced standing students ($n=18$).

*Percents do not add up to 100 indicating some students did not mark a response for every class listed.

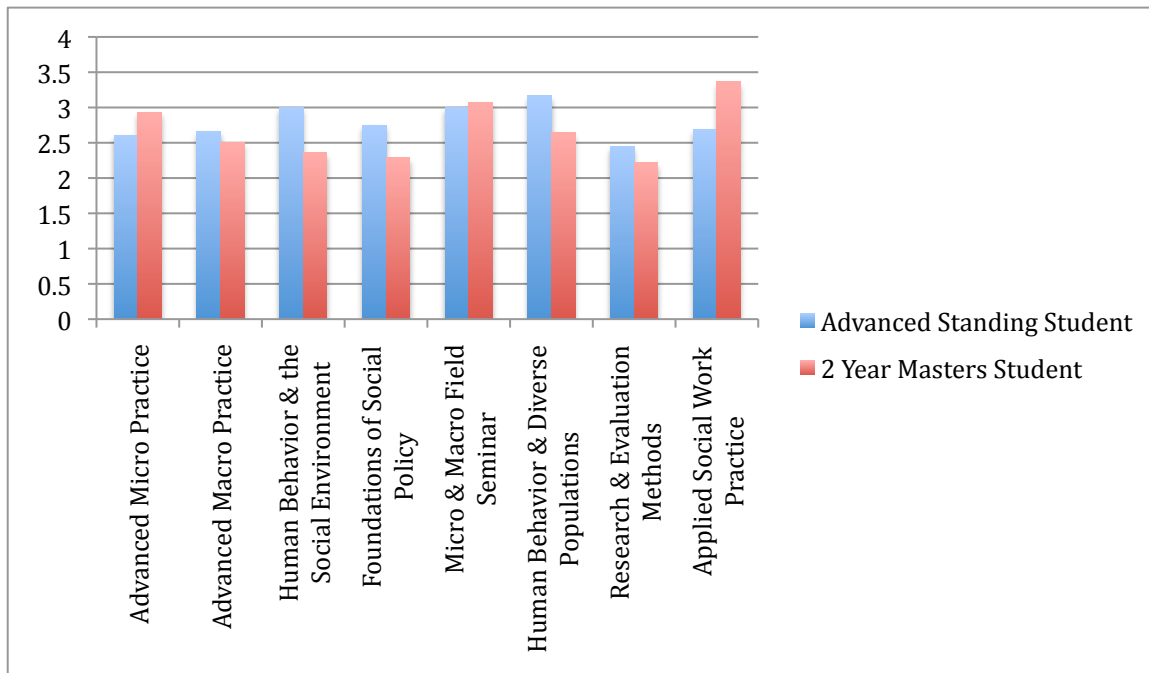


Figure 6. Comparing advanced standing and two-year MSW student perception of MSW level courses. Advanced standing ($n = 18$) and two-year MSW students ($n = 14$).

*Percents do not add up to 100 indicating some students did not mark a response for every class listed.

BSW, advanced standing and two-year MSW students were provided a list of 10 ethical areas where they selected their level of competency in each area. BSW students reported they were most competent in: Physical Contact (31.82%), Duty to Warn (27.27%), Patient to Client or Client to Patient Attraction (27.27%), Friendship with Clients after Termination (20.45%), Termination of Services (15.9%), Reporting Misconduct of a Colleague (13.64%) and Dual Relationships (13.64%) (see Figure 7). BSW students reported they were least competent in: Patient Right to Die (34.09%), Reporting Misconduct of a Colleague (15.91%), Dual Relationships (13.64%), Patient to Client or Client to Patient Attraction (9.09%), Physical Contact (9.09%), Duty to Warn (6.82%), Termination of Services (6.82%), Accepting Gifts from Clients (6.82%), Friendship with Clients after Termination (4.55%) and Self-Disclosure (4.55%).

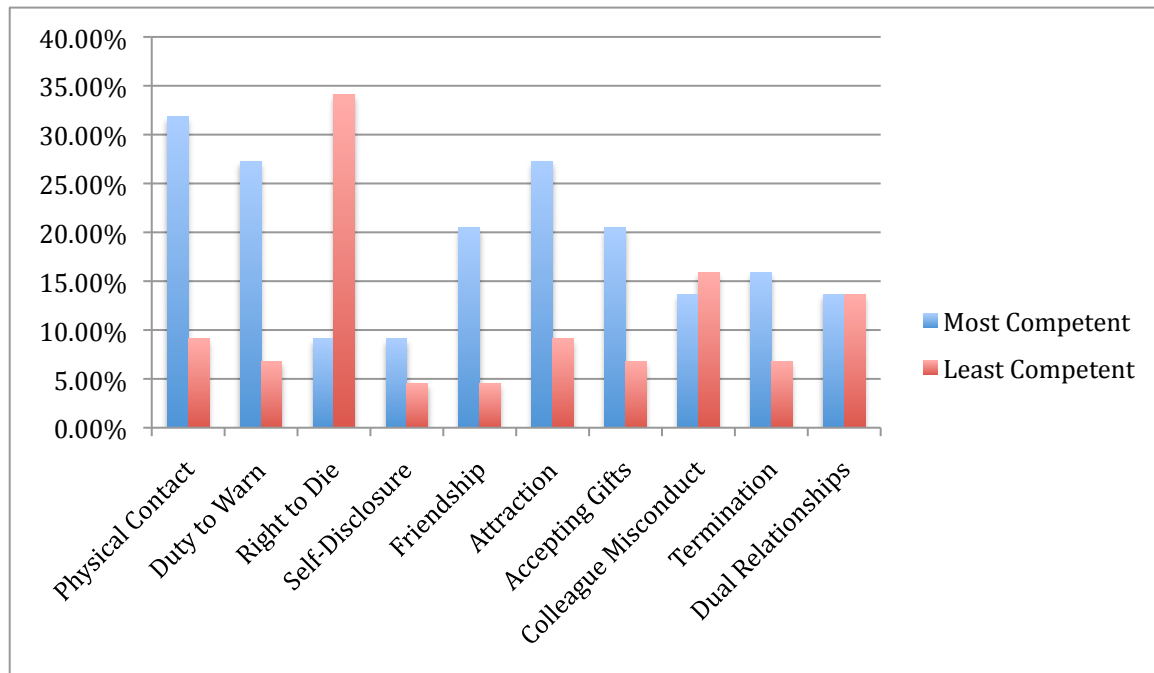


Figure 7. BSW student ratings of most and least competent ethical areas ($n=42$).
 *Percents do not add up to 100 due to some participants indicating multiple items as “most competent” and “least competent.”

Advanced standing students reported they were most competent in: Physical Contact (27.77%), Duty to Warn (27.77%), Dual Relationships (27.77%), Patient to Client or Client to Patient Attraction (22.22%), Self-Disclosure (16.66%), Reporting Misconduct of a Colleague (11.11%), Patient Right to Die (5.55%), Friendship with Clients after Termination (5.55%), and Termination of Services (5.55%) (see Figure 8). Advanced standing students reported least competence in: Patient Right to Die (33.33%), Termination of Services (22.22%), Duty to Warn (11.11%), Friendship with Clients after Termination (11.11%), Self Disclosure (5.55%), Patient to Client or Client to Patient Attraction (5.55%), Accepting Gifts from Clients (5.55%), and Reporting Misconduct of a Colleague (5.55%).

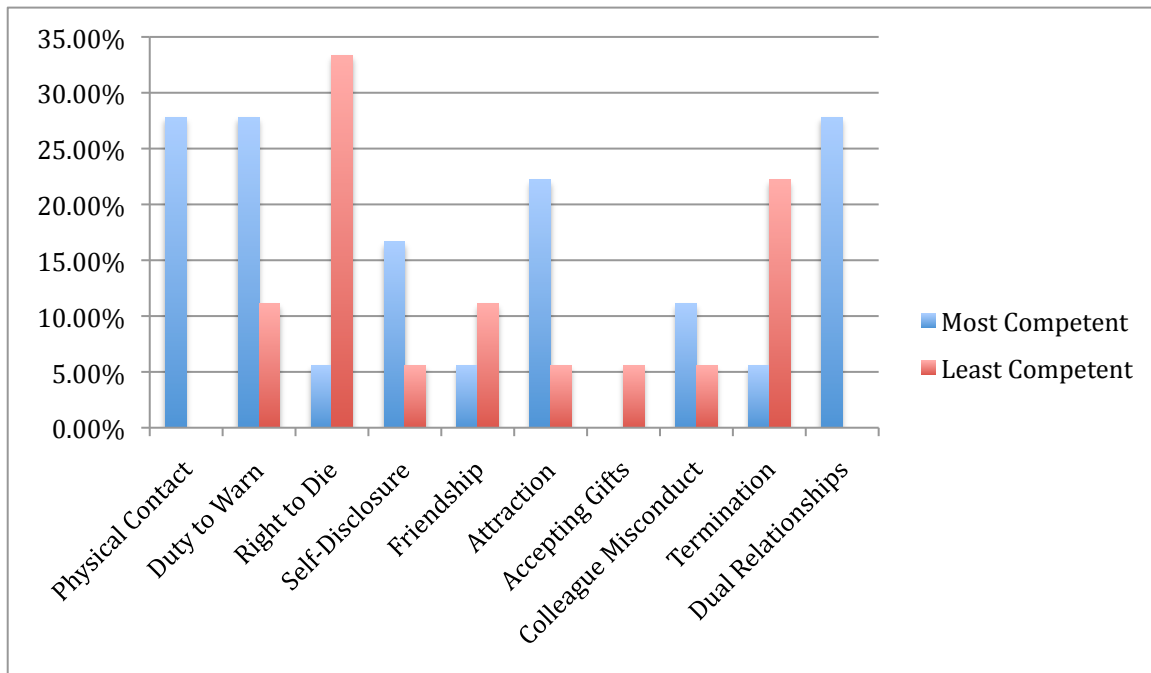


Figure 8. Advanced standing student ratings of most and least competent ethical areas ($n = 18$). *Percents do not add up to 100 due to some participants indicating multiple items as “most competent” and “least competent.”

Two-year MSW students reported the most competency in the following areas: Physical Contact (28.57%), Termination of Services (21.42%), Self-Disclosure (14.28%), Patient to Client or Client to Patient Attraction (14.28%), Duty to Warn (7.14%), Patient Right to Die (7.14%), Accepting Gifts from Clients (7.14%), and Reporting Misconduct of a Colleague (7.14%) (see Figure 9). Two-year MSW students reported least competency in the following areas: Patient Right to Die (42.85%), Duty to Warn (14.28%), Patient to Client or Client to Patient Attraction (14.28%), and Reporting Misconduct of a Colleague (14.28%).

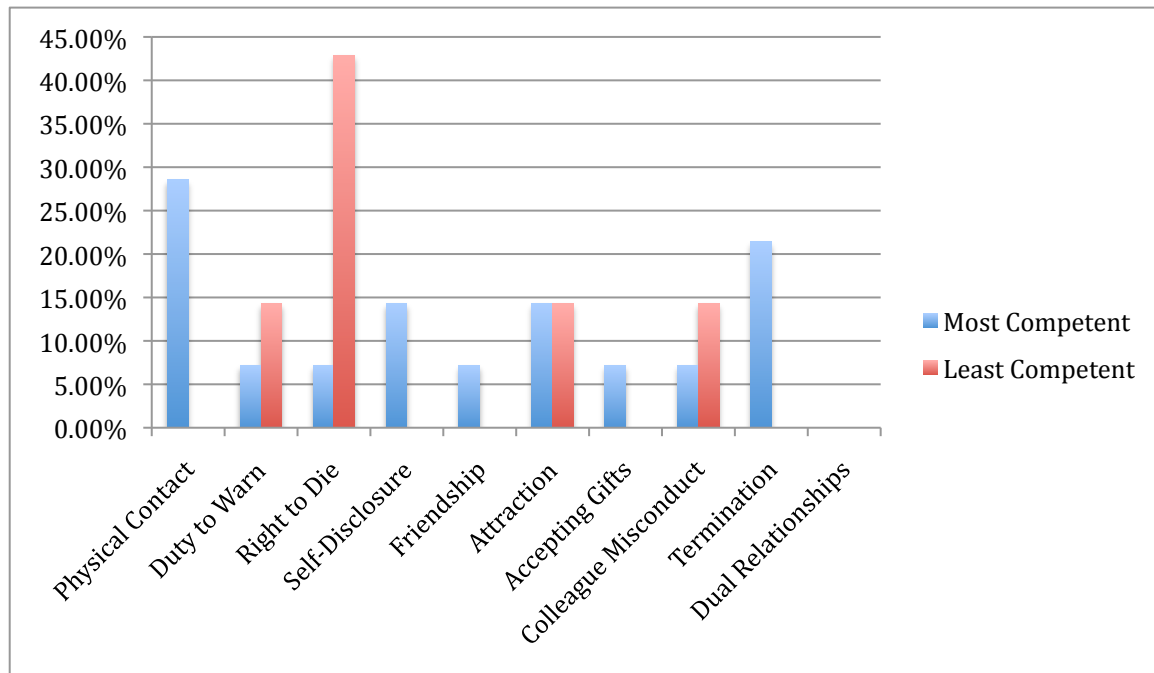


Figure 9. Two-year MSW student ratings of most and least competent ethical areas ($n = 13$). *Percents do not add up to 100 due to some participants indicating multiple items as “most competent” and “least competent.”

To determine the most competent and least competent for the entire sample ($n=73$), student responses were compared in one figure (see Figure 10).

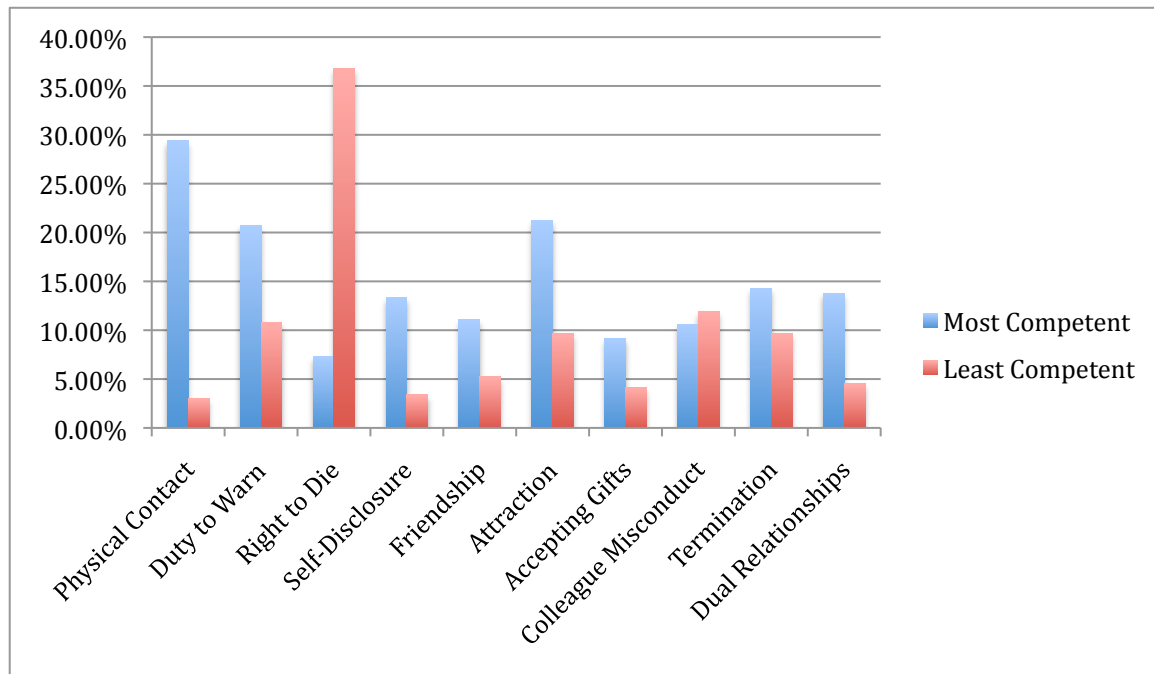


Figure 10. BSW, advanced standing and two-year MSW combined ratings of most and least competent ethical areas. BSW ($n=42$), advanced standing ($n=18$), and two-year MSW students ($n=13$). *Percents do not add up to 100 due to some participants indicating multiple items as “most competent” and “least competent.”

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to determine if differences existed between graduating bachelor's, advanced standing, and two-year MSW students in perceptions of ethical training and their actual ethical decision-making. Differences were measured in terms of student perception of ethics training received in their social work program with their scores from the NGES. The findings in this thesis are relevant to social work literature as it is one of the first studies to directly ask students their perception of their ethics education. Prior studies in the literature have asked students to determine: their overall perception of their social work education, the amount of content dedicated towards ethics in their courses, and their perceptions towards boundaries in professional settings. In an effort to determine ethical awareness among MSW students entering social work, graduating from the program and who have five years of post graduating experience, one study even compared student perception to an instrument that measures actual ethical-decision making. But no study has directly asked students in the BSW and MSW program about their perception of overall ethics training and compared it to an instrument that measures actual ethical-decision making. Comparing BSW and MSW student perception of their ethics education to their scores on the NGES allowed for an in-depth analysis that measured students' perception of ethics training against a validated ethical scenarios questionnaire. In the following sections, the research questions are reviewed; practical interpretations of findings are interpreted, limitations of the study are discussed and implications for practice and future recommendations are suggested.

5.1 Research Question 1

The first research question asked how BSW, advanced standing, and two-year MSW students compared in their perception of their ethics training in their social work program. It was hypothesized that advanced standing students would report the highest level of preparation in terms of their perception of ethics education, because they have had the most exposure to social work ethics. Statistical analyses were conducted to see if differences existed between groups in terms of their perception of ethics training. Results indicated no differences existed between groups in terms of gender, age, race/ethnicity or if they were a BSW, advanced standing or two-year MSW student. These findings suggest students of all socio-demographics and student categories (BSW, advanced standing, and two-year MSW students) are graduating from their programs with roughly the same perception in their ethical skills as the result of the program. Thus, graduating students are between a neutral and agreeable stance that their training in social work ethics from their social work courses prepared them for their career in social work. This further suggests that the BSW and MSW program at UTA prepares its students by building their confidence in their ethical skills for their future careers. These findings are further supported by the student response of their field placement as the most significant contribution to ethics instruction in their social work classes. With field placement as the most significant contribution to ethics instruction in social work program, one can infer that field placement has had a significant impact on whether students perceive themselves to be prepared for their future career in social work.

5.2 Research Question 2

The second research question asked about the relationship between students' perception of their ethics education in relation to their score on the NGES. It was hypothesized that the students, who reported a high level of agreement when asked if their ethics training prepared them for their social work career, would score higher on the NGES. Statistical analyses indicated no significant differences existed for student perception of ethics instruction in their social work program in relation to the scores on the NGES. The present study findings did indicate that BSW students scored higher on the NGES than advanced standing and two-year MSW students. The significant difference between BSW student scores and advanced standing and two-year MSW student scores suggest the BSW program prepares its students more to respond to ethical areas than the MSW program. Interpretation of these results suggest, BSW students are more likely to select a value representative of social work and not based on personal values in response to ethical dilemmas compared to students in the MSW program (advanced standing and two-year MSW students). While ethics education curriculum requirements are the same for both BSW and MSW programs, it is possible that the BSW programs teach ethics in a way that is better received by students as indicated by their actual responses to ethical dilemmas found in the NGES.

No significant differences were found between advanced standing and two-year MSW student scores on the NGES, which suggests that the MSW program prepares all of its incoming students with roughly the same skill set to face ethical dilemmas in professional settings. It was hypothesized that advanced standing students would report the highest agreement in their social work preparation and their NGES scores would be

higher. Interpretation of the mean scores being roughly the same for each student subset in the MSW program indicates the two-year program is as adequate in teaching social work ethics as the one-year program for advanced standing students. This evidence suggests that the efforts to educate and produce future social workers at the two-year MSW level, as well as the future social workers at the one-year advanced standing level, are successful.

5.3 Interpretation of Question 1 and Question 2

Interpretation of these findings in both research questions suggest BSW students are more likely to select the most social work ethical response, when provided a list of ethical dilemmas compared to advanced standing and MSW students. Reasons for this statistical difference may be due to differences in instruction behind BSW and MSW programs. Students at the BSW level have just learned about the values and principles associated with the profession and may be more likely to rely on their education rather than life experiences to interpret “real world” ethical dilemmas. Social workers at the BSW level also frequently work in jobs of case management as opposed to treatment and thus may spend more time in their program discussing the rules and protocols in agencies and job settings and less time developing a larger range of interdisciplinary skill.

Advanced standing students and two-year MSW students in the MSW program may have scored lower on the NGES overall compared to the BSW students because the MSW program is more clinical and treatment focused. Thus, MSW students may interpret an ethical dilemma from a more critical and non-literal perspective. This may influence students at the MSW level to select more of a conservative answer on the NGES because they see the scenario as open for interpretation and subjectivity (neutral).

MSW programs are geared towards refining students' ability to be critical thinkers and evaluative of every situation through the application of "real world" experience and learned skills. MSW students may also have more of a specific focus in terms of specialization, treatment, and intervention methods which may cause them to be more critical thinkers in times of ethical dilemmas.

5.4 Practical Interpretations of Findings

No significant differences were found based on age, race/ethnicity, or gender, which indicates no socio-demographic classification of students outperformed the other in terms of the NGES. Chi squared analyses were redone using listwise deletion, which limits the generalizability of our findings. However, using listwise deletion was the only way to include the measurable data from the socio-demographic questions. The no significant differences found between age, race/ethnicity, or gender suggest the UTA School of Social work provides the same level of education to all of its students without discrimination. This supports the idea of cultural diversity within the social work program itself, which is in conjunction with the ethical principles outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2014).

The data suggests that child and family services was the most common specialization among advanced standing students, whereas mental health and substance abuse services was the most common specialization among two-year MSW students. Age might be a factor when considering the category of students for degree specialization. Overall, the majority of two-year MSW participants in the study were 26-30 years of age (40.00%), whereas, 21-25 years of age was the majority age bracket for BSW (56.4%) and advanced standing students (61.10%). BSW level internships may

involve more work with children and families; thus, the familiarity of working with these groups may have encouraged them to select the children and families specialization.

Two-year MSW students may have selected mental health and substance abuse services more because of more “real world” experiences with people community, or perhaps they have less familiarity working with children and families and in agency setting. Further analyses are required for clarification.

Advanced standing students in this study were asked to rate either the BSW or MSW program as the most significant for ethics instruction. Advanced standing students were almost three times as likely (72.20%) to report their BSW program better prepared them for ethics in social work. Advanced standing students may have reported their BSW program education was more significant in terms of ethics instruction, because it was when they first learned about ethics. MSW programs may have discussed ethics in the courses, but because advanced standing students believed the material to be more of a review instead of new information, they may have not reported a significant discussion on ethics in their MSW classes. MSW programs may also discuss ethics and ethical dilemmas in more of an analytic and “real world” interpretation, whereas BSW programs may be more concrete in describing what is an ethical dilemma. Students may recall the more concrete instruction of ethics and not the interpretation behind ethical dilemmas that may be discussed more so in MSW programs.

No significant differences were found between student reports of most significant contribution to ethics instruction in social work programs; however, non-inferential statistics identified field placement as the overall most significant for advanced standing (50.00%) and two-year MSW (42.80%) students respectively. BSW students rated in-

class activities as the most significant contribution (40.00%) with field placement (38.63%) as the next most significant contribution to their ethics training from their social work program. Interestingly, advanced standing and two-year MSW students reported a rating of “often” to “very often discussed” for their Applied Social Work Practice class ($M=3.36$), and Micro Macro Field Seminar class ($M=3.07$), which correlates to the findings that advanced standing and two-year MSW students rated their field placement as the most significant contribution to their social work courses. These results suggest the field placement in MSW programs may be educating students about ethics education in a way that in-class instruction cannot. Students may be gaining confidence in their ethical problem solving skills when out in the field working directly with a population. Students may feel the learning of applied ethics is more relevant to their ethics training than classroom discussion. BSW students may spend more class time discussing the aspects of ethical dilemmas and defining ethics in social work, which indicates why BSW students reported in-class activities as the most significant in terms of student perception of significant ethics instruction. Interpretation of these findings correlate to findings by Aguilar & Williams (2005) who found that students in that 90% of students in the BSW sample reported ethics content in their courses whereas only 71% of MSW report ethics being discussed in their social work classes.

BSW students were asked if they planned on obtaining their LBSW, less than half of the total number of BSW participants said yes (40.90%), the other approximate 60% was divided evenly between saying they did not plan to obtain their license or that they were unsure. These results conflict with the NGES scores of the BSW student. One would infer that the graduating social work student with the highest NGES score would

pursue a career in social work. Perhaps BSW students are prepared for responding to ethical dilemmas in professional settings but at the point of graduating from their program, are unsure of licensure. An alternative explanation of these findings may be that graduating BSW students are not planning on obtaining their LBSW license because they are to obtain their LMSW upon graduating from the master's program.

Interpretation of these results are supported by the number of advanced standing students in the MSW program who have their LBSW (7.14%) from the present study's sample.

Advanced standing students were asked if they had their LBSW license and if they planned on obtaining their LMSW upon graduation. Only one participant out of the sample size ($n=18$) had their LBSW license (7.14%) but 100% of advanced standing students in the sample reported they planned on obtaining their LMSW license after graduation. Almost 100% of two-year MSW students ($n=14$) indicated they planned on obtaining their LMSW license with only one student participant who reported they did not plan on obtaining their LMSW license after graduation (7.14%). Interpretation of these findings suggests the MSW programs prepare its students for future careers in social work. Almost all of the MSW students who participated in this study reported they planned to obtain their LMSW after graduation (96.87%).

These findings are significant for social work programs, as social work programs aspire to produce competent and confident social workers that will work social work jobs in professional settings. Findings from the present study suggest specifically the School of Social Work at UTA produces students from its program who want to pursue careers in social work, thus the intentions of producing competent and confident social workers are being met. Pursuing licensure in social work is a crucial part of social education, as

graduates are not considered a social worker unless they are licensed in that state (Texas Department of State Health Services, 2014). Licensure therefore, is a central goal and expectation of those students graduating from either the BSW or MSW program.

Students from all three categories rated the classes that discussed ethics the most and least. For BSW students, Social Work Statistics was determined the BSW class that discussed ethics the least for BSW ($M=1.42$) and similarly for advanced standing students ($M=1.45$); however, the actual number of responses for the undergraduate statistics course was rather small. In the MSW course, Research and Evaluation Methods in Social Work, received a larger number of responses, but also received, the lowest scoring MSW class for advanced standing students ($M=2.44$) and two-year MSW students ($M=2.12$). These findings suggest the topic of ethics may not be explicitly discussed in this course in a familiar manner. Ethics discussed in the Research and Evaluation Methods course may focus more on ethics in conducting research and not the topics of ethical dilemmas they consider applicable to social work practice.

In terms of ranking a list of 10 ethical areas from most to least competent, students in all three categories (BSW, advanced standing, and two-year MSW) reported they were most competent in Physical Contact and least competent in Patient Right to Die. These findings were particularly interesting as each group of students, BSW, advanced standing and two-year MSW, reported similar percentages for most competent (31.82%, 27.29% and 28.57%) and least competent (34.09%, 33.33% and 42.85%) for BSW, advanced standing and two-year MSW students respectively. Perhaps these findings indicate areas that are well discussed in ethics instruction and areas where ethics instruction can be improved. The Code of Ethics very clearly indicates physical

relationships with clients are prohibited and therefore, a frequent topic discussed in social work classes. Students that reported Patient Right to Die as the least competent area in social work may have done so for several reasons. For one, students may have been unsure about what this topic covered; they may have felt uncomfortable not knowing what the question asked and therefore marked it as least competent. It may also be that students indicated this category as least competent because they genuinely do not know much about the topic. Laws vary by state; students might not have been sure if Patient Right to Die was a universal right or even mentioned in the Code of Ethics. None of the students in the MSW program ($n=32$) reported their area of specialization was in Aging Services, where Patient Right to Die would most likely be discussed.

5.5 Limitations

Despite the strength of these findings, this study was not without limitations. First, the sample for the present study was limited to one university's social work program. Moreover, the sample size was smaller than desired for advanced standing and MSW groups. As such, the generalizability of these groups is limited. While the three sets of participant data (BSW=44, advanced standing=18, and two-year MSW=14), were not similar in terms of percentages of actual students graduating, findings from this study may prove significant for future studies measuring student perception in ethics instruction. Due to the uneven sample sizes, comparing results from the advanced standing and two-year MSW students to the BSW students is not a fair indication of student achievement and knowledge in social work ethics. Moreover, with such a large MSW program, a total of 32 MSW students is not a very accurate or representative sample of the population.

Second, some items that could have contributed to statistical analyses were misunderstood by participants (e.g., hours dedicated to ethics education, competency in ethical domains) and thus excluded. These items could not be analyzed as covariates to determine the extent to which they influenced these findings. Therefore, this study required the principle investigator to use listwise deletion, (excluding cases with missing data), their data was dropped from a particular analysis. This can cause bias in the results (e.g. “people most likely to respond unethically to scenario left the question blank”).

Third, no comparison condition of alumni was present (e.g., licensed social workers with 5 or more years of experience) which has been utilized as an integral condition in past research (Nathanson et al., 2011). Because of this, it is difficult to determine the extent to which findings influence “real-world” social work practice. As such, future research should include a larger, more diverse sample containing not only students, but also social work graduates to determine the generalizability of these findings.

While the NGES has good reliability and validity when measuring the adherence of social work ethical choices, the NGES has not been measured as a reliable or valid instrument when comparing BSW student’s ability to adhere to social work ethical choices in specific scenarios. The present study may suggest perceptions of questions in the NGES are different for MSW students and BSW students. Further research is needed for clarification.

The focus of this research was on the student perception of where they believed they received the most ethics training in their social work program. Respondents reported on, online or in face-to-face classes was not pertinent to student perception of

their ethics instruction in their social work program. Analyzing the effectiveness of ethics taught in online classes versus in face-to-face class room settings would be useful for further analyses with more advanced statistics used in a dissertation. Analyzing the effectiveness of ethics taught in online classes versus in face-to-face classroom settings would also call for more advanced statistics.

5.6 Implications

While this study produced limited findings in terms of generalizability, they may be used in future studies measuring student perception in ethics instruction across multiple social work programs. Findings in this study suggest BSW students are more likely to connect specific ethical scenarios with social work values, compared to advanced standing and two-year MSW students in the MSW program. These findings suggest that social work programs at the BSW level are successfully preparing students for ethical dilemmas found in professional settings. Further analyses are required to indicate whether advanced standing and two-year MSW students would more likely respond to ethical dilemmas on the basis of social work values, or more critical thinking processes. Further analyses are also needed to indicate what is the best method to use universally when teaching students about social work ethics. Does the method of instruction vary by age of students within the program? Do students at the MSW level need to be instructed differently than students at the BSW to prepare them for “real world” ethical scenarios? Is it possible that student moral, mental and personal development over the course of the undergraduate or graduate career influences their interpretation of social work ethics?

While student perception of ethics training in their social work program did not prove to be significantly related to the student scores on the NGES, future studies may yield different results. Research needs to identify why perception of ethics training and the scores on the NGES were not significantly related. One would hypothesize that a higher reported perception of ethics training would be related to a higher score on the NGES, but they were not. Future research needs to use higher indicators of ethics training besides student perception of ethics to have a more accurate measure of student preparation. For example, students reported that they perceived themselves to be more ethically prepared as a result of their training in social work than their scores from the NGES indicated.

A larger sample size from each student category (BSW, advanced standing, two-year MSW) might yield more generalizable findings. Future research should include other social work programs to measure if differences exist between university programs. Future research should also examine the relationship between ethics instruction in face-to-face and online class formats.

Replications of this study may produce suggestions for the CSWE in terms of updating curriculum standards to include what students report works best for them in terms of their ethics education. Social work programs might consider discrete ethics courses rather than relying on instructors to integrate ethics material into their courses. It could be possible to revolutionize social work teaching curriculums by directly asking students the areas they wish to improve on and where they feel most and least competent and relate their learning to a measure that assesses students' ethical problem solving abilities (e.g. NGES). Building more competent and educated social workers also has the

potential to lower Code of Ethics violations in the future.

This research took the results of student responses to ethical scenarios (NGES) and related it to their perception of how competent and confident they were in their ethical problem solving skills in social work professional settings. Future studies with larger sample sizes might yield a correlation that exists between student perception and their scores on the NGES (or another measure of student performance in response to ethical dilemmas), which would indicate what works well in terms of preparing students for professional ethical practice post-graduation from their social work program.

APPENDIX A

IRB #2015-0030 NOTIFICATION OF EXEMPTION

Office of Research Administration
Regulatory Services
817-272-3723
regulatoryservices@uta.edu
<http://www.uta.edu/research/administration>

**Institutional Review Board
Notification of Exemption**

November 10, 2014

Madeline Massey
Dr. Norman Cobb
Social Work

Protocol Number: 2015-0030

Protocol Title: *Measuring student perception of ethics instruction in BSW and MSW programs*

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

The UT Arlington Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, or designee, has reviewed the above referenced study and found that it qualified for exemption under the federal guidelines for the protection of human subjects as referenced at Title 45CFR Part 46.101(b)(1)(2).

- (1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, either directly or through identifiers linked to the subject; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You are therefore authorized to begin the research as of **November 9, 2014**.

Pursuant to Title 45 CFR 46.103(b)(4)(iii), investigators are required to, "promptly report to the IRB any proposed changes in the research activity, and to ensure that such changes in approved research, during the period for which IRB approval has already been given, are **not initiated without prior IRB review and approval** except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subject." Please be advised that as the principal investigator, you are required to report local adverse (unanticipated) events to the Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services within 24 hours of the occurrence or upon acknowledgement of the occurrence. All investigators and key personnel identified in the protocol must have documented Human Subject Protection (HSP) Training on file with this office. Completion certificates are valid for 2 years from completion date.

APPENDIX B

IRB #2015-0030 APPROVED CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Dear Student,

I am currently involved in a thesis research project examining the perceived level of ethics education received in your bachelor or master of social work program. This study explores the relationship between where you believe you received the most ethics education and what courses or teaching mechanisms provided the most preparation in learning to solve ethical dilemmas. The study consists of a two-part questionnaire asking for general information followed by a list of ethical scenarios.

Participation in this study in no way will affect your grade in your coursework and does not determine whether or not you will graduate. Participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to end participation in this study at any time with no penalty.

All responses are anonymous.

If you have any questions before or after completion of the survey, please contact the Principle Investigator, Madeline Massey at madeline.massey@mavs.uta.edu

Completion of the two-part questionnaire will require approximately 10 minutes.

By marking yes, you are consenting to participating in the following study measuring student perception of ethics instruction in social work classes.

☐ YES

If marked "yes," please continue to the next page.

By marking no, you are not providing your consent to participate in the following study measuring student perception of ethics instruction in social work classes.

☐ NO

If marked "no," thank you for your time and consideration. You may now turn in the questionnaire as it is.

Thank you for your participation.

APPROVED

NOV 09 2014

Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX C

BACHELOR STUDENT VERSION OF PART ONE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions by circling the best letter response. If more information is asked, please indicate your response by writing in the corresponding blank.

1. What gender do you most identify with?

- (a) Male
- (b) Female
- (c) Other (please indicate) _____

2. What is age your range?

- (a) 21-25
- (b) 26-30
- (c) 31-35
- (d) 36-40
- (e) 41-45
- (f) 46-50
- (g) 51-55
- (h) 56-60
- (i) 61-65
- (j) 66-70

3. What cultural group do you most identify with?

- (a) American Indian and Alaska Native
- (b) Asian
- (c) Black or African American
- (d) Hispanic
- (e) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- (f) White
- (g) Other (please indicate) _____

4. At the time of completing this survey, you are an undergraduate BSW student.

- (a) True
- (b) False

5. When do you plan to graduate? Please circle the semester AND circle the year.

Fall	2014
Spring	2015
Summer	2015

6. Apart from the current pursuit of a BSW, what other educational degrees do you hold?
Please indicate if multiple degrees apply.

- (a) Bachelor
 - (b) Master
- Please indicate the field _____

7. Please indicate the form of social work education you received in your academic program.

- (a) Face-to-face in class only
- (b) Online classes only
- (c) Combination of online classes and face-to-face instruction

Please indicate what percentage of face-to-face classes _____ %
 Please indicate what percentage of online classes _____ %

8. Considering ALL of your social work courses, what is the total number of hours dedicated to ethics education?

Please enter in the approximate number of hours _____

9. What types of ethics instruction were used in your courses? Please mark "X" for ALL that apply in the corresponding blanks.

Online	Face to Face	
_____	_____	Group discussion on ethical dilemmas
_____	_____	Assigned essay or reaction to ethical scenarios or dilemmas
_____	_____	Discussion on ethical decision making models
_____	_____	Role-playing
_____	_____	Self-assessment on ethics, morals and values
_____	_____	Lecture
_____	_____	Other (please indicate) _____

10. What was the most significant contribution to your ethics education as a BSW student?

- (a) In class activities (ie: group discussion, role-playing activities)
- (b) Professor (ie: instruction and presentation on ethical content)
- (c) Field Placement
- (d) Assignments (ie: papers, projects, self-assessments)
- (e) Lecture
- (f) Other (please indicate) _____

11. Are you planning on obtaining your LBSW license after you graduate?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Unsure

12. The following are a list of classes most BSW students take. On a scale of 0-4, please circle the number that corresponds with the quality of ethics instruction in your social work courses by placing the numerical rank by the course.

If you did not take the course listed, please circle the letter "X."

0 = Never Discussed
 1 = Rarely Discussed
 2 = Sometimes Discussed
 3 = Often Discussed
 4 = Very Frequently Discussed
 X= Did Not Take the Course

BSW COURSES

Introduction to Social Work	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Practice	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Welfare Policy and Services	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Research Methods	0	1	2	3	4	X
Human Behavior & the Social Environment	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Statistics	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Field Seminar	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Field Placement	0	1	2	3	4	X

13. Of the following 10 ethical areas, which do you feel the most to least competent? Please indicate by ranking the following 10 areas 0 being the least competent and 10 being the most competent. Please write the number in the corresponding blank. Each number will only be used once.

- _____ Physical contact
- _____ Duty to Warn
- _____ Patient Right to Die
- _____ Self-Disclosure
- _____ Friendship with clients after termination
- _____ Patient to client or client to patient attraction
- _____ Accepting gifts from clients
- _____ Reporting misconduct of a colleague
- _____ Termination of services
- _____ Dual Relationships

Please circle the correct numerical response from the following question using a five-point scale with 1 representing the strongest degree of disagreement and 5 representing the highest level of agreement. The number 3 will represent a neutral stance.

I strongly disagree (SD) ← (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) → I strongly agree (SA)
Neutral (N)

14. My training in social work ethics via my social work courses has prepared me for my career in social work.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

You have now completed Part 1 of the questionnaire. Please turn the page to complete Part II.

APPENDIX D

ADVANCED STANDING/TWO-YEAR MSW STUDENT VERSION OF PART ONE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions by circling the best letter response. If more information is required, please indicate your response by writing in the corresponding blank.

1. What gender do you most identify with?

- (a) Male
- (b) Female
- (c) Other (please indicate) _____

2. What is age your range?

- (a) 21-25
- (b) 26-30
- (c) 31-35
- (d) 36-40
- (e) 41-45
- (f) 46-50
- (g) 51-55
- (h) 56-60
- (i) 61-65
- (j) 66-70

3. What cultural group do you most identify with?

- (a) American Indian and Alaska Native
- (b) Asian
- (c) Black or African American
- (d) Hispanic
- (e) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- (f) White
- (g) Other (please indicate) _____

4. At the time of completing this survey, you are

- (a) An ADVANCED STANDING student pursuing an MSW degree (have a BSW)
- (b) A GRADUATE student pursuing an MSW degree (do not have a BSW)

5. When do you plan to graduate? Please circle the semester AND circle the year.

Fall	2014
Spring	2015
Summer	2015

6. Apart from the current pursuit of an MSW, what other educational degrees do you hold? Please indicate if multiple degrees apply.

- (a) Bachelor
 - (b) Master
- Please indicate the field _____
- _____

7. Please indicate the year and university from which you graduated with your bachelor's degree. If you have more than one bachelor's degree, please mark other and indicate below.

Please indicate the year you graduated with your bachelor's degree _____

- (a) UT Arlington
- (b) UT Austin
- (c) TCU
- (d) Baylor
- (e) UH
- (f) UNT
- (g) SFAU
- (h) TTU
- (i) Other (please indicate) _____

If you have multiple bachelor degrees, please indicate the year and university _____

8. Please indicate your area of specialization.

- (a) Child and Family Services
- (b) Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- (c) Administration and Community Practice
- (d) Aging Services
- (e) Health Services
- (f) Other (please indicate) _____

9. Please indicate the form of social work education you received in your academic program.

- (a) Face-to-face in class only
- (b) Online classes only
- (c) Combination of online classes and face-to-face instruction

Please indicate what percentage of face-to-face classes _____ %

Please indicate what percentage of online classes _____ %

10. If you are an advanced standing student (have a BSW), in which program did you receive the most ethics instruction and discussion?

- (a) Not applicable; I am not an advanced standing student
- (b) BSW program
- (c) MSW program
- (d) Other (please indicate) _____

11. Considering ALL of your social work courses, what is the total number of hours

dedicated to ethics education?

Please enter in the approximate number of hours _____

12. What types of ethics instruction were used in your courses? Please mark "X" for ALL that apply in the corresponding blanks.

Online

Face to Face

Group discussion on ethical dilemmas

Assigned essay or reaction to ethical scenarios or dilemmas

Discussion on ethical decision making models

Role-playing

Self-assessment on ethics, morals and values

Lecture

Other (please indicate) _____

13. What was the most significant contribution to your ethics education as an advanced standing or two-year MSW student?

(a) In class activities (ie: group discussion, role-playing activities)

(b) Professor (ie: instruction and presentation on ethical content)

(c) Field Placement

(d) Assignments (ie: papers, projects, self-assessments)

(e) Lecture

(f) Other (please indicate) _____

14. If you have your BSW, do you have your LBSW license?

(a) Not applicable; I don't have my BSW

(b) Yes

(c) No

15. Are you planning on obtaining your LMSW license after you graduate?

(a) Yes

(b) No

(c) Unsure

16. The following are a list of classes most BSW and MSW students take. On a scale of 0-4, please indicate the amount of quality of ethics instruction in your social work courses by circling the numerical rank by the course.

If you did not take the course, please circle "X"

0 = Never Discussed

1 = Rarely Discussed

2 = Sometimes Discussed

3 = Often Discussed

4 = Very Frequently Discussed

X= Did Not Take the Course

BSW COURSES

Introduction to Social Work	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Practice	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Welfare Policy and Services	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Research Methods	0	1	2	3	4	X
Human Behavior & the Social Environment	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Statistics	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Field Seminar	0	1	2	3	4	X
Social Work Field Placement	0	1	2	3	4	X

MSW COURSES

Generalist Micro Practice	0	1	2	3	4	X
Generalist Macro Practice	0	1	2	3	4	X
Human Behavior & the Social Environment	0	1	2	3	4	X
Foundations of Social Policy and Services	0	1	2	3	4	X
Micro and Macro Practice Field Seminar	0	1	2	3	4	X
Human Behavior and Diverse Populations	0	1	2	3	4	X
Research & Evaluation Methods in Social Work	0	1	2	3	4	X
Applied Social Work Practice	0	1	2	3	4	X

17. Of the following 10 ethical areas, which do you feel the most to least competent?
Please indicate by ranking the following 10 areas 0 being the least competent and 10 being the most competent. Please write the number in the corresponding blank. Each number will only be used once.

_____ Physical contact
_____ Duty to Warn
_____ Patient Right to Die
_____ Self-Disclosure
_____ Friendship with clients after termination
_____ Patient to client or client to patient attraction
_____ Accepting gifts from clients
_____ Reporting misconduct of a colleague
_____ Termination of services
_____ Dual Relationships

Please circle the correct numerical response for the following question using a five-point scale with 1 representing the strongest degree of disagreement and 5 representing the highest level of agreement. The number 3 will represent a neutral stance.

Neutral (N)

I strongly disagree (SD) ← (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) → I strongly agree (SA)

18. My training in social work ethics via my social work courses has prepared me for my career in social work.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

You have now completed Part 1 of the questionnaire. Please turn the page to complete Part II.

APPENDIX E

PART TWO OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The following survey has been developed to find out some of the ethical choices that social workers may select.

Please fill in the circle that best reflects to your response to each item. Do not leave any items blank. IF you decide to change an answer, please complete erase or put an "X" through your original response. You may use a pen or pencil to complete this survey. Do not put your name on the survey; it is anonymous. Your consent to participate in this study will be implied when you return your completed survey.

The following list represents a series of ethical choices. You are asked to rate the strength of your agreement with each statement on a five-point scale. 1= the strongest degree of disagreement and 5= the highest level of agreement. Please consider your choices from an ethical (what is right) perspective, rather than a practical (what works) or legal perspective. We are not interested in evaluating your technical or legal knowledge. There are no right or wrong answers; we are simply interested in your opinion on these issues.

1. Bob is an unemployed worker without the technical skills he needs to find a job that pays a livable wage. While it is more expedient to find him a job that requires no skill, it would be preferable to provide him with educational and skills training if he is willing and able to make an investment of his time and energy.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

2. Debra is a hospital social worker. Sally's husband has been diagnosed as brain dead. Before this occurred he indicated to Sally that he would not want to survive in that state. It would be all right for Debra to support the decision to remove him from life support.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

3. A social worker does not need to be nonjudgmental if the social worker personally disapproves of the client's behavior, such as in the case of a male batterer or a mother who has committed infanticide.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

4. Gwen is a social work administrator, in an agency serving a diverse population, who needs to hire an additional staff member. If all applicants possess equal qualifications, she should give greater weight to the application of a minority social worker than that of a non-minority worker to achieve ethnic diversity among staff.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

5. Roberta is a social worker working for change in an ineffectual educational system. Roberta should support a strike or any legal means of effecting change even if such an action creates an inconvenience for students and their families.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

6. Family Service Society (FSS) is a community-based agency. It is located in a diverse neighborhood where there have been reports of verbal clashes among different groups. The social workers from FSS should do what they can to promote positive relations

among varying ethnic or racial groups.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

7. Miguel is very angry and hostile toward people. He has begun to recognize that he feels inadequate because he is poor and has limited social and education assets. His social worker should help him to recognize that being poor is not his fault but primarily a consequence of unequal access to education, social and economic resources.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

8. Tanya, who is in tenth grade, is an exceptional basketball player who is headed for the WNBA. She is sent to the school social worker because she has become disruptive in class. She bitterly reveals to the social worker that it doesn't matter how she performs in class since she is guaranteed a diploma. The social worker assess that Tanya resents the "special treatment" and that her disruptive behavior is a form of acting out. The social worker should work with Tanya, her coaches and her teachers to help her achieve her academic potential and earn her diploma.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

9. Jimmy is an older man with a progressive cognitive impairment. He is mentally incapable of listening to financial advice aimed at helping him prepare for incapacity. His social worker should not help his children seek a legal remedy to control his finances.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

10. Unless required by law to reveal a confidence, a social worker should not discuss a client with anyone other than other professionals within the agency who are directly involved with the client's case and whose involvement is vital to the client's needs.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

11. Social workers should support a health care policy that permits universal access to all citizens, even if it means that most people have to give up some control over their health care resources.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

12. Toni runs a current events discussion group in a community center where membership is open to all people in the local community. The majority of the group votes to oust a member, Julie, strictly because she is homosexual. Toni should not intervene on behalf of Julie and let the membership come to their own decision regarding her presence in the group.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

13. Even if Robert is caught lying to the social worker, the social worker should not judge him as lacking in human dignity and should treat Robert with respect.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

14. Joanne reveals credible plans to her social worker regarding her intention to assault someone she dislikes. The social worker's first priority should be to take actions to

protect the potential victim even if it means disclosing privileged information to the proper authority.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

15. Lois is a 15-year-old that wants to get an abortion but does not want her parents involved in the decision-making process. After assessing Lois' reasons for wanting to interrupt her pregnancy as well as her resistance to involving her parents in the present circumstances of her life, it is all right if the social worker helps Lois seek a legal means of obtaining an abortion without parental involvement.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

16. Frank is a middle-aged Caucasian man who was recently laid off from a job he worked at for nearly 20 years. He has a wife, two children (ages 8 and 12), car payments, a mortgage and little savings. He is struggling to make ends meet. Maureen, age 19, is an African American woman, living in a homeless shelter with her 2 year-old child. These individuals are equally deserving of a social worker's help in finding a way out of their current predicaments.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

17. A tenants' association that is led by a social worker from a local community center is planning a protest against the public housing authority. The social worker has concluded that the protest is likely to result in violence and potential harm to individuals on both sides of the issue. The social workers should work toward helping the association to find ways to avoid or at least minimize the risk of harm to individuals on both sides.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

18. Michelle, age 16, is applying for a job as junior counselor at a day camp. She is in counseling with a social worker for problems with assertiveness. Michelle tends to retreat from expressing her wishes because of feelings of insecurity. Michelle needs a recommendation from a favorite teacher and asks the social worker to secure the letter of recommendation from her. The worker feels that it would be advisable for Michelle to go to the teacher and speak for herself. The worker explores Michelle's resistance and then encourages her to speak for herself, offering to role-play the possible scenario. The worker is incorrect in her advice.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

APPENDIX F

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Dear Student,

I am currently involved in a thesis research project examining the perceived level of ethics education received in your bachelor or master of social work degree. This study explores the relationship between where you believe you received the most ethics education and what courses or teaching mechanisms provided the most preparation in learning to solve ethical dilemmas. The study consists of a two-part questionnaire asking consisting of demographic questions followed by a list of ethical scenarios.

Participation in this study in no way will affect your grade in your coursework and does not determine whether or not you will graduate. Participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to end participation in this study at any time with no penalty.

All responses are anonymous.

If you have any questions before or after completion of the survey, please contact the Principle Investigator, Madeline Massey at madeline.massey@mavs.uta.edu

Completion of the two-part questionnaire will require approximately 10 minutes.

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX G

SCRIPT TO INTRODUCE STUDY TO SOCIAL WORK CLASSES

SCRIPT TO INTRODUCE STUDY TO SOCIAL WORK CLASSES

My name is Madeline Massey, I am social work master's student and I am doing a thesis project on ethics instruction in social work courses. The purpose of this research is to measure student perception of ethics found in their social work courses.

In order to measure student perception of ethics instruction, I will administer a two-part questionnaire in the form of a paper survey to social work students. The questionnaire will consist of questions asking general information followed by a list of ethical scenarios.

The questionnaire is anonymous. Please do not put your name anywhere on the questionnaire form. The only identifying information desired is your age, gender, cultural affiliation and if you are a social work student at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Before beginning the questionnaire, you will be asked if you would like to participate in this study. If the answer is yes, please mark "yes" and continue onto the next page. If the answer is no, please mark "no" that you do not consent to participate in this study and you may turn in the questionnaire form as it is.

There are no foreseeable risks involved with your participation in this study. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete. There are no educational incentives for participating in this study. No extra credit will be given for your participation. Your participation is strictly voluntary. You may choose to not participate or may choose to discontinue participation in the study at any time without penalty.

I will administer a questionnaire to every student in the room, if you do not have a blue or black pen, please ask the principle investigator for one. I will leave this box at the front of the room, where you will place your completed, partially completed or consented "no" questionnaire form when you have finished.

If you have any questions after the questionnaire is administered please email the principle investigator,
Madeline.massey@mavs.uta.edu

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Thank you.

APPENDIX H

PROFESSOR CONSENT FORM

PROFESSOR CONSENT FORM:

Course #: Thesis 6398

Professor: Dr Cobb

PI: Madeline Massey

Permission is requested from you, the professor, to recruit research participants from your class. By signing this form, you are agreeing to allow me, the principal investigator (PI), to recruit students from your class to participate in my research study. The UTA Institutional Review Board will maintain this document within the study file upon approval for verification of this request and permission granted. As the principal investigator, I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to explain the details of my research study as pertaining to the necessity for recruitment in your classroom and promptly inform you of any changes to procedures or objectives that might affect your decision to allow this recruitment.

Professor Signature: _____
Date: _____

PI Signature: Madeline Massey

Date:

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Madeline Massey was raised in Austin, Texas and graduated from The University of Texas at Austin in 2007 with her Bachelors in Psychology. She attended the University of Texas at Arlington where she graduated with her Masters in Social Work (MSW) in 2014.

In 2010 she was an undergraduate research assistant for the Sexual Psychophysiology Lab at the University of Texas at Austin where she conducted research on relationships, sexual disorders and sexual health. It was through this opportunity that she became familiar with research practices including SPSS data entry and screening participants for studies. In 2011, she was an undergraduate research assistant for the Mood Disorders Lab at the University of Texas at Austin where she conducted research on mood disorders, medical treatment and counseling methodology. It was through this research opportunity that she conducted mini standard clinical interview diagnostics (SCID) by phone and assessed fMRI scans. In 2014, she interned at Parkland Hospital's Department of Psychiatry in Dallas, Texas where she learned several invaluable clinical skills including: evaluating and treating psychiatric emergencies, differentiating between altered mental status from psychotic disorders, providing crisis intervention, learning public mental health policy and procedures, learning risks associated with medication, and learning the process of discharge planning for patients exiting the hospital.

She currently is a member of Phi Alpha Honor Society. Her research interests include ethics in helping professions, couples counseling, sexual health and overall mental health in adult populations including LGBTQIA.