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Student Self Report of Core Field Instructor Behaviors that Facilitate Their Learning

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe student self-report of core field instructor behaviors related to their learning. In response to an anonymous survey, 168 students reported behaviors that facilitated their learning and that interfered with their learning. Using grounded theory, these behaviors were categorized into two overarching themes as developmental support or task support— and varied by age, prior work experience, and placement level. The findings can be used to evaluate field instructor performance, intervene when student learning needs are not adequately met, and train existing instructors to provide targeted instructional support.

Keywords: field instructor, supervision, practicum

As social work educators, our primary objective is to create learning environments that allow students to develop the strongest set of professional skills attainable prior to entering the profession. Field education is our signature pedagogy and is pivotal to students' professional growth, skill acquisition, and confidence. Field instructors play a central role in facilitating these goals.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, social work researchers began investigating the nature of the student-field instructor relationship. Much of this research, both then and now, has focused on the relationship between field instructor characteristics or behaviors, and student satisfaction with their field instructor or with their overall field experience (Fortune et al., 1985; Kanno & Koeske, 2010; Lazar & Eisikovits, 1997). While these studies enhance our understanding of students' satisfaction, they do not, specifically, tell us whether these behaviors are related to students' learning.

We know relatively little about student-identified core instructor behaviors—those behaviors that students view as important to their learning— and whether these behaviors vary by practice setting, field instructor, or student characteristics (e.g., age, prior work experience, level of placement). Although several studies have investigated field instructor behaviors, typically, these studies included a list of behaviors that were developed by research staff or faculty members without student input (Fortune, McCarthy, & Abramson, 2001; Kanno & Koeske, 2010; Knight, 2001a; Knight, 2001b; Miehl, Everett, Segal, & DuBois, 2013; Sinicropo & Cournoyer, 1990). Moreover, the questionnaires used to identify behaviors were often developed to investigate supervisory practices with social workers, not social work students (e.g., Shulman's [1981] questionnaire) and were not validated. Accordingly, these studies may not have included a comprehensive list of those behaviors that social work students believe facilitate or get in their way of learning.

Students are in a unique position to identify which behaviors are most likely to contribute to their learning (Choy, Leung, Tarn, & Chu, 1998). We were able to identify a small number of studies, however, that asked social work students to identify field instructor behaviors that facilitated their learning. Choy et al. (1998) surveyed 124 BSW and MSW students in diverse practice settings, using open-ended questions. They asked students what the field instructor had to do in order to help them learn and develop skills necessary to carry out their field work. Their responses were classified using Kadushin's (1976) system into three pre-conceived types of field instructor tasks: managing, educating, and facilitating. Tasks related to managing included behaviors, for example, that related to planning and monitoring students' work. Educating included behaviors related to teaching practice theory and skills, and facilitating included behaviors related to supporting students and encouraging students' self-reflection.

Using Shulman's (1981) social work supervision questionnaire, Knight (2001a) investigated the relationship between the frequency in which field instructors used several behaviors and how much BSW and MSW students learned. Four variables explained 60% of the variance in learning—field instructor partialized case concerns, instructor reviewed cases, instructor assigned them readings, and student liked the field instructor—at the beginning of their field experience. At the end of the field experience, about 75% of the variance

in learning was explained by whether the field instructor encouraged open discussion, used process recordings, provided individualized learning, reviewed and analyzed cases, and encouraged autonomy. Knight (2001a) also developed a model to predict students' perception of helpfulness and satisfaction, and found few common predictors across models, suggesting that helpfulness, satisfaction and learning are not the same construct. Notably, all three models predicting helpfulness, satisfaction, and learning included whether the field instructor encouraged open discussion.

Ellison (1994) asked 100 MSW students to identify one critical incident and describe what their field instructor did that was effective and what they did that was ineffective. The researchers labeled 15 behaviors that were effective and 21 behaviors that were ineffective. Effective and ineffective behaviors were further categorized as "expressive" or "task." The most frequently occurring effective task behaviors included: provided information (74.1%) and feedback (20.1%). Effective expressive behaviors included: provided opportunities to express concerns (20.8%) and validated students' feelings (11.9%). The most frequently occurring ineffective task behaviors included inadequate contact (19.1%) and lack of information (18.4%). Students infrequently reported expressive behaviors that were ineffective (e.g., denigrated student: 4.4%).

While these studies help clarify important field instructor behaviors from the students' perspective, Choy et al. (1998) categorized student responses using categories they developed prior to surveying students and Ellison (1994) limited their inquiry to MSW students and critical incidents. Knight's (2001a; 2001b) studies used an existing questionnaire, and some of the items included in the questionnaire may not be as applicable to macro practice as they are to micro practice. Our approach complements their approaches. However, it does not use a preconceived coding scheme or researcher-developed questionnaire, or limit students' responses to critical incidents. We use grounded theory to identify core behaviors and, like Ellison (1994), content analysis to summarize the frequency in which behaviors occurred. In addition, we examine in an exploratory analysis whether these behaviors vary depending on student characteristics, including their age, prior work experience, and level (BSW and MSW foundation versus MSW advanced field students).

Field education is perhaps one the most varied landscapes students enter because placements are unique to each student and spread across a range of practice contexts. Identifying a set of core field instructor behaviors that can be measured and used across practice settings would give us a significant area to focus our efforts in strengthening student learning.

Methods

Design and Sample

This analysis was part of a larger study evaluating the quality of a field education program at a school of social work in the Midwest. The school has four campuses located in the southeast, central, and northwest parts of the state. We surveyed all undergraduate and graduate students completing their field experience Spring and Summer semesters during 2014. At the time of the survey, students were in their undergraduate and graduate foundation placements for one semester; students were in their advanced placement for two

semesters. Of the 170 students surveyed, 168 completed the survey.

Sample characteristics. The sample included 56 undergraduate (33.3%), 30 first-year graduate foundation year (17.9%) and 82 second-year graduate advanced (48.8%) students. The majority of participants were women (82.5%; men: 17.5%). Students were between the ages of 20 and 61 years old ($M=30.31$; $SD=8.85$); 60.7% of the students were less than 30 years old. On average, students had 3.51 years of full-time professional social work experience prior to enrolling in their most recent degree program (range=0 to 25 years, with a substantial proportion of the students, 41.2%, having no prior social work experience).

Data Collection Procedures

The students completed the Field Assessment Survey (FAS 1.0) in their last field seminar, which coincided with the end of their field experience. The instructor left the seminar, and the anonymous survey was distributed to students by a staff member or by one of the researchers. The survey took about five minutes to complete, was four pages in length and included close-ended questions measuring the quality of students' relationship with (a) their field instructor, (b) key staff at their organization, and (c) their field liaison; and demographic questions. In addition to the close-ended questions, students were asked to respond to two open-ended questions: "What did your instructor do that facilitated your learning?" and "What did your instructor do that got in the way of your learning?" Their responses ranged from one word (e.g., "availability") to 52 words. We report on results from the open-ended questions only. The results from these analyses were used to develop and validate a scale to measure core field instructor behaviors, which will be described in a subsequent manuscript.

Data Analysis

The analyses proceeded in three phases. First, grounded theory or the constant comparative method was used to identify concepts and the relation among concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Two people coded student responses. The text was read line-by-line by the coders. They independently identified key words or phrases among the students' responses, which were repeatedly sorted, and tentatively named to capture the concept. The coders identified similar, and often the same, concepts and, ultimately, agreed on nine concepts for the first question and 10 concepts for the second question.

Second, to count the number of students whose responses reflected a concept, we wrote operational definitions for each concept. Initially, these definitions were independently written by each coder, with one coder writing more detailed definitions than the other coder. The coders, together, refined the definitions, and the second coder then resorted chunks of text (words and phrases) based on the operational definitions. The first reader, using the operational definitions, reviewed the second coder's coding. After the coders agreed on the final operational definitions, which are included in Tables 1 and 2, and agreed that the student's text met a definition, the percent of students whose responses reflected each concept was calculated. We refer to these concepts as field instructor "behaviors." Because we used consensus to code students' responses, we did not calculate inter-rater reliability. Both coders kept memos throughout the coding process to document

each time a concept was named and renamed, a concept was defined and redefined and a student's response was sorted and resorted.

Finally, the sample size was large enough to examine whether behaviors 1-7 in Table 1 (Behaviors that Facilitated Learning) varied by students' age, prior professional social work experience, and placement level. These three variables were recoded into dichotomous variables: less than 30 years old versus 30 years old or older, no prior years of experience versus one or more years of experience, and BSW and MSW foundation versus MSW advanced practicum students. Twenty-one relationships were examined, using contingency tables and chi-square analysis. Significance was set at less than or equal to .05.

Table 1

Behaviors that Facilitated Learning (N=149)

	<i>n</i>	%
Developmental Support: The field instructor helped the student meet his or her personal or professional needs.		
1. Was available and open: The field instructor was readily accessible (available) and willing to answer the student's questions, ask for input, or consider suggestions (open).	52	34.9
2. Provided emotional support: The field instructor created an environment that allowed the student to process the student's reactions to experiences by listening to, understanding, or encouraging the student.	30	20.1
3. Provided feedback: The field instructor provided information or asked questions <i>to help</i> the student reflect on his/her performance and to improve his/her skills.	21	14.1
4. Challenged: The field instructor urged or directed the student to complete a task or critically think about a task <i>to help</i> the student progress to the next phase of his/her development.	18	12.1
5. Encouraged autonomy: The field instructor supported, suggested, or urged the student to complete a task <i>to help</i> him/her practice independently or without direct supervision when the student was ready.	18	12.1
Task Support: The field instructor helped the student learn about an activity or how to complete it.		
6. Provided learning experiences: The field instructor provided opportunities to help the student learn how to complete a task by observing others do it or trying to do it by him/herself.	36	24.2
7. Provided instruction: The field instructor explained to or showed the student how to complete a task.	27	18.1
8. Provided materials: The field instructor provided the student with information through print or audiovisual material on how to complete a task.	8	5.4
9. Planned tasks: The field instructor developed in advance, with or without the student, a set of tasks that the student would complete.	5	3.4
"Nothing"	2	1.2

Table 2

Behaviors that Got in the Way of Learning (N=140)

	<i>n</i>	%
Developmental Support		
1. Was unavailable: The field instructor was not readily accessible.	16	11.4
2. Was not invested in the field instructor role: The field instructor was not interested in students' learning.	4	2.9
3. Was unable to communicate effectively: The field instructor was unable to express his or her thoughts or feelings in a way that was helpful to the student.	5	3.6
4. Did not provide adequate feedback: The field instructor did not provide information or ask questions to help the student reflect on his/her performance and to improve his/her skills.	7	5.0
5. Did not encourage autonomy: The field instructor did not support, suggest, or urge the student to complete a task to help him/her practice independently or without direct supervision when s/he was ready.	4	2.9
Task Support		
6. Did not provide learning experiences: The field instructor did not provide opportunities to help the student learn how to complete a task.	5	3.6
7. Did not provide the <i>right</i> learning experiences: The field instructor did not provide the type of opportunities that the student wanted to learn.	8	5.7
8. Did not provide <i>enough</i> learning experiences: The field instructor did not provide a sufficient number of opportunities to help the student learn how to complete a task.	2	1.4
9. Did not provide adequate instruction: The field instructor did not explain to or show the student how to complete a task.	5	3.6
Was Disorganized		
10. Was disorganized: The field instructor was not <u>planful</u> .	6	4.3
"Nothing"	86	51.2

Results

Behaviors that Facilitated Learning

One hundred and sixty-eight students completed the survey; 19 (11.3%) students did not respond to this question. Therefore, there were 149 valid responses: 147 (98.8%) students wrote at least one behavior that facilitated their learning and two (1.2%) students wrote "nothing." We identified nine behaviors that were organized under two broad themes: developmental support and task support. Table 1 includes the definitions

and the percent of students responding to the question who reported each concept.

1. Developmental Support

A relatively large proportion, 52 students, reported their instructor facilitated their learning by being **available and open** to talk about their experience. Although one student wrote the word “availability” only, all of the other students wrote responses that suggested availability alone did not facilitate their learning. Instructor availability seemed to be a pre-requisite for meaningful communication between field instructors and students, and for the students’ learning. Typical responses included, the instructor “opened up the room for conversation,” “allowed open communication, free of judgment,” and was “open to all questions, flexible, accessible.” The most frequently occurring phrase, other than “open,” was the instructor “answered my questions.”

Students’ perception of availability and openness to discussing their experience often occurred when they met privately (viz. during scheduled supervision), but it also extended to when they were on the move, before or after working with clients and others. For instance, a student wrote, “She utilizes the ‘show/observe, discuss, implement w/supervision, discuss, implement independently, check-in & discuss’ way of approaching assignments/responsibilities.”

Twelve students indicated their communication was bi-directional: students were encouraged to ask questions and to make suggestions. For instance, students wrote, “He also spent a lot of time talking to me about my thoughts and suggestions” and my instructor “asked for questions & thoughts and talked with me about every situation.” Finally, some students connected availability to their learning. For instance, “We were able to have great conversations whenever an issue came up & it really facilitated me actually learning something new.”

Instructor **provided emotional support**, the second behavior categorized under developmental support, was reported by 30 (20.1%) students. It involved instructors listening, understanding and encouraging students. Typical phrases included the instructor was “very encouraging,” “encouraged me,” “was always supportive,” was “very supportive,” “provided support,” and was “incredibly supportive.”

Six students’ statements were made in the context of discussing a challenging experience: “She also provided me with a space to come and process the events, as some were difficult or very emotionally intense” and the instructor “created a secure atmosphere so I was encouraged to go to [him or her] with problems or concerns.” Other statements were made in the context of students’ pursuing their own interests: “Incredibly supportive of me and my goals and also recognized my strengths and weaknesses relative to this work.”

For the third behavior, instructor **provided feedback**, 18 of 21 students who identified this theme used the word “feedback.” The instructor provided information or asked questions to help student reflect on their performance of tasks. Students most often wrote about feedback in a generic way: it was neither “good” nor “bad” feedback.” Instead, they wrote “continual feedback” or “a lot of feedback.” Other modifiers included, “constructive,” “practical,” and “clear and concise.” What seemed to underlie student responses was the instructors’ intention to help them, an appreciation for feedback and its importance to their development.

The fourth and fifth behaviors, instructor **challenged** and instructor **encouraged autonomy** respectively, were each mentioned by 18 (12.1%) students. Exemplar responses of challenging included, “He always encouraged me to push myself and do things, even when they seemed difficult or anxiety provoking” and “My instructor challenged me to try new tasks and activities outside of my comfort zone.” Examples of statements for autonomy included, “She provided many different learning experiences and allowed me to go on my own as soon as I was ready” and my instructor “promoted my independence to grow professionally.”

2. Task Support

Four behaviors were categorized as task support. When asked what facilitated their learning, a relatively large proportion of students, 36 (24.2%), wrote their field instructors **provided learning experiences**. These experiences included observing the field instructor, trying out a new skill while the instructor was present, or being connected with other professionals or clients. Fifteen students suggested field instructors were committed to their students' learning and students felt included in their field instructors' daily tasks. For example, one student wrote, "She made sure to include me in as much as possible [...] Tried to make every situation a learning opportunity." Another student wrote, "They both did a great job of allowing me different opportunities (soc skills, off-site programs, shadow others). I loved working with [instructor] & [instructor]!"

Provided instruction, the second behavior under task support, was also mentioned by a substantial proportion of students (27 or 18.1%). Field instructors "guided," "instructed," "taught," "showed," "advised," "talked with," "led," "helped," and "explained to" students. Although not typical in terms of the length of students' statements, this quote captures the behavior of providing instruction:

Applied theory & theory styles to different situations I brought to him. He was a natural teacher and very wise. He had an amazing amount of experience and was able to share it in a way that taught me important concepts for working with people.

The last two behaviors under task support included, field instructor **provided materials** and **planned tasks with students**. These behaviors were least likely to be mentioned by students, 5.4% and 3.4% of students, respectively. Materials typically included readings, and planning tasks included helping to develop the learning contract.

Behaviors that Got in the Way of Learning

Twenty-eight (16.7%) students did not respond to the question. Therefore, there were 140 valid responses: 54 (32.1%) students wrote at least one behavior that facilitated their learning, and 86 (51.2%) students wrote "nothing." We identified nine concepts that were categorized as lack of developmental support or lack of task support. Five of these nine behaviors were, essentially, the flip side of the behaviors that facilitated learning. They included unavailability, inadequate feedback, did not encourage autonomy, did not provide adequate learning experiences, and did not provide adequate instruction. A tenth category that got in the way of learning was instructor "was disorganized."

1. Inadequate Developmental Support

Five behaviors were categorized as lack of developmental support (see Table 2). The first behavior was instructor **was unavailable**, which was mentioned by 16 (11.4%) students. Unavailability, which was defined as not being readily accessible, included the field instructor not being at work (e.g., "came every so often," "out of the office for days"), not being reachable, or not having time to meet. Six students wrote their instructor didn't have time to meet or "help" them, or was too "busy."

The second behavior, instructor **was not interested in the field instructor role**, was mentioned by 4 (2.9%) students. They wrote, for example, "I felt my field instructor wanted to be more of a 'rubber stamp' as opposed to an active part of my learning." The third behavior was labeled **unable to communicate effectively** and included behavior that the student perceived as unhelpful during instances of conflict or frustration (5 or 3.6% of students). Examples included the instructor had "a melt-down that caused a major blow out," was "unprofessional and rude," "refused to listen, disagreed," and spoke "harshly at times."

Instructor **did not provide adequate feedback** was the fourth behavior that interfered with students' learning (7 or 5.0% of students). Feedback was not "critical," not "constructive," not "positive," or not "negative" enough. The fifth and final behavior categorized under developmental support was instructor **did not encourage autonomy** (4 or 2.9% of students). One student wrote, "I wish [my field instructor] would of [sic] let me be a bit more independent and do more intakes/client interaction by myself."

2. Inadequate Task Support

The first, second and third behaviors categorized under lack of task support were related to learning experiences: 15 (10.7%) students wrote their instructors did not provide learning experiences, the *right* experiences or *enough* experiences. Five (3.6%) students wrote that their instructor **did not provide learning experiences** and, for two students, they wrote, in addition, they were responsible for finding their own learning experiences (e.g., "looked elsewhere on my own"). After not being available, which was included under developmental support, students most frequently wrote instructors **did not provide the right learning experiences** (8 or 5.7% of students). In a few instances, students wanted more social work learning experiences or master-level social work experiences. Two students (1.4%) wrote that their field instructors **did not provide enough experiences**.

The final behavior, under task support, was named **did not provide adequate instruction** (5 or 3.6% of students). Students wanted their field instructors to explain tasks in more detail or to show them how to do something. For example, "Sometimes threw too much at me" or "She sometimes did things in a face paced manner."

3. Disorganization

Finally, six (4.3%) students, when asked what interfered with their learning, wrote the field instructor was "pretty disorganized," "is very disorganized," "was very disorganized," "changed her mind a fair amount, which didn't always provide for the most stable work environment," "would rearrange schedule [...] let me know at the last minute," or "was running late to meetings or was disorganized."

Exploratory Analysis: Age, Prior Social Work Experience, and Placement Level

Sample sizes were large enough to examine whether behaviors 1–7 in Table 1 varied by students' age, number of years of prior social work experience, and placement level. Table 3 shows that younger students were more likely than older students to report that being challenged facilitated their learning ($X^2=5.42$; $p=.02$). Students with less prior social work experience were more likely than students with more experience to report that instructors who were available and open ($X^2=6.31$; $p=.01$) or provided feedback ($X^2=4.48$; $p=.03$) facilitated their learning. Advanced MSW students were more likely than BSW and MSW foundation students to report that instructors who encouraged autonomy facilitated their learning ($X^2=5.69$; $p=.02$).

Table 3

Field Instructor Behavior by Student Characteristic (Percents)

	Over 30 Years Old			Any Prior Social Work Experience			Advanced Practicum		
	No	Yes	<i>p</i>	No	Yes	<i>p</i>	No	Yes	<i>p</i>
1. Was available and open	34.1	30.5	.64	44.7	22.4	.01	33.3	33.3	.99
2. Provided emotional support	18.7	15.3	.59	21.3	14.9	.38	16.7	19.3	.71
3. Provided feedback	13.2	16.9	.53	23.4	9.0	.03	6.7	12.3	.30
4. Challenged	14.3	3.4	.02	6.4	10.4	.44	11.7	10.5	.84
5. Encouraged autonomy	8.8	16.9	.10	6.4	16.4	.09	3.3	15.8	.02
6. Provided learning experiences	23.1	23.7	.93	14.9	28.4	.09	21.7	21.1	.94
7. Provided instruction	14.3	18.6	.48	14.9	22.4	.31	11.7	21.1	.16

Discussion

Support, defined as to give help, was the overarching category or behavior that emerged in the analysis. Two broad core subcategories of support were also identified: developmental support and task support. We defined *developmental support* as helping students' meet their personal and professional needs and *task support* as helping students learn about an activity or how to complete it. These subcategories are similar to the subcategories identified in Mor Barak, Travis, Pyun, and Xie's (2009) study on social workers ("emotional and social support" and "task support") and in Ellison's (1994) study on social work students ("expressive" and "task" behaviors).

At this early stage of professional development, many students experience a psychological vulnerability from their lack of self-confidence and novice status. Emotional support deepens a student's willingness to risk the perceived potential of failure in trying a new role. Consistent with Ellison's (1994) and Miehl's et al.'s (2013) findings, feedback appears to be an additional and important behavior related to learning. It is likely to lead to increased self-confidence as students receive input to improve practice skills and positive reinforcement when completing tasks successfully.

Openness and accessibility among field instructors appears to be an essential precursor to building a trusting relationship where students can honestly reveal their uncertainties and risk trying and learning how to complete new tasks. Gray, Alperin, and Wik (1989), Ellison (1994), Knight (2001a), and Barretti (2009) found similar results. Barretti (2009) writes that, "Without instructor availability, there can be no relationship, and thus no change. Thus, availability lays a critical foundation for supportive student-educator relationships" (p. 59).

After feeling confident that they could complete tasks satisfactorily, some students wanted their field instructors to challenge them to progress further in their skill development and/or to encourage them to function independently when they were ready. This finding is consistent with Knight's (2001a) finding that encouraging autonomy was an important predictor of student learning. By design, field experience is intended to pre-

pare students to function autonomously at their educational level of social work practice by the end of their program. Field instructors who hold the same commitment to their students' desire to fully actualize—by being challenged or through independent practice—are likely to positively impact students' mastery of skills and further strengthen their self-confidence.

Instructors also addressed students' learning needs by providing task support. They exposed them to direct practice opportunities where they could observe or carry out tasks, taught them how to complete a task, and provided them with supplemental written or audiovisual training materials. To facilitate their learning, some students also reported their field instructors provided them with an adequate number and type of learning opportunities appropriate to the professional mastery they sought.

In reporting which field instructor behaviors facilitated or hindered their learning, many students emphasized the foundational stage of being exposed to learning experiences and being taught how to carry out professional social work tasks. Similar to students in Ellison's (1994) study, students highlighted the value of detailed instruction, demonstration and observation in a real practice context. Several students valued their field instructors intentionally breaking down the steps of completing tasks in the practice setting. To some field instructors, this may seem rudimentary or indicate a student is not prepared to practice; however, it is a key passage in their professional skill acquisition.

A final behavior that was labeled disorganized did not fit into either type of support, although it may be related to both types of support. Students may be unable to get their developmental and task support needs met when students believe their field instructors are not planful. The impact of this behavior on learning has been anecdotally affirmed in our field program. Students sometimes indicate a desire to change placements after identifying their field instructor as disorganized; they interpret disorganization as indicating their field instructor is unreliable or less competent and, as a result, will negatively impact their learning experience.

We examined whether age, prior experience and placement level were related to behaviors and found some statistically significant differences between student subgroups. Students without prior social work experience were more likely than students with prior experience to report field instructors who were open and available and who provided feedback facilitated their learning. Younger students were more likely than older students to report that being challenged facilitated their learning. Advanced MSW practicum students were more likely than BSW and MSW foundation students to report that autonomy facilitated their learning.

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Implications for Practice

In addition to implications for field instruction described above, identifying core field instructor behaviors related to learning has several potentially important applications. In strengthening the signature pedagogy within social work curriculum, they could be used by field program faculty and staff to ensure EPAS standards are met—in selecting, monitoring and evaluating field instructors and field settings, and in the development of effective field instructor training.

1. Selecting, Monitoring and Evaluating Field Instructors

The behaviors included in Tables 1 and 2 could be used to ensure program quality, including screening prospective field instructors, evaluating field instructor performance, and intervening when student learning needs are not adequately met. First, administrators could use the behaviors to screen qualified field instructors before placing students under their supervision, paying attention to the most frequently reported behaviors. For instance, a relatively large proportion of students, about one in 10 students, reported their field instructors were unavailable, and a smaller proportion of students reported their field instructors were not invested in their learning. To screen out field instructors who do not have sufficient time, program administrators should provide prospective field instructors and their supervisors with a realistic estimate of the number of hours needed to provide supervision and discuss whether they have adequate time and support from their supervisor to supervise students.

Second, the behaviors included in the tables might also be useful when students raise concerns about their field instructor, their field setting or their learning needs. Field administrators or liaisons could help students clarify their concerns by reviewing the list of field instructor behaviors, and, if appropriate, meeting with the field instructor and student to explore barriers to student's learning. Finally, at the program level, administrators could evaluate program quality by asking students to rate field instructors on these behaviors annually and then use this feedback to support individual mentoring for field instructors or to decide whether to continue to place students with these field instructors.

2. Training

Our findings suggest field programs may benefit from focusing often-limited field instructor training time (e.g., orientations, CEU events, online materials, site visits) on behaviors that facilitate better student learning. These trainings could apply to both new field instructors as they make the transition from practitioner to educator and to help experienced instructors deepen their understanding of students' needs and to assess whether and how effectively they use behaviors that facilitate or get in the way of students' learning. For example, specific modules could be developed to target behaviors that facilitate students' learning, such as how to provide facilitative feedback and how and when to better support student autonomy.

Strengths and Caveats

This study had some strengths including a relatively large sample for a qualitative analysis, a high response rate, and more than one coder. However, some caveats should be noted. For instance, these results are based on student self-report and, therefore, reflect students' subjective appraisal of their field instructors' behaviors only. We do not know whether an independent observer would have concluded a field instructor did or did not, for example, encourage autonomy. Moreover, despite this high response rate, the results cannot be generalized beyond this program. While the length of the responses were adequate to identify a list of behaviors, we do not know how many students, if asked, would have, for example, strongly agreed that their field instructor used each behavior that was identified during the coding process. Nor do we know why a substantial proportion of all students chose not to respond to the second open-ended question (16.7%), "What did your instructor do that got in the way of your learning" or wrote "nothing" (51.2%). For students who left the space blank, they may have believed nothing got in their way of their learning, they did not want to say anything negative about their field instructor, or they may have experienced fatigue because of the number of surveys they are asked to complete during the duration of their studies.

Closed-ended questions are needed to report the frequency in which all students endorse each behavior and to adequately test whether core behaviors vary by age, prior social work experience and placement level. We used results from this qualitative analysis to develop items for the Field Instructor Supervision Scale (Coohey, 2016), which was subsequently validated using two additional waves of data. Data from the FAS 2.0 will

be used to examine the relationship between field supervision and student outcomes. In these analyses, we will examine whether and what combination of behaviors increase students' perceived self-efficacy on each CSWE competency, preparedness for social work practice, and satisfaction with their field instructor and overall experience.

As first-hand reporters of their own experience, students readily identified specific field instructor behaviors that facilitated their learning. Their responses highlight the importance of asking students to report on behaviors that positively and negatively facilitate their learning, because it offers field programs insight into their students' learning process and identifies an opportunity to improve student and program outcomes. These field instructor behaviors, when fostered and supported by field programs, are likely to positively impact the learning experience for social work students engaged in their field experience and support the overarching goal of fully preparing social work graduates for professional practice.

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