

Augsburg College Assessment Data
MSW Academic Years 2012-13 and 2013-14

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The MSW Program Assessment Plan: An Overview

The Department of Social Work has a long history of program assessment. We began with alumni surveys and course assignments as indicators of student outcomes. In 2006 the department introduced a more rigorous approach to program evaluation with student self-assessment questionnaires and field assessment instruments aligned with the program goals and objectives. Yearly assessment reports have been standard agenda items for department reviews. Assessment data has been integrated into a more reflective process where outcome data are presented to the full faculty, small task groups review the findings and make recommendations to the curriculum committee. The curriculum committee then reviews the outcome data, faculty comments and lead instructor reflections. Curricular updates and large-scale revisions become the work of the curriculum committee. Reports, plans for content updates, course revisions or curricular revisions are presented each year to the Social Work faculty for discussion and action. This integrated program assessment plan has served the department well for the past decade.

Beginning in 2005 the MSW program has continuously developed and used quantitative and qualitative methods to assess its explicit and implicit curriculum. Following the publication of EPAS 2008 our two primary assessment tools, the Student Self-Efficacy Questionnaire and the Learning Agenda and Assessment were re-designed to better assess the core competencies and those practice behaviors established by CSWE and published in EPAS 2008. The foundation assessment instruments were developed using the 41 Core Competency practice behaviors required by CSWE. In 2012, we added two practice behaviors addressing specific skills in termination (AS 2.1.10). The MCCP assessment instruments were developed from the CSWE advanced clinical practice behaviors. Practice behaviors for the MCMP concentration were derived from the literature, program assessment data and market forces. Currently we have two years of data from the revised Foundation Student Self-Efficacy Questionnaire. We also have two years of data from the Learning Agenda and Assessment tools from Foundation, MCCP and MCMP students. In addition we have data from projects and signature assignments in both the MCMP and MCCP concentrations.

The implicit curriculum assessment measures student experiences on campus and in the classroom. We rely on qualitative feedback from MSW exit interviews and quantitative feedback from the Student Environmental Inventory (SEI). The Student Environmental Inventory instrument was developed to assess classroom and campus level information for the implicit curriculum. The student course evaluations also contain a number of assessment items related to our implicit curriculum. We extract summary data from the student course evaluations to complete our implicit curriculum assessment strategy.

Rationale

The principal assessment question that influences our assessment strategy is: How well does our program prepare students to meet the 10 core competencies established by CSWE and adopted by our program? In answering this question we first determined that post-test measures best address this question. Two post-test quantitative measures, the Student Self-Efficacy Questionnaire and the Learning Agenda and Assessment were developed to cover practice behaviors in the foundation and in both MCMP and M CCP concentrations. We set item level criterion and established benchmarks, the ratio of students achieving a chosen criterion. For more reliable information, we use these two measures longitudinally looking for patterns across the 10 core competencies and year-to-year shifts in these patterns. We will provide more details when we discuss the analysis of the data. Additional support for student achievement is collected from field seminar assignments in the M CCP curriculum and the summative project in the MCMP curriculum.

The implicit curriculum is assessed through at least two years of data from student course evaluations and exit surveys and interviews. The items in the student course evaluation go to the faculty's ability to provide a challenging and thorough course and to demonstrate commitment and respect to the student learning experience. The exit interview is designed to elicit a more holistic review of the department and curriculum by the graduating student.

Description

The MSW program assessment plan uses the assessment tools outlined in the Table 1 below. For the direct measure of the 10 core competencies two measures are used, the Student Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SSEQ) and the Learning Agenda and Assessment (LAA). For the implicit curriculum, two measures are used, the Student Environmental Inventory and the student exit interview. Exit interviews and the SEI ask students to reflect on their entire time in the program. Data are collected annually, analyzed and reported at the beginning of each academic year. Findings are presented to the MSW Program Director, Department Chair, and Social Work Department faculty; a report is also submitted to the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies at Augsburg College. This report is required as a part of the College's assessment plan.

Table 1 - Overall Assessment Plan

MSW Year	#1 Measurement tool	#2 Measurement tool	#3 Measurement tool	#4 Measurement tool	#5 Measurement tool
Foundation	SSEQ	LAA			
MCCP	SSEQ	LAA	Field Seminar Assignments	Exit Interview	SEI
MCMP	SSEQ	LAA	Summative Project	Exit Interview	SEI

Explicit Curriculum Measures

The explicit curriculum is defined by CSWE (2010) as the formal education process that includes the curriculum and the courses. It demonstrates intentional program design to teach the practice behaviors to achieve the core competencies outlined by CSWE EPAS 2008. Criterion scores were established for each instrument and benchmarks were developed using ‘percent achieving criterion’ for a cutoff mark. Benchmarks were set at 80% for the Student Self-Efficacy questionnaire and the Learning Agenda and Assessment tool. The benchmark value corresponds with our grading criteria for passing performance in all courses where 80% is a 3.0 grade, the minimum passing grade for each MSW course.

Student Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SSEQ)

The Student Self-Efficacy Questionnaires (i.e., foundation, MCMP, MCCP) measures student perceptions of their level of skill for of each identified practice behavior. The responses are based on a 10-point Likert Scale (1 = Not at all confident and 10 = Highly confident). There is strong evidence that measuring one’s confidence or self-efficacy corresponds with actual skill levels. Self-efficacy is a theoretical construct estimating students’ level of skill or knowledge. Self-efficacy (that is, the estimation of one’s ability to complete a task or one’s retention for specific knowledge) was first described in 1977 by Albert Bandura in his paper, “Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change”. There is much research supporting the validity of self-efficacy as an estimation of one’s knowledge or skill (Bandura, 2002). In recent years, researchers have begun to recommend self-efficacy as a measure of student learning in social work education (Holden, Barker, Meenaghan, & Rosenberg, 1999; Holden, Meenaghan, Anastas, & Metrey, 2002; Holden, Meenaghan, & Anastas, 2003; Holden, Anastas, & Meenaghan, 2005; Wilson, 2006).

Competency levels and item benchmarks for the Self-Efficacy Questionnaires were established. We determined that practice behavior scores of 8 and higher demonstrated a high level of confidence or self-efficacy as reported by the student. We set the benchmark for achieving the practice behavior at 80% of our students with a mean practice behavior score of 8 or higher indicates that the MSW program is achieving or exceeding its program goals. The mean score for this benchmark was calculated using the average of the mean practice behavior scores associated with each core competency (See Table 4.6 Data Collection and Analysis). When the core competency scores are below the established benchmarks, mean scores for each practice behavior are used to guide a more precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the programs curriculum related to the specific core competency.

Learning Agenda and Assessment (LAA)

The Learning Agenda and Assessment allows the field supervisor to assess each student intern on practice behaviors in both the foundation and concentration years. Student interns are evaluated twice during their year-long field practicum. Field instructors complete the evaluations at the mid-term and end of the placement. The LAA instrument was developed using the core competency practice behaviors identified by CSWE. The practice behaviors were translated into a four point ordinal scale ranging from (1) unsatisfactory to (4) distinguished (Table 4.2). For each core competency, multiple practice behaviors were established from CSWE guidelines or in the case of MCMP, from macro practice experts. Ten core competency scores are calculated using the average of the mean practice behaviors associated with each core competency.

Findings

Foundation

When interpreting these data, we considered measuring competencies at the end of the foundation year and end of the concentration year. We took the mean score of the SSEQ and the LLA benchmark scores to derive a summative outcome score for each of the 10 competencies. We discovered that the program was rated as achieving the benchmark in only 4 of the 10 competencies. Analysis of these data suggest however that the field instructors rated our students as achieving 8 of the 10 competencies in 2013 and 9 of 10 competencies in 2014. We asked students to complete the same self-efficacy questionnaire nearing the end of their concentration year. The data suggest that student's self efficacy reached our expectations for all 10 competencies. Results from the analysis of the two sets of scores are very encouraging. We can now document that student competencies developed continuously throughout the program such that they were able to meet all foundation competencies by the time they graduated.

Multicultural Macro Practice

The most recent findings from the Learning Agenda and Assessment (LAA) data consistently show a large percentage of students exceeding our defined benchmark (Table 4). On the whole the LAA findings affirm the strengths of the MCMP program. We continue to show strength in the areas of diversity, human rights, professional conduct, and ethics. Overall, field instructors had strong positive feedback regarding students and most students achieved proficiency on all 10 core competencies. The summative project is designed as an outcome measure to demonstrate professional competency in all 10 EPAS categories. In academic year 2012-13 100% of our MCMP students successfully completed their summative project as evaluated by program faculty. In academic year in 2013-14 92% of MCMP students successfully completed their summative project. In summary, indicators suggest that the Multicultural Macro Practice curriculum is meeting and exceeding most and perhaps all of its program curriculum competencies.

Multicultural Clinical Practice

Field instructor ratings from the LAA indicate that overall, our students are attaining 9 of the 10 core competency and related practice indicators. As adjunct to our field supervisor observations, we use signature course assignments in the MCCP curriculum as a second measure of core competencies. Data from the reporting course instructors suggest that at least 90% of the MCCP students are meeting the 3.0 for each core competency related assignment (Table 4).

Discussion

In general we are confident that graduates from our program are equipped to provide the highest level of professional service to clients at all system levels. As part of our continuous improvement activities, we continue to consider areas of growth as well as areas on innovation. We continue to develop innovative strategies to increase the efficacy of our instruction in areas of influencing public policy towards greater social and economic justice. In addition we are developing new instructional strategies to improve the use of research and reflective practices to inform and improve professional practices. In brief students graduate with greater confidence in their professional social work knowledge and skills. MSW graduates are also equipped with skills in delivering culturally sensitive services in wide variety of contexts and systems.

Table 1***Summary Report of Two Academic Years of MSW Foundation Curriculum Assessment Data***

Competency	2013 Graduates					2014 Graduates				
	Student Self-Efficacy		Learning Agenda		% Meets Benchmark	Student Self-Efficacy		Learning Agenda		% Meets Benchmark
	Score	%	Score	%		Score	%	Score	%	
2.1.1 Identify as a professional SW..	8.5	81	3.5	90%	86%	9.0	91%	3.6	99%	95%
2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles..	8.2	71%	3.4	90%	81%	8.5	84%	3.4	93%	89%
2.1.3 Apply critical thinking...	7.3	48%	3.2	87%	68%	7.3	48%	3.4	91%	70%
2.1.4 Engage in diversity and difference	8.3	80%	3.4	91%	86%	8.5	87%	3.4	96%	91.5
2.1.5 Advance human rights and social ...	8.0	75%	3.4	94%	85%	8.6	82%	3.4	92%	87%
2.1.6 Engage in research-informed ...	6.9	45%	3.0	83%	64%	7.4	47%	3.3	81%	64%
2.1.7 Apply knowledge of HBSE...	7.1	45%	3.3	91%	68%	7.5	57%	3.4	94%	76%
2.1.8 Engage in policy practice...	7.2	48%	3.2	77%	63%	7.0	44%	3.3	79%	62%
2.1.9 Respond to contexts ...	7.1	46%	3.2	75%	61%	7.3	49%	3.4	90%	71%
2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, evaluate, and terminate, ...	7.2	49%	3.3	83%	66%	7.6	48%	3.5	89%	69%

Table 2*Summary Report of Foundation Student Self-Efficacy post foundation and post concentration years.*

Competency	2013 Graduates				2014 Graduates			
	Student Self-Efficacy Time 1		Student Self-Efficacy Time 2*		Student Self-Efficacy Time 1		Student Self-Efficacy Time 2*	
	Score	Benchmark	Score	Benchmark	Score	Benchmark	Score	Benchmark
2.1.1 Identify as a professional SW..	8.5	81%	9.0	94%	9.0	91%	8.8	87%
2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles..	8.2	71%	8.9	93%	8.5	84%	8.7	88%
2.1.3 Apply critical thinking...	7.3	48%	8.5	84%	7.3	48%	8.1	75%
2.1.4 Engage in diversity and difference	8.3	80%	8.8	96%	8.5	87%	8.8	88%
2.1.5 Advance human rights and social ...	8.0	75%	8.8	89%	8.6	82%	8.6	89%
2.1.6 Engage in research-informed ...	6.9	45%	8.0	73%	7.4	47%	7.9	68%
2.1.7 Apply knowledge of HBSE...	7.1	45%	8.6	88%	7.5	57%	8.5	90%
2.1.8 Engage in policy practice...	7.2	48%	8.0	75%	7.0	44%	8.3	79%
2.1.9 Respond to contexts ...	7.1	46%	7.2	76%	7.3	49%	8.1	78%
2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, evaluate, and terminate with ...	7.2	49%	8.1	84%	7.6	48%	8.0	70%

* MCCP graduates only

Table 3***Summary Report of Two Academic Years of MSW MCMP Curriculum Assessment Data***

Competency	2013 Graduates (N=5)				2014 Graduates (N=13)			
	Summative Project	Learning Agenda		% Meets Benchmark	Summative Project	Learning Agenda		% Meets Benchmark
	Passed %	Score	%		Passed %	Score	%	
2.1.1 Identify as a professional SW..	100%	3.8	100%	100%	92%	3.4	98%	94%
2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles..	100%	3.9	100%	100%	92%	3.2	91%	91.5%
2.1.3 Apply critical thinking...	100%	3.8	100%	100%	92%	3.3	95%	93.5%
2.1.4 Engage in diversity and difference	100%	3.9	100%	100%	92%	3.3	98%	95%
2.1.5 Advance human rights and social ...	100%	3.9	100%	100%	92%	3.2	88%	90%
2.1.6 Engage in research-informed ...	100%	3.7	100%	100%	92%	3.1	96%	94%
2.1.7 Apply knowledge of HBSE...	100%	3.9	100%	100%	92%	3.2	84%	88%
2.1.8 Engage in policy practice...	100%	3.8	100%	100%	92%	3.2	88%	90%
2.1.9 Respond to contexts ...	100%	3.9	100%	100%	92%	3.3	92%	92%
2.1.10 Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate ...	100%	3.8	100%	100%	92%	3.2	87%	89.5%

Table 4***Summary Report of Academic Year 2014: MCCP Curriculum Assessment Data***

Competency	2014 Graduates					Codes for signature MCCP assignments
	Signature MCCP Assignments		Learning Agenda		% Meeting Benchmark	
	Assignment	%	Score	%*	%	
2.1.1 Identify as a professional SW..	4	96%	3.4	93%	94.5%	1 = Case Presentation
2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles..	6-8	96%	3.4	94%	95%	2 = Process Recording #3
2.1.3 Apply critical thinking...	2	96%	3.2	85%	91.5%	3 = Forum: Cross Culture
2.1.4 Engage in diversity and difference	3	100%	3.3	91%	95.5%	4 = Use of Self
2.1.5 Advance human rights and social ...	1	90%	3.2	91%	90.5%	Phases of Practice 5 = Engage and Assess
2.1.6 Engage in research-informed ...	7,8	96%	3.1	83%	89.5%	Phases of Practice 6= Goal Setting
2.1.7 Apply knowledge of HBSE...	6	93%	3.2	88%	90.5%	Phases of Practice 7 = Intervention
2.1.8 Engage in policy practice...	5	93%	3.0	77%	85%	Phases of Practice 8 = Termination
2.1.9 Respond to contexts ...	1	90%	3.3	90%	90%	
2.1.10 Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate ...	5-8	96%	3.3	88%	92%	

* % of students meeting competency based on faculty assessment of MCCP assignments