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Does Social Work Have a Signature Pedagogy?

Tara Earls Larrison and Wynne S. Korr

This article contributes to discourse on signature pedagogy by reconceptualizing how our pedagogies are understood and defined for social work education. We critique the view that field education is social work's signature pedagogy and consider what pedagogies are distinct about the teaching and learning of social work. Using Shulman's work on professional education, we offer a conceptualization that rests on the belief about the necessary outcome of our pedagogy—it must enable students to think and perform like social workers through the development of the professional self. We present a framework that focuses on three integrating features: thinking and performing like a social worker, development of the professional self, and characteristic forms of teaching and learning.

The purpose of this article is to offer a conceptualization of social work's signature pedagogy that rests on a belief about the necessary outcome of the pedagogy—it must enable students to think and perform like social workers. The article intends to add to the emerging dialogue about signature pedagogy in social work (Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2010). We argue that field education does not meet the criteria for signature pedagogy as understood by Shulman (2005b) and interpreted in the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

Our thinking draws on the long history within the profession about the educational and practice frameworks necessary for social work competency and emphasizes the person of the practitioner as an integral component of the thinking and performing of the work. We present an enhanced conceptualization about how signature pedagogy may be understood and defined for social work education. Using Shulman's work on professional education (1999, 2004, 2005a, 2005b) to frame our understanding, we suggest that the signature pedagogies in social work involve the integration of practitioner knowledge, performative action, and awareness that emphasizes the development of the professional self.

In presenting our conceptual framework, we briefly look at some earlier writings related to the history and evolution of social work practice and education (Brieland, 1987; Lee & Kenworthy, 1929; Reynolds, 1942) to help situate the profession's current pedagogical perspectives and to explore how these viewpoints intersect with our thinking about what it means to educate the developing social work practitioner. Our discussion focuses on three integrating components:

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thinking and performing like a social worker, development of the professional self, and characteristic forms of teaching and learning. We conclude with comments on the ways in which our views are congruent with and different from the assumptions voiced in EPAS and suggest that the profession may want to reconsider how signature pedagogies are understood more broadly.

UNDERSTANDING SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY

The term *signature pedagogy* emerged out of research conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that aimed to explore pedagogies and practices within professional education. The research—in medicine, law, engineering, teacher education, nursing, and the clergy—increased the visibility of discipline-specific forms of teaching and learning that were characteristic of professional education and which socialized developing practitioners into their fields (Shulman, 2005a, 2005b; Sullivan, 2005). Although signature pedagogy was initially identified as a concept for professional education, the term has been applied to teaching and learning in many academic domains, including public administration (Abel, 2009), psychology (Goodyear, 2007), doctoral education (Olson & Clark, 2009), and the humanities (Benmayor, 2008).

A signature pedagogy suggests that educational approaches within fields of studies are “both the aim and the method of teaching” (Parker, Chambers, Huber, & Phipps, 2008, p. 115). As such, these pedagogies are “pervasive, routine and habitual” (Shulman, 2005a, p. 22) and are easily identifiable as the educational method—specific and distinctive to that discipline. Often-cited examples of discipline-based signature pedagogies include the case method approach of law education, which emphasizes skills in “thinking like a lawyer,” and the well-known performance-in-action approach of clinical rounds within medical school training (Shulman, 2005a, 2005b; Sullivan, 2005).

Shulman’s work (1999, 2004, 2005a, 2005b) focused on pedagogies that aimed to educate professional practitioners. He emphasized that the purpose of teaching and learning in professional education differed from pedagogy in other academic disciplines. “Signature” to professional education is teaching and learning that focuses on preparation for competent practice. Shulman (2004, 2005a, 2005b) identified three critical and overlapping skills as fundamental for practitioner competence: to think, to perform, and to act with integrity.

Shulman (2005a, 2005b) explained that teaching and learning involves the integration of knowledge and skills coupled with a depth of understanding about “what it means to perform.” The pedagogical focus must emphasize that the developing practitioner “come to understand in order to act, and they must act in order to serve” (Shulman, 2005b, p. 53). In recognizing service as an important construct, Shulman clarified not only that the actions of the practitioner are purposeful but that the focus and practices of professional pedagogies support this understanding.

Shulman’s third component—to act with integrity—intersects with thinking and performing and involves the development of practitioner judgment. Acting with integrity encompasses a moral, ethical, personal, and social responsibility regarding the performance of one’s practice actions. Thus, educational emphasis moves beyond attainment of conceptual and theoretical knowledge and toward the development and application of practical knowledge skills regarding one’s reasoned and responsible actions (Shulman, 2005a, 2005b).

Lastly, Shulman (2005b) explained that professional education involves socializing students into the ways, practices, and habits of a discipline. In doing so, professional pedagogies help

shape the emerging practitioner's future actions and behaviors, as well as facilitate understanding about values and constructs within the discipline.

(MIS)IDENTIFYING SOCIAL WORK'S SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY

Shulman's work (2005b) influenced the recent changes to EPAS that identified field education as social work's signature pedagogy. More recently, Wayne et al. (2010) have added to this discussion, noting areas of congruence and disparity between Shulman's criteria and how it has been implemented for field education within social work (p. 327). We support many of Wayne et al.'s (2010) well-developed and thoughtful suggestions about the ways in which current educational field structures in social work may be modified or adapted to include a more comprehensive understanding of Shulman's criteria. We agree that the 2008 EPAS did not go far enough in its interpretation of what Shulman meant by signature pedagogy and how it might be applied to "strengthen the effectiveness of social work education" (Wayne et al., 2010, p. 328). However, the viewpoint of these authors is enveloped within customary accepted interpretations of EPAS, which has articulated that the signature pedagogy of social work is field education.

The purpose of this article is to expand the dialogue about signature pedagogy beyond the prevalent conceptualization and to offer an alternative framework about what pedagogies are distinct to the teaching and learning of social work. We argue that the profession may want to reconsider how its signature pedagogies are understood more broadly. Doing so will enable us to recognize educational aspects across the curriculum that are influential to and characteristic of the teaching and learning methods, socialization processes, and expectations for practice competency within social work.

Practicum Experiences

Since the early days of social work training, students have been required to perform as social workers (typically in a practicum setting) while gaining knowledge and skills about the profession and its core values. Practicum experiences are essential in helping the emerging practitioner apply knowledge and connect theory to social work practice (Goldstein, 2001). Students identify field education as the most important aspect of their training (Schneck, Grossman, & Glassman, 1991). "Labeling field education as the signature pedagogy of social work provides an opportunity for educators to examine and analyze the learning and teaching process that lie behind this widespread comment" (Wayne et al., 2010, p. 336).

CSWE's (2008) declaration that field education represents "the central form of instruction and learning," whereby its intent "is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting" (p. 8) represents a notable commendation for social work education. This acknowledgment in EPAS provides some much needed institutional strength in elevating the field's often-marginalized status within social work, as well as another way to bridge long-standing theory-practice gaps in the discipline.

We affirm that this practicing—or performing—component of social work education is an integral pedagogical feature for social work. However, many professional degree programs require a practicum, or fieldwork, as a part of their disciplinary training (e.g., clinical law experiences; medical school rotations; preservice teaching; and internships in the health professions, such as

nursing, speech pathology, and occupational and physical therapy). The practicum is not unique to social work, nor is this experience signature only to our discipline; a practicum may very well be a signature component of training professionals and professional education. Therefore, although we agree that the practicum is an essential part of social work's signature pedagogy, we would argue that field education is not, in and of itself, the signature pedagogy.

Revisiting EPAS 2.3

A closer examination of the explicit curriculum standard regarding signature pedagogy reveals what could be a much broader interpretation of how the profession might consider what is central to social work education. As written, EPAS presents an inherent contradiction in naming field as “the central form of instruction” but also in describing classroom and field experiences as interrelated and equal components of the social work curriculum. The fifth sentence within Educational Policy 2.3 highlights this point:

It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum [emphasis added], and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. (CSWE, 2008, p. 8)

The incongruity within EPAS has limited how the profession has considered which “pedagogical principles are worthy of becoming a universal component in social work education” (Wayne et al., 2010, p. 334). In simplifying or narrowly interpreting the broader intent of EPAS only to mean field, we overlook how social work's central forms of teaching and learning occur elsewhere. As EPAS indicates, the teaching and learning that happens in the classroom and the field practicum are interrelated, equal components of the educational experience, and each contribute to and are crucial in developing the emerging practitioner's understanding of what it means to think and perform like a social worker.

Reinterpretation

Shulman (2005a, 2005b) articulated that signature pedagogies shape the character of practice. What educational practices shape and socialize emerging social workers into the profession? What is characteristic of and central to how we educate developing practitioners for competent practice? How we answer these questions will help reveal what pedagogies make our educational approaches signature.

Field education is one place where characteristic forms of social work pedagogy happen, but social work's signature pedagogies involve central forms of teaching and learning that go beyond the practicum as well. Characteristic forms of teaching and learning in social work also occur in our classrooms, in our implicit and explicit curricula, and particularly through the relational teaching-learning encounters and interactions between and among social work students and educators (Earls Larrison, 2009).

In identifying field education as the signature pedagogy, we disregard aspects of teaching and learning inherent to social work training across the program. In doing so, we risk confusing

“place” and “process” and ignore signature pedagogies that are the result of broader educational and socialization practices, both in the field and in the classroom, that facilitate the integration of theory and practice and that support the development of the emerging professional for competency.

We reemphasize an earlier point—signature pedagogies are central to and reflect the practices and processes of a discipline and are enacted through the delivery of the teaching and learning. We suggest that social work’s signature pedagogies occur across the curriculum and are inherent in all aspects of social work education. It is from this perspective that we offer a conceptualization of social work’s central forms of teaching and learning with the goal of enhancing our understanding about what is recognizable and distinctive to social work.

SOCIAL WORK’S SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY: AN ENHANCED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the following sections, we explore a conceptualization of social work’s signature pedagogy that rests on a belief about the necessary outcome of the pedagogy—it must enable students to think and perform like social workers—and that focuses on the mediating process of professional self-development as integral to these educational processes. Our thinking draws on the long history of discussion and evolution regarding the profession’s conceptual practice frameworks and recognition that the practitioner is a central figure in the application of the thinking and performing components of the work.

We present a framework that focuses on three integrating features: thinking and performing like a social worker, development of the professional self, and characteristic forms of teaching and learning. First, we offer a brief historical view of what the profession has considered central to our social work knowledge frameworks. Next, we explore how the development of the professional self is a necessary and fundamental component of this pedagogy that links teaching and learning to performance. Finally, we present some pedagogical formulations that may be particularly distinctive to social work in applying knowledge and skills to foster the development of a professional self. The section concludes with explorations about what we consider to be challenges for our educational practices and pedagogies.

Thinking and Performing Like a Social Worker

What does thinking and performing like a social worker require? If we expand our notion about what is central to (or common within) social work practice, in both the classroom and the field, and particularly from a historical perspective, we see that the profession has evolved in what this thinking requires.

Brieland (1987) cited the work of Lee and Kenworthy as particularly relevant: “Lee and Kenworthy saw field instruction as the means to help the aspiring social worker experience and test the professional self” (p. 238). In their book, Lee and Kenworthy (1929) offered an account of the Bureau of Children’s Guidance established by the New York School of Social Work in 1922 as both “a center for the treatment of problem children and the training of social workers”

(p. v). It is the latter discussion that is pertinent. In their writing, we see the importance they gave to both thinking and performing:

The general objectives of the New York School in professional education for social work may be defined as follows:

- to familiarize students with the subject matter of the field of social work: its facts, concepts, formulation of experience, and established procedures;
- to stimulate the thinking of students in regard to purpose, goals, meanings—in general, the philosophy of the field; and
- to develop in students facility and precision in the application of knowledge and philosophy to practical situations. (Lee & Kenworthy, 1929, pp. 157–158)

The third objective certainly foreshadows Shulman’s thinking:

The linkage of thinking and doing to personal development as a practitioner is also made explicit: A trained social worker, however, is something more than a person who has acquired certain distinctive knowledge and experience. The period of training is marked, also, by certain definite personality developments which are quite as important in the practice of social case work as are experience and education in the more limited sense. (Lee & Kenworthy, 1929, p. 215)

This emphasis on the personality development of the emerging practitioner portends a later educational focus on the professional self.

From the earliest days of the profession through the early 1980s, the profession gave attention to the development of a conceptual framework for practice and the linkage to social work education (Brieland & Korr, 2000). The first touchstone was the 1928 Milford Conference that proposed the generic casework conceptualization. The 1951 Hollis-Taylor study of social work education grappled both with the nature of social work and with the structure for social work education.

Soon after in 1958, the NASW Commission on Social Work Practice, under the leadership of Harriet Bartlett, provided a definition of practice that included the development of the professional self as a fundamental component of practice knowledge:

The social work method is the responsible, conscious, disciplined use of self in a relationship. . . . Implicit in this is a continuing evaluation regarding the nature of the relationship between worker and client . . . and its effect on both the . . . individual . . . and on the worker himself. This evaluation provides the basis for the professional judgment which the worker must constantly make and which determines the direction of his activities. (as cited in Bartlett, 2003, p. 269)

Bartlett (1970) continued with the difficult work of trying to integrate the various domains of practice, resulting in the book *The Common Base of Social Work Practice*. This evolution from method to generic casework to the common base eventually led to a broadly acknowledged view of generalist practice as a common foundation for social work. Knowledge for generalist practice has particular “common” elements—attention to “all methods” (as Brieland described in 1987)—referring to casework, groupwork, and community work, in addition to advocacy and research. We now typically refer to practice with all size systems, rather than with “all methods.”

After the early 1980s, the discussion of frameworks moved almost entirely into the social work education literature. As Brieland and Korr (2000) noted, “Through accreditation standards, social work has been responsible for the major changes in social work concepts that in early

years would have been the product of practitioners” (p. 134). The EPAS of the 1980s and 1990s, through prescriptions about content, implicitly set out the knowledge base for practice.

We teach an integrative practice knowledge framework that we label *bio-psycho-social* that also includes the more recent additions of spiritual or cultural. Additional perspectives have been encompassed in our common knowledge base (e.g., person-in-environment transactions, ecological, and systems; problem solving; attention to diversity; and more recently, empowerment, strengths, and justice-based human rights). Thus, both educators and emerging practitioners are socialized into the profession through identification with and actualization of the core constructs that are outlined in the mission and value statements of our professional organizations.

Our practices and pedagogies have also similarly developed and expanded—from casework to generalist to an emphasis on research-informed practice. Included are components that define what social work practice is and an interdisciplinary conceptual knowledge framework with regard to the theories, core values, and skills essential for professional competence. Other overlapping pedagogical notions include emphases on critical thinking, critical reflexivity, experiential learning, and relational teaching (Earls Larrison, 2009).

In essence, we have evolved a conceptual framework that incorporates what thinking and performing like a social worker mean. This knowing-doing paradigm (Goldstein, 2001; Schön, 1982, 1987)—or the integration of knowledge and action—has been a mainstay of professional practice education and is a familiar pedagogical conception within social work. But a critical element remains, as Lee and Kenworthy (1929) and Shulman (2004, 2005a, 2005b) pointed out: How is this knowledge coupled with how the practitioner develops an understanding about his or her performance and in what he or she does? In what ways do social work educators help emerging practitioners develop the practical knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions and judgments?

Development of the Professional Self

Shulman’s identification of the triad of thinking, performing, and acting with integrity informs our view of a signature framework for social work. We argue that social work’s signature educational framework involves pedagogies about what it means to think and perform like a social worker through the development of the professional self. As early social work educator Bertha Capen Reynolds (1942) observed, “Learning an art, which is knowledge applied to doing something in which the whole person participates, cannot be carried on solely as an intellectual process, no matter how clearly and attractively subject matter is presented” (p. 69).

We suggest that social work competency includes simultaneous pedagogical attention to three components: practitioner knowing, doing, and being. Professional self-development, as a focus on one’s “being” and articulated as the congruence between the practitioner’s personal and professional selves, is a core component of the learning, growing, and developmental processes for social work practice competency (Earls Larrison, 2009). Competent practice necessitates that emerging practitioners recognize—through self-awareness, critical reflexivity, and analytical thinking—that how they make use of who they are is an integral component of one’s practical and purposeful action. These elements are the foundation for professional maturation (Urdang, 2010).

The process of practitioner development, or how practitioners come into their own, is an individualized and self-reflective experience. It involves the whole self—the accumulated integration

of one's background, experiences, relationships, connections, and interpersonal characteristics through a critical-reflective-thinking process that includes dialogical and supportive synergistic experiences within the teaching-learning encounter (Earls Larrison, 2009).

Professional self-development is not a linear process but an integrated accumulation of a multitude of factors and situations that simultaneously occur, overlapping and weaving, through and between experiences within social work education—both in the practicum and through coursework. We argue that development of the professional self takes place throughout the student's educational experience and into one's professional practice. Furthermore, this skill intersects with lifelong learning and does not end with the completion of the degree; the professional self is continually reassessed and evolves, as new practice knowledge, skills, and awareness become integrated into the person of the practitioner.

Therefore, developmental emphases move beyond acquiring conceptual knowledge and check-listing performance actions and toward the reasoned thoughtful application—or practical judgment—of how to engage as a practitioner. This position aligns with Shulman's (2005a, 2005b) conceptualization that a professional practitioner must learn to perform with integrity, recognizing the responsibility about what it means to be and how to act within the relationship: "To be a professional requires understanding, character, and practical skills that can be employed with sensitivity, given the conditions and context within which one works" (p. 30). Shulman (2004) argued that professional pedagogy is compromised when all the dimensions of practice—the intellectual, the technical, and the moral—are not in balance. Thus, a pedagogical focus on professional self-development in social work supposes that the thinking and performing of the work involves a practical understanding of how the emerging professional "self" intersects with one's performance and potential practice actions.

Characteristic Forms of Teaching and Learning

Educating social work students to think and perform requires that our pedagogies socialize the emerging practitioner into the profession and thus shape how students employ knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and judgments. Social work pedagogies are particularly delivered through the educational processes and relational transactions that occur within the teaching-learning encounters and dynamics formed between and among the instructor and the students (Earls Larrison, 2009).

In their review of the literature on signature pedagogy in the professions, Wayne et al. (2010) concluded that educators often identify multiple pedagogic methods, philosophical approaches, and contextual issues as coexistent within a discipline's pedagogies rather than identifying just one central approach to prepare students. Recognizing that social work educators apply professional knowledge to their teaching practices in myriad ways, we present some initial pedagogical formulations that may be particularly distinctive in fostering the development of a professional self for social work education. These examples focus on the application of the practitioner's knowledge and skills in ways that engage the learner in personal, affective, and deeply integrative ways.

Modeling relational connectedness, core practice skills, and values. The relational dynamic within the pedagogical encounter helps define what social work practice is for the emerging practitioner. Modeling practice and values within the teaching-learning encounter is

paramount to student understanding and the duplication of those same core conditions in their practice (van Manen, 1995). Mentoring, modeling, and apprenticeship experiences are what socialize newcomers to the profession. These interactions help the developing student gain understanding of professional practice through the ways in which educators behave and respond in the teaching-learning encounters. Collaborative and relational processes within the teaching-learning encounter are experienced as empowering and facilitative of practical understanding. Barretti (2004) identified that “modeling also assists in overall professional functioning and in the development of a professional self” (p. 231). Accessible educators who are passionate and sincere and who personify care and concern provide relational congruence that facilitates student understanding of professional use of self (Earls Larrison, 2009). How we engage and what we do as educators—through genuineness, spontaneity, and congruency—mirror how emerging social workers transfer knowledge and understanding to their own practice behaviors. Social workers, in particular, are trained to engage in professional behaviors that support the restoration of social justice, that foster personal integrity, and that support the dignity of the human spirit. These roles as helpers and healers guide us in making purposeful decisions. An educational focus on the relational capacities of healing and nurturing and one that models these actions within the teaching-learning encounter help restore social work’s core values and provide pedagogical balance.

Fostering transformative awareness. Social work students seek personal and professional fulfillment from their educational experiences (Earls Larrison, 2009). This search for meaning is fundamental to pedagogical actions in social work education and in creating purposeful learning experiences that develop students’ capacities to think and perform. Meaningful exchanges, or “purposeful learning conversations” (Bryant & Milstein, 2007, p. 199), facilitate the developmental and socialization processes about what being a practitioner means. Structured conversations and purposeful dialogue, as well as written and verbal feedback, help foster awareness and provide students with a sense of who they are as developing practitioners. These exchanges help students to “come into their own” regarding how they think about knowledge as applied to their potential actions. Knowledge is not just accumulated but integrated in useful and critically reflective ways that support emerging practitioners’ understanding of who they are and how these skills are transferred to practice encounters. Transformative experiences and pedagogical interactions that challenge and facilitate critical thinking help in developing confidence to make self-determined judgments about behavioral and practice actions. Thus, knowledge for practice, gained through and by the processes within the pedagogical encounter, becomes an integrated aspect of one’s practical understanding.

Nurturing personal and professional growth. Earls Larrison (2009) found that the relational investment between social work educators and their students was influential in determining how students understood their emerging professional identities. Educators who were perceived as mentors and role models, and who viewed their relationships with their students similarly, best helped students understand how one’s use of self was implemented for practice. Educators who relate to students in this way facilitate understanding of how emerging practitioners can apply knowledge, skills, and awareness as integrative elements that assist them in making informed judgments and practical decisions. These relational interactions help practitioners integrate their personal and professional identities.

Remaining Challenges

We have outlined a conceptual framework that may enhance the thinking about what is signature to social work education. We have suggested that social work's signature pedagogy involves the continuous interweaving of personal and professional development coupled with the knowledge and skills needed for practice. Our signature educational forms lie in the mentoring, modeling, and parallel processes of social work practice via the integration of our common knowledge base and core professional values and through the transformative and relational capacities we nurture within our students and ourselves.

The signature pedagogies in social work emerge in our classrooms and in the educator-student interaction and are further applied within field education. Thus, our pedagogies are the result of practicum and classroom experiences that facilitate the integration of the professional self, through the teaching-learning encounters that occur within and across the curriculum. These exchanges are integral to how we educate and socialize emerging practitioners. This focus is central to and distinctive about social work education.

Creative challenges for our pedagogy remain: How do social work educators assist emerging practitioners in forming and integrating their personal and professional selves, roles, and identities? What educational practices nurture professional growth and create transformative processes that foster practice competency? What pedagogies best integrate diverse knowledge frameworks that blend scientific relevance with artistic creativity? These explorations are necessary if we hope to restore balance to our educational practices.

CALL TO ACTION: RESTORING EMPHASIS ON THE PROFESSIONAL SELF

We have argued that the person of the practitioner is a necessary and fundamental component of social work practice and our pedagogy. Social work has been inconsistent in its discussion of the professional self as an integrative feature of practice knowledge. CSWE has followed suit, minimizing the importance of the professional self within the accreditation standards. EPAS 2001 further deemphasized the person of the practitioner by dropping the phrase "professional use of self" altogether (Dewane, 2006). Failure to recognize how the professional self is an instrument of practice and a crucial component of clinical competency and is integral to social work pedagogy has limited its significance within social work education (Butler, Ford, & Tregaskis, 2007; Deal, 1997; Dewane, 2006; Earls Larrison, 2009; Liechty, 2005; Ringel, 2003; Urdang, 2010).

Although the revised competency-based EPAS (2008) appears to suggest that the person of the practitioner is a component of practice, the current policy statement does not clearly identify practitioner self-development or use the phrase "professional self" in its descriptions of educational competencies and practice behaviors for student-practitioners. Educational Policy 2.1.1 comes closest to articulating the notion of the professional self: "Identify as a professional social worker and conduct one's self accordingly" (CSWE, 2008, p. 3). Included under this standard are statements about social workers' commitment to their professional conduct and growth, personal reflection, self-correction, and demonstration of professional demeanor. This competency imbeds language that implies application of the professional self to practice behaviors but does not explicitly use the term *professional self*.

Other core competencies also imply notions of performance and emerging social workers' ability to use and apply their own understanding for practice actions. Specifically, Educational Policy 2.1.3, "Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments," states:

Social workers are knowledgeable about both the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom. (CSWE, 2008, p. 4)

Again, this competency implies, but does not explicitly discuss, the significance of this skill in relation to professional self-development. As written, the current standards provide limited educational emphasis, direction, or necessity for the specific application, use, and development of the professional self within the structure or curriculum of social work programs. Instead, the professional self is suggested in the implicit and explicit curriculum and educational outcomes of the standards.

Our framework highlights the integration of practitioner knowledge and action and recognizes that practitioner self-development is integral to how we educate emerging social workers. We must restore this emphasis in our educational standards and as a fundamental component of social work practice and pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

So what is social work's signature pedagogy? We have argued that field education is a necessary but not sufficient component of our signature pedagogy. Instead, we suggest that social work's signature pedagogy occurs in all learning exchanges, in our implicit and explicit curricula, and in both the classroom and the field. It involves those pedagogies that most enable students to think and perform like social workers through the development of the professional self.

Social work's signature pedagogy occurs in both the classroom and in a supervised practice setting we call *field*. Our pedagogical actions, interactions, and behaviors facilitate and encourage transformative growth and change through personal and professional development, via the integration of our common knowledge base and core professional values. Emphasizing field education helps restore our focus to this critical component. But if we truly build on Shulman's understanding, we need to see our signature pedagogy in our knowledge framework, in the performance of practice, and by fostering student-practitioner development to focus on the professional self.

EPAS 2008 begins to address these issues by focusing on performance, called competencies, and the linkages of knowledge to practice through field education, labeled as the signature pedagogy. Naming field education as the signature pedagogy was a shorthand for this process—a shorthand we must deconstruct not to reify the words and mistakenly convey that what we are thinking about is either characteristic of the setting or of the policies and procedures that guide internships.

Wayne et al. (2010) began the important work of expanding the EPAS interpretation of signature pedagogy for field education. We have explored a rough sketch of how the profession might envision an enhanced conceptualization of social work's signature pedagogy and invite others to

participate in expanding our framework so that we might better articulate what is distinct and signature to social work.

By suggesting that our signature pedagogies occur in all aspects of social work education—in the classroom and in the field setting—our aim is to deconstruct long-standing dichotomies of theory and practice and to contribute to what we hope will be an evolving dialogue on signature pedagogy. When we unite based on our core values and common base, issues of epistemology, ontology, and methodology no longer become dichotomized forces tearing us apart.

There is much hope for a more balanced, holistic, and integrative pedagogical framework for social work education and practice—a pedagogy embodied and enacted by and through the person of the practitioner. We cannot separate knowledge from action, research from practice, or theory from wisdom. A signature pedagogy that legitimizes the person of the practitioner as an interconnective and central feature of social work education may best help facilitate the integration of science and art, cognition and emotion, and class work and fieldwork, necessary for social work practice competency. It is from this enhanced conceptualization that we suggest what is signature about social work and may allow our profession to finally integrate all that we know, and all that we do, with who we are.

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