DISSERTATION

UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS: LEARNING

INTERVIEWING SKILLS IN A HYBRID PRACTICE CLASS

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS: LEARNING

INTERVIEWING SKILLS IN A HYBRID PRACTICE CLASS

This action research case study explored undergraduate social work students' perceived learning of interviewing skills in a hybrid environment course delivery. The single case study consisted of 19 students enrolled in a practice course blending web-based and face-to-face (f2f) meetings (4 of 15 f2f) within a large urban college. As part of the 15-week course, interviewing skills training constituted a 4-week learning module, with pre and post interviewing skills data collected at the beginning and end of this period.

The intentional instructional design for learning interviewing skills used a theoretical perspective of person-in-environment grounded in theories of social constructivism, brain-based learning, and metacognition. Metacognitive activities provided students an understanding of their natural human learning process and included use of reflection to promote self-assessment of skills improvement and competency development. A six-step teaching-learning system (i.e., reading, thinking and writing, watching and discussing, working with cases, practicing, and evaluating) was utilized.

In this mixed methods study, quantitative data were collected to identify changes in students' confidence and competency for performing interviewing skills after learning in a hybrid environment, using the Interview Skills Confidence Scale and the Interview Evaluation Rater Scale. Students' guided reflections constituted the qualitative measure (pre, during, and post skills training). Merging the findings of the quantitative and qualitative measures indicated

students' increased confidence and competency in their performance of interviewing skills, learned in a hybrid environment. Skill categories of *beginning* and *closing,* which reflected the lowest pre confidence and competency scores, showed the most change, post training. Perceived benefits of hybrid delivery included online discussions (learner-centered, reflective dialoguing, active ongoing interaction, and collaboration) and f2f skills practice (personalization) for learning interviewing skills. Use of the web-conferencing tool (Wimba) to practice, record, and evaluate interviewing skills, presented technical difficulties for nearly half of the students.

Action research indicated that revisions regarding how students practiced and evaluated skills were needed, such as facilitating more f2f time, alternative ways for skills practice and evaluation online, and/or giving students' choices. Findings suggest the study's measures (confidence, competency, and student reflections) be repeated in the subsequent semester as students' field instruction commences to assess transfer of learned interviewing skills to field (internships).

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DEDICATION

      I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband of 40 years, Jim Barclay. Without his unconditional love and emotional support during the six year journey my degree wouldn't have been possible. Completing a doctoral program can be an isolating experience for the candidate but it can also be for those they live with. Giving up partner time and companionship (weekend after weekend) became the new norm. Jim, you're patience, acceptance, and sacrifice fueled my perseverance needed to finish. I know without your willingness to go it alone (of course you had more time for fly fishing) I would probably have given up. Thank you for going the long haul with me, loving me, and encouraging me the entire way.

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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Within the context of this study, the following terms and definitions are used:

- *Action research* - "Any systematic inquiry conducted by…stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (Mills, 2007, p. 5);

- *Best practices* - "The preferred technique or approach for achieving a valued outcome. Identification of best practices requires measurement, benchmarking, and identification of processes that result in better outcomes" (Mullen, Bellamy, & Bledsoe, 2008, p. 195);

- *Brain-compatible learning* - Teaching methodologies based on research congruent with how the brain learns naturally (Hart, 1983);

- *Competence* - Performance-oriented and measurable practice behaviors referring to what social work students are able to do in relation to knowledge, values, and skills learned in foundation classes and field curriculum. According to the 2008 EPAS, competency-based education is an outcome performance approach to curriculum design (CSWE, 2008);

- *Confidence* - Belief in one's ability to "execute specific skills in a particular set of circumstances and thereby achieve a successful outcome" (Holden, Meenaghan, Anastas, & Metrey, 2002, p. 116). This concept reflects the basic premise of self-efficacy;

- *Constructivism* - Learning theory with the premise that reality is constructed by the knower, based upon what he or she perceives from interaction with his or her environment (Bruner, 1986; Jonassen, 1991);

- *Face-to-face* (*f2f*) - Format of a traditional class that meets at a designated time on a regular basis in a classroom for instruction;

- *Distance education* - "Any means of delivering part or all of a course or courses online or through the Web, or through television or other media where students neither meet physically as in the traditional classroom setting, nor meet simultaneously via one of the aforementioned distance education media," according to the Commission on Accreditation (COA) (Vernon et al., 2009, p. 265);

- *Interviewing skills* - Verbal and non-verbal communication responses associated with the social work interview and used in the helping process. Interviewing skills in this

study refer to building relationship (attending, observing, active listening for content and process, beginning, and closing), expressing understanding (reflection of feeling and content), and exploring meaning (questioning);

- *Metacognition* - Person's ability to figure out meaning, to learn how he or she learns to promote the construction and transfer of learning;

- *Natural Human Learning Process (NHLP)* – The natural way a person learns. The person identifies his or her natural way of learning through the metacognitive activity of describing the process, from knowing how to do something to being good at it. The process of learning consists of up to a six-stage taxonomy (Gunn, Richburg, & Smilkstein, 2007; Smilkstein, 2003);

- *Hybrid* or *blended learning* - Courses that combine online and face-to-face delivery. For this study, hybrid describes a majority of the course content being delivered online, including use of threaded discussion, emails, and other technologies, with lesser content of the course being taught f2f (4 of 15 sessions), on-campus or through teleconferencing;

- *Online learning*, *web-based learning, Internet-based learning* (used interchangeably) Learning that takes place partially or entirely over the Internet/World Wide Web (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The student is separated from the teacher, and interaction among students and instructor is implemented through the use of the computer and the Internet, utilizing a course management system;

- *Person-in-environment* - A primary theoretical perspective of Generalist Social Work. This perspective sees people as constantly interacting with various systems around them in transactions that have dynamic and active effects;

- *Practice courses* - Foundational courses in social work curriculum to provide the knowledge, skills, and values to intervene with systems of all sizes (individual, families, groups, communities, and organizations) in the use of thoughtful and planned efforts to affect change (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2009);

- *Social constructivism* - The basic premise that all knowledge is socially constructed in a collaborative process with a person's environment and others (Vygotsky, 1978);

- *Web-conferencing software tools* (e.g., Elluminate, Adobe ConnectNow, Wimba) - Allow face-to-face meeting via Internet. Each student/instructor, with the use of a webcam and microphone, can participate from his or her own computer and connect with course participants.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of higher education is changing rapidly with the use of online learning, due to the growth and accessibility of the Internet (World Wide Web) and computers. *Online learning*, also known as *web-based* or *Internet-based learning,* refers to learning that takes place partially or entirely over the Internet (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Today, online learning environments vary from full online delivery to a blend (blended/hybrid) of traditional face-to-face (f2f) and online delivery. To enhance the benefits of each format for student learning, instructors intentionally consider the pedagogical potential of each delivery system when blending a course, with the aim of transforming both structure and method of teaching and learning (Ayala, 2009; Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal, 2004; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003). Colleges and universities are expanding online learning to enrich all educational platforms as well as deliver complete degree programs through course management systems.

Accredited by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), three baccalaureate social work programs and 19 Master of Social Work (MSW) programs in the United States are being delivered entirely with the use of Internet courses, two-way television, and other ancillary technologies (CSWE, 2011). The numbers reflect a growing trend, having nearly doubled in one year. In 2010, fully online programs consisted of two undergraduate and 10 master's programs (CSWE, 2010). This trend raises debate among social work educators as to the suitability for all content to be delivered and learned in this format, particularly interviewing skills (Moore, 2005a; Vernon, Vakalahi, Pierce, Pittman-Munke, & Adkins, 2009). Social work instructors are mandated by accreditation to ensure that *comparable,* competency-based learning occurs in all

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educational environments (CSWE, 2008). Online courses must be grounded in good design

principles, derived from research and frequently evaluated and revised to ensure students'

learning—the essence of action research inquiry. The focus of this action research case study is

to explore the experience of undergraduate social work students' learning interviewing skills in a

hybrid practice class. Design and delivery of an intentional teaching-learning system for

acquiring interviewing skills in a hybrid environment, along with measures of students' change

in confidence and competency in using interviewing skills, have been studied.

Background

The impetus for providing distance-education social work programs is rooted in core

principles of the profession: social justice, equality, and service to oppressed population (Abels,

2005; Metropolitan State College of Denver [MSCD]), Social Work Department, 2002). Lack of

educational opportunities for students due to diversity, economic and/or geographical barriers,

along with underserved communities, provided the need for establishing alternative delivery for

social work programs (Abels, 2005; Raymond, 2005). Motivation for enrolling in online courses

also includes the impact of the economic downturn; higher fuel costs; and flexibility to

accommodate work and family schedules, child care, and transportation (Allen & Seaman,

2008).

Metropolitan State College of Denver's Department of Social Work responded to the

geographical barriers and underserved communities in Colorado by offering the first accredited,

undergraduate online distance-education social work program in the United States in 2005-06. At

the time, only on site programming east of the Rocky Mountains was available. Using the

combination of computer-mediated and interactive television approaches, undergraduate social

work education was made available across the state of Colorado. A 3-year pilot project, prior to the onset of the full curriculum delivery, was conducted to develop and implement the *comparable,* competency-based curriculum (CSWE, 2008; MSCD, Social Work Department, 2002). Although courses and curriculum content remained the same in on-campus and online environments, *different* teaching-learning approaches, along with an effective delivery mode (hybrid/fully online) were examined, commencing with ongoing departmental action research (MSCD Department, of Social Work, 2002).

Social Work Distance/Online Learning

Social work as a discipline has been slow to adopt Internet-mediated instruction. Online-learning literature and research focused on social work prior to the year 2000 are limited (Siebert, Siebert, & Spaulding-Given, 2006). In 2006, CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) directed the Committee on Research and Instructional Technology (CRIT) to survey 501 undergraduate (BSW) and graduate (MSW) programs to gain an understanding of distance-education use in social work (Vernon et al., 2009). The response included 137 (27%) schools or programs, of which 86 were bachelor level. The survey provided four categories related to program status: (a) currently offering courses, (b) planning courses, (c) intending to offer courses, and (d) no plans to use technology. Of the BSW programs, 48 (41%) responded they were delivering distance courses using some form of technology, with 72% using Internet/web format. Adding the programs categorized as planning and intending to offer distance education increased the number to 71 (61%) (Vernon et al., 2009). In addition, 15% of the BSW respondents reported they intended to offer complete distance-education degree programs. Despite the limitations of low response and self reporting of this study, the rapid expansion of

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distance-education use in social work, primarily web-based learning, is apparent. Ten years

earlier, in a 1995-96 survey sent to all accredited U.S. schools of social work, interactive

compressed video systems were identified as the primary technology used, with no mention of

web-based learning (Siegel, Jennings, Conklin, Napoletano, & Shelly, 1998). Today, web-based

courses have become the primary format used to offer social work distance-education courses

(Raymond, 2005).

Teaching Practice Courses Online

Despite the demand and exponential growth in web-based course offerings, a lack of

faculty consensus prevails in delivering all types of course work using technology (Moore,

2005a; Peters, 1999; Vernon et al., 2009). Moore (2005a) conducted a national study focusing on

"perceptions of faculty with Web-based experience concerning the effectiveness of Web-based

instruction as compared to face-to-face instruction in social work education" (p. 53). Findings

indicated faculty perceived f2f instruction to be more effective, although the degree of perceived

effectiveness related to the curriculum area (Moore, 2005a). Social work faculties perceived the

most acceptable online courses to be non-interactional and content driven (i.e., social welfare

policy, research, and human behavior and social environment), practice courses being the least

acceptable (Moore, 2005a; Siegel et al., 1998; Vernon et al., 2009). Moore's (2003) analysis

reported instructors who lacked web-based experience in teaching practice were most critical of

web-based delivery effectiveness.

Concern whether web-based instruction is conducive to learning practice skills, primarily

interviewing skills, stems from social work educators' perceptions that direct interaction, f2f

between students and instructors, is critical for learning these skills (Kulkin, Williams, & Ahn,

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2008; Moore, 2005a). Traditional (f2f) instruction is considered to have many advantages, including the ability to (a) receive immediate feedback, (b) observe nonverbal communication, (c) participate in group activity, and (d) use role play (Moore, 2005a).

To what extent students can learn interviewing skills in an online instructional environment is an area of limited study and persists as an area of debate in social work study education (Ouellette, Westhuis, Marshall, & Chang, 2006; Seabury, 2005; Vernon et al., 2009). In the CSWE distance-education survey in 2006, 21 of 38 responses "insisted that practice should not be taught online," (Vernon et al., 2009, p. 272), citing the lack of f2f interaction necessary for practicing relationship building, communication, and skill development. Contradictory to the prevailing resistance is that practice courses are reported to be the most frequently offered online courses of all the foundational courses in both the CSWE and Moore (2005a) studies mentioned above (Vernon et al., 2009).

Web-Based Environment for Learning Practice Skills

Literature regarding web-based learning of practice skills is scarce, with few studies to report from the past 10 years (Bellefeuille, 2006; Collins & Jerry, 2005; Ouellette et al., 2006; Seabury, 2005; Siebert et al., 2006; Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006; Youn, 2007). Of these studies, one, Ouellette et al. (2006), focused on undergraduate students. The majority of studies compared fully online learning environments with traditional f2f learning environments for the acquisition of interviewing or clinical skills, with the exception of Bellefeuille (2006) and Collins and Jerry (2005). The use of a blended/hybrid learning environment to teach clinical skills was identified in a predominantly web-based psychology counseling initiative in Alberta, Canada (Collins & Jerry, 2005).

Reviewing the comparison studies, no significant differences were found between skill acquisition in web-based and f2f learning environments using outcome variables of student satisfaction/attitudes and performance/grades, although small convenience samples limit generalizability. Comparison studies have frequently been cited as rationale for support of web-based education by demonstrating that students in a technology-based course learn as well as those in the traditional classroom. Twigg (2001) called for researchers to identify strengths of each learning approach rather than advocate for one approach versus the other. The more relevant question for research is: What is better and unique about an online learning environment, rather than What is "as good as"? (Moore, 2005b; Twigg, 2001).

A criticism of web-based instruction is that it is done haphazardly by instructors, replicating campus courses without regard for differences in learning environments or learning objectives (Kulkin et al., 2008, Twigg, 2001). Another criticism of online learning and particularly of learning interviewing skills is the lack of human interaction and social presence available in traditional classes. Given these criticisms, perhaps the more pertinent question for examination is:What are the most effective teaching and learning strategies for a web-based environment? Research addressing the nature of learning in an online environment, including ways to improve instructional design and implementation to benefit learning, is the targeted need. Modes of course delivery, including blended/hybrid learning environments; the utilization of technologies, such as web conferencing; and research-supported online pedagogy, are elements to consider when teaching interviewing skills.

Bellefeuille's study (2006) is unique and valuable, because it considered a theoretical instructional approach, compatible with features of an online environment, to examine the

effectiveness of learning reflective skills. Application of constructivism to the instructional

design principles and teaching strategies was used in the computer-mediated learning

environment. Bellefeuille asserted,

> Learning with technology, based on constructivist design, can actually
> enhance the learning process and help students in doing, reflecting, deciding,
> and thinking critically….The focus in the learning environment must
> shift from one of teaching to one of learning….When learners take
> charge of their learning, the computer serves as an effective facilitative
> medium that expands their learning options….Things can be done collaboratively in a
> Web-based learning environment that cannot be done in a traditional classroom. (p. 97)

The study highlighted the uniqueness and strengths for learning online, considering the mode of

delivery and applicable learning pedagogy (constructivism) to develop an intentional

instructional design to achieve the objectives of learning reflective practice skills. Bellefeuille

demonstrated the process of creating a new and specific model for learning skills. This research

implies that instructors need to consider the uniqueness of the learning environment and learning

objectives while considering the most advantageous pedagogy for course design and delivery.

The study by Ouellette et al. (2006) compared the acquisition of interviewing skills in a

fully online course with a traditional f2f class. Noteworthy, the design and implementation of a

teaching-learning system were carried out with some variance, considering the uniqueness of the

learning environment and learners. Bellefeuille's (2006) and Ouellette et al.'s studies supported

proponents of the position that learning is a consequence of the instructional design. Online

education is not a teaching method in itself, but rather a tool that facilitates the implementation

of a teaching-learning strategy (Miller & King, 2003; Twigg, 2001). Research examining

effective instructional designs and online delivery strategies to support student learning and

competency in using interviewing skills is consistent with the recent accreditation policy

standards released in the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) (CSWE, 2008).

Social Work Education and 2008 Accreditation Standards

Social work programs and instruction are governed by accreditation standards determined by the CSWE. A review and re-establishment of the standards for accreditation are mandated by the CSWE every 7 years. In April 2008, new guidelines for the EPAS were released, shifting "the focus of assessment from the evaluation of program objectives to assessment of educational outcomes and student achievement of practice competencies" (Petrachhi & Zastrow, 2010, p. 125). Programs must be able to identify an "intentional design" that encompasses rationale for both explicit (courses and instruction) and implicit (learning environment in which the explicit curriculum is delivered) curriculum, linked to course objectives, specific practice behaviors, and practice competency (Holloway, 2008).

The 2008 EPAS' emphasis on *outcome performance competencies* involves "sequencing the assessment tasks and developing accurate and useful instruments" (Petrachhi & Zastrow, 2010, p. 125). The 2008 accreditation standard 4.0 requires a plan to specify "procedures, multiple measures and benchmarks to assess attainment" (CSWE, 2008, p. 16) of 10 core competencies. Multiple assessment measures to clearly evaluate performance levels of each learned interviewing skill are required.

<center>**Statement of the Problem**</center>

Web-based social work course offerings have rapidly increased in the last 10 years. The 2006 CSWE survey reported practice classes were the most frequently offered online, foundational social work course, despite fervent debate in the literature and on academia listservs

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about the suitability for this content to be offered in a web-based format (Moore, 2005a; Siegel et al., 1998; Vernon et al., 2007). The heart of the debate is whether practice skills, especially interviewing and clinical skills, can be successfully learned without f2f interaction. The debate implies the options are either f2f or online, when given the advances in technology, there is a continuum of choice, using blends/hybrids of delivery as identified in a program in Canada in a psychology counseling initiative (Jerry & Collins, 2005). Research on the use of blended/hybrid delivery to teach interviewing skills is limited (Ayala, 2009; Coe Regan & Youn, 2008).

There is a paucity of research regarding online learning of interviewing skills. In addition, there is a scarcity of undergraduate studies addressing social work students' learning needs and experience in a web-based environment (Kulkin et al., 2008). The research consists primarily of comparison studies, generally finding no significant differences between students' practice skill acquisition in web-based and traditional, f2f learning environments. The two educational environments are unique and provide different mediums and different learner roles for learning. Research exploring relevant theory, concepts, and methods for effective teaching-learning of interviewing skills in a web-based delivery are being called for by social work educators (Coe Regan & Youn, 2008). To comply with the 2008 EPAS accreditation standards, evidence demonstrating effective ways to learn interviewing skills online, using multiple measures for evaluating skill competency, is necessary.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore undergraduate social work students' perceptions of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid learning environment, intentionally designed using research-supported learning theories, online pedagogy (as part of hybrid/blended delivery), and

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skills training. With advancing opportunities for choices in modes of delivery and use of technology online, understanding how this group of students perceived the experience was the impetus for using action research, case study methodology. To explore and gain understanding of the experiences of undergraduate students learning interviewing skills in a hybrid delivery environment, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the perceptions of students learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course?

2. How do students' pre confidence scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post confidence measure?

3. How do students' pre competency scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post competency measure?

Brief Overview of the Study

The hybrid learning environment was constructed using the *person-in-environment* social work perspective. The central focus of the person-in-environment perspective is that people are constantly interacting with various systems in their environment, including the educational system (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2009). The premise for this study was that students bring a unique natural learning process (Natural Human Learning Process) to the educational environment that interacts with the intentional teaching-learning process of the course instructional design. The intentional instructional design was informed by constructivism and brain-based learning strategies for learning interviewing skills.

Multiple measures, including a pre and post training confidence scale, were used to gain a sense of how competent students feel before and after training to perform interviewing skills. Pre

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and post training video recordings (10-15 minutes), consisting of the students interviewing a person with a "real-life" issue, were evaluated by external raters to measure change in competency. A third measure was student reflections of the process of learning interviewing skills in an online hybrid format (i.e., experience of the teaching learning process, the hybrid format, and use of technology). Demographics were collected.

Significance of the Study

It was important to conduct the study, because it has potential to benefit students, instructors, social work programs, and the consumers of social work services in the areas of knowledge, practice, and teaching. Research exploring relevant learning theory, online pedagogy, and methods for effective teaching-learning of interviewing skills, including mode of delivery in a web-based environment, will add to the body of knowledge for social work educators and benefit the learning of students and the clients they serve (Ayala, 2009; Coe Regan & Youn, 2008).

The intentional instructional design and learning strategies, which address the 2008 EPAS requirements, could provide social work educators with explicit and implicit curriculum strategies to consider for use in practice courses. Undergraduate social work programs have the responsibility to prepare students, with bachelor-level competency in all social work foundation courses, with proficiency to enroll in Advanced-Standing Master of Social Work Programs. This study will inform MSCD's Department of Social Work in regard to the proficiency of students in the area of interviewing skills and inform what instructional revisions are needed to affect students' learning. There will be benefit in better understanding how and/or whether students learn interviewing skills in an online hybrid practice course.

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Use of multiple measures for assessing students' growth in confidence and competency to perform interviewing skills is significant in meeting EPAS 2008 requirements for "sequencing the assessment tasks and developing accurate and useful instruments" (Petrachhi & Zastrow, 2010, p. 125). Development and specific procedures to implement assessment measures for demonstrating students' interviewing skill competency will benefit MSCD's social work program for compliance with 2008 EPAS and may provide guidance for other programs.

Delimitations of the Study

Merriam (2009) defined a case study as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). The bounded system of this case study consists of the undergraduate social work students enrolled in the distance hybrid section of Generalist Practice I (SWK 3410), spring 2011, at Metropolitan State College of Denver, taught by this researcher. This specific case was selected because it represents the students who will be experiencing a hybrid format for learning interviewing skills, using online delivery. Delimitations for this case study relate to the context for skill learning and the methods used. Learning interviewing skills in a hybrid environment occurred in a 4-week module within a 15-week practice hybrid course. Four of 15 course sessions were conducted in a f2f mode, either with the students on campus or with the use of teleconferencing, with one f2f meeting being conducted within the interviewing module. The specific teaching-learning strategies used in the course evolved over a 6-year action research process, commencing with the first hybrid practice course offered in the MSCD Social Work Program during spring semester, 2005. It is noted that there are other strategies that could be used to teach interviewing skills.

Organization of the Study

Action research is a methodological approach conducted by educators to analyze and improve the learning environment in an educational setting. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2004) proposed a five-phase action research cycle that has been adapted in this study to identify, research, plan, implement, and evaluate the problem. These multiple phases parallel the five chapters included in this dissertation as outlined below and shown in Figure 1:

- Chapter 1: Introduction - *provides the context and identifies the problem* for study to understand students' perceptions of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid environment;

- Chapter 2: Literature Review - *investigates and reports relevant areas of research* to inform an intentional instructional design for teaching-learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course. The areas reviewed include learning theories, online learning pedagogy, hybrid delivery, and research-informed interviewing skill training and research to include online learning;

- Chapter 3: Methodology - *presents the intentional instructional research design* of the study, including multiple measures for assessing effectiveness, along with the *action plan* for implementation;

- Chapter 4: Findings - *reports the findings* of the multiple measures implemented in the action plan;

- Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion- *evaluates and reflects on findings* to better understand and inform what teaching-learning strategies are to be continued,

expanded, revised, or discontinued. Identification of further needs for study has been

indicated to launch the next action research cycle.

Figure 1. Five phases of action research paralleling the dissertation's five chapters. Adapted from
   SuperVision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach (6th ed.), by C. D.
   Glickman, S. P. Gordon, and J. M. Ross-Gordon, 2004, p. 430, Pearson Publishers, Boston, MA.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

American higher education is experiencing a paradigm shift from an emphasis on

instruction (teaching paradigm) to one of *producing learning* (learning paradigm), according to

Barr and Tagg (1995)**.** Traditionally, instructors viewed their central role as delivering quality

instruction and transferring knowledge (primarily through lecture) to the students. The new

paradigm places responsibility on the instructor to create an environment and experiences for

students to discover and construct knowledge and solve problems within a community of

learners (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Twigg, 2001). The roles of students and instructors have changed;

facilitating learning puts the student at the center and the instructor as a guide (Sternberg &

Williams, 2002).

In addition, the exponential growth of online course delivery provides a variety of

educational environment opportunities for learning. Understanding how students best learn both

specific content and in a particular delivery is not only a challenge but also a responsibility when

developing learner-centered instructional designs. The intent of this study, using action research

as a method of inquiry, is to gain deeper understanding of how students perceive learning

interviewing skills in a hybrid practice environment. The learning objectives for students are to

acquire a sense of self-confidence and competency in the use of interviewing skills in preparation

for social work practice.

This chapter reviews pertinent literature, with research analyzed and synthesized to

inform the teaching-learning process constructed for learning interviewing skills. To adequately

understand meaningful student learning, particularly that of learning interviewing skills delivered

in a hybrid environment, research areas reviewed include (a) learning theories and the study's

theoretical framework; (b) online pedagogy and the use of hybrid/blended delivery; and (c) interviewing skills training, accompanied by the learning of interviewing skills online. As depicted in Figure 2, the literature areas reviewed inform this study's intentional instructional design.
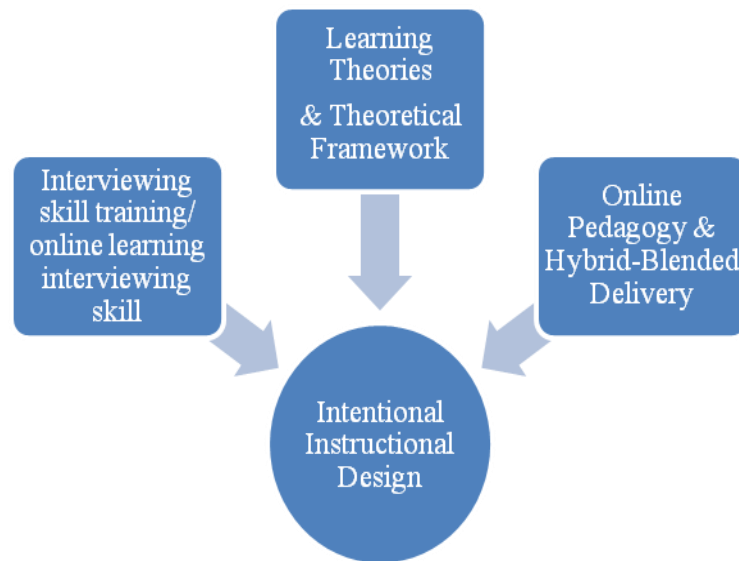
Figure 2. Literature informing study's intentional design.

Learning Theories and Theoretical Framework

Theories of learning are essential for developing a teaching-learning process to develop skills and competencies. Learning theories provide the conceptualization of what it means to learn and to understand (Duffy & Jonassen, 1991; Herie, 2005). According to Merriam, Cafarella, and Baumgartner (2007), "Learning is a process that brings together cognitive, emotional, and environmental influences and experiences for acquiring, enhancing, or making changes in one's knowledge, skills, values, and worldviews" (p. 277). Beginning in the 1960s, the literature in the area of student learning reflected a shift in the teaching-learning perspective

from an objectivist to a constructivist epistemology (Lackney, n.d.). These dichotomous worldviews of how knowledge is acquired are often described as mutually exclusive (Phillips, 1998). Conceptually and for use in instructional design development, they may be better described and understood as a continuum of the two traditions (Phillips, 1998). Therefore the dominant underpinnings of these traditions are briefly presented as a learning theory continuum, consisting of objectivist, behaviorist, cognitivist, and constructivist paradigms. The section ends with a review of the informing role of neuroscience in understanding the brain's natural learning process and its alignment with learning theories used for developing the optimal learning environment. The convergence of neuroscience research with the constructivist learning theory is subsequently presented as this study's theoretical framework.

Objectivism

In the United States, instruction for learning has evolved from an objectivist tradition. Objectivist epistemology views the locus of knowledge and truth in the external world outside the mind of the learner. Meaning exists in the world separately from the person's experience of it (Bellefeuille, 2006; Duffy & Jonassen, 1991). The instructional designer using this paradigm imposes content and strategy on the learner with the intent to effectively transfer the objective knowledge to the learner for memory (Bellefeuille, 2006; Vrasidas, 2000). The learning environment structure is teacher centered; the teacher is the expert. Experience, learners' characteristics, and the motivation a learner brings to the situation are viewed by the objectivist as leading to partial and biased understandings (Duffy & Jonessen, 1991). The objectivist position is that "there is one *true* and *correct* reality, which we can come to know following the objective methods of science" (Vrasidas, 2000, p. 3).

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Behaviorism

Behaviorism and much of information processing-based cognitive psychology are characterized as part of the objectivist tradition (Duffy & Jonassen, 1991). The behaviorist tradition views the learning process as a change in behavior, resulting from stimulus-response sets from external environment stimuli, without regard to internal processes (Merriam et al., 2007). Knowledge is considered as objective, external, and transmittable (Vrasidas, 2000). The role of the instructor is to transmit and deposit in the student's head knowledge of the natural world. Dissemination of knowledge is teacher-directed, and the learner primarily assumes a passive role. Behavioral learning theory is currently used to inform the development of behavioral objectives and competency-based education, in addition to skill development and training (Merriam et al., 2007).

Cognitive Theory

Cognitive learning theory holds a common assumption that learning involves internal mental processes, including insight, information processing, metacognition, memory, and perception, all within the learner's control (Merriam et al., 2007). Cognitive theorists believe the learner must internally structure and organize information received over a period of time to solve problems in the current environment; the mind is the agent and locus of learning. The focus is on internal and physical changes in the learner. Understanding what learners know and how they acquire it are the focus of the cognitive learning theory (Jonassen, 1991).

A branch of the cognitive orientation that draws from behaviorism is social cognitive learning theory. Learning is posited to be both social, affected by interaction in the environment, and cognitive, influenced by thought processes within the learner that contribute to motivation,

affect, and action (Merriam et al., 2007). Self-efficacy theory, initiated by Bandura (1977), refers to an innate belief in oneself and one's ability to achieve. This theory is situated in the social-cognitive belief that a learner's self assessment of competency is influenced by a particular environment. Behavior-modeling techniques and use of self efficacy in classroom instruction and workplace training are common areas of social cognitive theory in practice (Merriam et al., 2007).

Constructivism

The constructivist epistemology is generally described as positioned at the opposite end of the continuum from the objectivist tradition in regard to assumptions about learning and understanding. The polar extremes in learning theory span "from externally mediated reality (objectivism) to internally mediated reality (constructivism)" (Jonassen, 1991, p. 8). Constructivism is defined by Brooks and Brooks (1999) as "a theory of learning that describes the central role that learners' ever-transforming mental schemes play in their cognitive growth" (p. 18). Constructivists consider how knowledge is transferred into true meaning (Cercone, 2006). The learner constructs a personal understanding of the environment through a process of interaction, reflection, and action (Dewey, 1938; Hausfather, 1996). When learners encounter something new, they need to reconcile it with previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what was believed or maybe discarding new information as irrelevant (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Learning is an active, spiraling process rather than linear (Bruner, 1973). As active creators, learners build knowledge in pursuit of personal understanding and meaning-making in active responses to sensory experiences (Saunders, 1999; Wood, 1995).

The learning theory of constructivism can be traced to Immanuel Kant, who believed reality is constructed by the knower, based upon what the learner perceives from interaction with the environment (Bruner, 1973; Jonassen, 1991). The tradition is largely rooted in several schools of thought from the works of Piaget (1954), von Glaserfeld (1995), and Vygotsky (1978) to the educational philosophies of Dewey (1916), Bruner (1973), and more recently, Gardner (1999). The common assumption among these theorists is that knowledge does not exist independent of the learner; knowledge is constructed by the learner (Vrasidas, 2000).

Piaget's research identified evolving developmental stages of children's learning and asserted that a child constructs reality by reorganizing (adapting) experiences and cognitive structures through interaction with the environment and others (Fosnot, 2005; Shapiro, 2002; Vrasidas, 2000). Piaget considered intelligence to be partly biological and partly acquired through complex relationships in the environment (Piaget, 1954, 1971). Constructivism has many variations, but two dominant assumptions of how the learning of knowledge occurs are identified in radical and social constructivism. Von Glaserfeld (1995) is a proponent of radical constructivism, with the belief that knowledge is constructed within the learner. In his view, "[learning] requires self-regulation and the building of conceptual structures through reflection and abstraction" (p. 14). Vygotsky is attributed with the theory of social constructivism, with its basic premise that all knowledge is socially constructed in a collaborative process with a person's environment and others (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005).

Educators using a constructivist perspective view each learner as unique in regard to the acquisition of learning, with a distinct learning style, personality, and set of experiences that affect how each makes meaning of knowledge (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). Meaningful learning

involves critical thought and reflection of authentic, real-life problem-based experiences, in interaction with the environment and peers (Bransford et al., 1999; Gunn et al., 2007). It is the instructor's role to develop and *guide* a safe environment of active engagement for the community of learners to construct meaningful learning and understanding (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Fosnot, 2005).

Neuroscience and Brain-Based Learning

Neuroscience research is now validating many learning theories and instructional strategies first introduced during the educational reform initiative of the 1960s (Lackney, n.d.). In particular, the shift to constructivist classroom applications (active and experiential learning) has been fueled by the recent explosion of neuroscience research. In the United States, the 1990s were declared the *Decade of the Brain* by President George H. W. Bush. Wesson (2008) reported that more discovery about brain functioning occurred in this decade than had been learned in all of human history. A preponderance of research informing brain-based learning evolved, exploring "many different aspects of the brain including anatomy, circulation, electrical activity, glucose metabolism and neural growth" (Cercone, 2006, p. 293).

Neuroimaging technology, including the positron-emission tomography (PET), magnetic and functional resonance imaging (MRI, fMRI), and computerized axial tomography (CAT), has allowed researchers to study healthy human brains (Cercone, 2006; McGeehan, 2001; Sousa, 2006). Experimental research on the human brain prior to the new technologies relied on the use of animal brains (primarily rats and chimpanzees) or damaged human brains through autopsies (Diamond & Hopson, 1998; Eriksson et al., 1998; Greenough, Black, & Wallace, 1987; McGeehan, 2001).

A "new breed of science of the brain," referred to as *educational neuroscience*, has originated from action research—a systematic, intentional investigation by instructors in actual learning environments (Jensen, 2005, p. 5). The onset of brain-based learning research in education can be traced to Hart's (1983) coining of the term, *brain compatible learning*, in his seminal book, *Human Brain & Human Learning*. This book ignited the brain-based teaching revolution with a call for educators to turn to biology to develop instructional designs to match the nature of the brain to achieve better learning outcomes in an action research context (Jensen, 2005; King, 1997; McGeehan, 2001). Influential works by educators providing research-based, brain-compatible instructional models include but are not limited to Sousa's *How the Brain Learns*, Jensen's *Teaching With the Brain in Mind,* and Caine, Caine, McClintic, and Klimek's *12 Brain/Mind Learning Principles in Action,* as well as Kovalik's integrated thematic instruction model and Smilkstein's brain-based Natural Human Learning Process model.

Brain-based learning research has profound potential for educators to optimize a student's natural learning process (Bransford et al., 1999; Caine et al., 2005; Gunn et al., 2007; Jensen, 2005; Smilkstein, 2003; Sousa, 2006). "When both teachers and students have metacognitive knowledge—know how the brain learns and how they themselves learn—every classroom can be a place of vibrant, successful learning" (Gunn et al., 2007, p. 52).

Brain-based learning: Key elements and research. Brain-based learning views each brain and its existing neural networks as "uniquely shaped by genetics, the environment, social phenomena, and experience" (Cercone, 2006, p. 297). Although still relatively new as a field of inquiry, brain research has identified several key findings that have significance for brain-based learning: neuroplasticity and the effect of enriched environments; the emotion-cognitive link for

learning; and the complexity, interconnectedness, and uniqueness of the brain. In this section, research is presented to address these key findings and their relevance for the teaching-learning process. Caution is warranted when applying brain-based research to practice, given that the current research is relatively new (Lackney, 2002; Roberts, 2002). "The prevailing belief is that information is doubling in our society about every 18 months. In the field of neuroscience …research more than two years old is already 'old information" (Jensen, 2005, p. 5).

Neuroplasticity: Effect of enriched environment and experience. The ability of the brain to continuously change physiologically during a person's lifetime as a result of interaction and experience is the concept of neuroplasticity (Gunn et al., 2007; Jensen, 2005; Sousa, 2006). Understanding brain neuroplasticity originates in animal brain research, conducted in the 1960s by Diamond (1988). This research compared the structure of the brains of laboratory rodents living in impoverished or enriched environments to understand whether environment had any effect. The impoverished environment was a small cage, housing a solitary rodent with no toys, whereas the enriched environment consisted of a large cage, filled with toys and other rodents. Within 8 days, Diamond found the enriched rodents developed cortexes that were 7 to 11% thicker than those of the rodents from the impoverished environment (Diamond & Hopson, 1998). The thicker cortex revealed more cellular growth and connections (neurogenesis) in the hippocampus, the structure responsible for new learning and memory. Noted in the study was the improved ability of the enriched environment rodents to perform complex tasks, such as learning their way around a new maze (Diamond & Hopson, 1998). Further animal replication studies were conducted in the 1980s, suggesting that factors critical to cortex growth and ability to

perform higher-order tasks were socialization, mental stimulation, and physical activity (Daggett & Nussbaum, 2008; Greenough et al., 1987).

A landmark study in 1998, related to the human brain, identified that the adult human hippocampus retains its ability to generate neurons throughout life (Eriksson et al., 1998). Human autopsies of consenting cancer patients provided hippocampus tissue for examination, revealing evidence of adult neurogenesis (Eriksson et al., 1998). A number of similar studies involving autopsies of musicians found that areas of brain responsible for receptive hearing were substantially thicker than nonmusicians (Gaser & Schlaug, 2003; Hutchinson, Lee, Gaab, & Schlaug, 2003; Kilgard & Merzenich, 1998). These studies disproved the 100-year-old central assumptions that loss of neurons is irreversible, production of neural networks stops at puberty, and the brain becomes rigid with age (Gross, 2000).

Human neuroplasticity has direct implications for adult learning and memory. The discovery confirms that enriched environments and experiences change the structure of the brain (Diamond & Hopson, 1998; Eriksson et al., 1998; Greenough et al., 1987). The adult brain is malleable, adaptable, and constantly reorganizing and growing complex neural networks as a result of experiences it has with the environment (Gunn et al., 2007; Jensen, 2005). All information is incorporated into existing neural networks (Fishback, 1999). The more a neural network is used, the stronger, more secure, and larger the network will grow. Repetition and practice are likely to make the neural pathways more efficient (Jensen, 2005). The brain incorporates new information into existing networks (prior knowledge), looking to make associations between incoming information and experience. If networks are seldom or not used, they can be lost and are said to be "pruned" away (Gunn et al., 2007; Jensen, 2005). As

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information is experienced and enters short-term memory, the brain must determine whether it will be consolidated and stored in long-term memory (Cercone, 2006). To increase the opportunity for long-term memory consolidation, the learner must attach personal relevancy and meaning to the information and skills presented (Caine et al., 2005; McGeehan, 2001). An "enriched" environment promotes long-term memory and transfer of learning by providing rich, complex, multi-sensory experiences (Caine et al., 2005; Gunn et al., 2007; Jensen, 2005). The instructor's role is one of *orchestrator*, ensuring the learning environment provides challenge, novelty, multiple intelligence activities, choice, high feedback, social interaction, and active participation (Caine et al., 2005; Gardner, 1999; Greenough et al., 1987). For deep and meaningful learning to occur, the instructor directs *active processing* by providing real world experiences, using "effective questioning, summarizing and multiple opportunities for students to learn" (Caine et al., 2005, p. 107).

Role of emotions in brain-based learning. Neuroplasticity provides part of the physiological equation for learning. To gain a full understanding of the body-mind connection, the role and influence of emotion are essential. Neuroscientists have confirmed that emotions and learning cannot be separated (Damasio, 2003; LeDoux, 1994; Pert, 1997). Groundbreaking research identifying a second category of "informational substances," paralleling the neurotransmitters in the conventional neuronal networks, was conducted by Pert (1997). Chemical substances, called ligands (primarily peptides), travel throughout the body in extracellular fluids to reach receptors on the outer surfaces of cells (Pert, 1997). As they travel, they inform, regulate, and synchronize communication across all systems of the body and brain. The effect of the communication is to change physical activity, including behavior and mood

(Kovalik & Olsen, 1998; McGeehan, 2001; Pert, 1997). According to Pert, "Emotions and bodily sensations are thus intricately intertwined, in a bidirectional network in which each can alter the other" (p. 142). Emotion is now believed to accompany every thought and action and mediate all learning (Damasio, 2003; Jensen, 2005; Pert, 1997). "Emotion drives attention and attention drives learning, memory, problem solving and just about everything else" (Sylwester, 1998, para. 5).

Attending to information, constructing meaning, and lodging it in memory are all driven by emotions (Caine et al., 2005; Jensen, 2005; LeDoux, 1994). Brain researchers have reported emotion's role in patterning, which refers to the meaningful organization and categorization of information (Caine et al., 2005). The amygdala, an almond-shaped structure in the middle of the brain gauging the emotional content of sensory data, responds to negative or positive emotional experiences, and its function is to process these experiences into long-term memory (Caine & Caine, 1997; Jensen, 2005). The more the amygdala is aroused, the stronger the memory effect (LeDoux, 2001). The brain resists remembering meaningless, non-contextual information. Therefore, it is important to tie emotional content to learning activity to grab the amygdala's attention, so the learning being done is linked to existing knowledge and sent to long-term memory (Greenough et al., 1987).

A groundbreaking study by Dolcos and McCarthy (2006), using event-related magnetic resonance imaging, found direct evidence that emotional distracters have detrimental effects on ongoing cognitive processes, particularly goal-directed behavior, by identifying the interaction between the "dorsal neural system associated with 'cold' executive processing and a ventral system associated with 'hot' emotional processing" (p. 2072). Significance of this study lies in

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the knowledge that specific emotional and cognitive regions of the brain were identified,

providing a physiological basis for the finding that emotional distracters can temporarily impair

cognitive performance. The study validates the idea that emotions drive cognitive functioning.

  Emotional response patterns: Reflexive and reflective. Information entering the body's

nervous system from the senses (sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch) is processed and

prioritized by the ligands. When the chemical system detects potential threat to safety, survival,

and/or challenges, an automatic reflexive system activates as a first line of defense or attack

response for self preservation (Sylwester, 1998). While the reflexive system response associated

with fear strengthens the emotional, it weakens "the factual memories of an event if the stressful

situation is serious and/or chronic" (Sylwester, 1998, para. 15). When the body is in a relaxed

state, a "relatively, slower analytic, reflective" system responds to solve challenging problems

(Sylwester, 1998, para. 17). Understanding this biological activity has important ramifications

for learning and the educational environment. A student's past experiences related to learning,

such as grades, successes, failures, and whether personal expectations are met or not, all

contribute to the student's learning. Emotions related to a sense of competency, confidence, and

self-assurance will each play a role in how a student approaches learning and what, in fact, is

learned. A metacognitive understanding of the dual-response process provides students an

opportunity to adapt and use coping measures to reduce or alter the chemical process. Likewise,

educators need to recognize that learners enter the educational environment with predispositions

and perceptions of what it means to be a student and of their ability to learn. To promote

engagement for learning, a safe, trusting, and stimulating emotional climate is essential. Safety,

trust, or the presence of fear can have direct influences on whether learning occurs and to what

extent the brain structure develops or is under-developed in the quantity of neural networks (Caine & Caine, 2001; Gunn et al., 2007).

  Brain-based learning: Complex, interconnected, and unique. Learning as a biological process has been established above with the review of neuroplasticity, the effect of enriched environments and experiences on the brain, and the role of emotions. The final area of brain-based learning provided here involves the brain's complexity, interconnectedness, and uniqueness. Every brain is uniquely organized according to its individualized physiology, neural wiring, bio-chemical balance, and developmental stage influenced by life experiences (Caine et al., 2005; Jensen, 2005). Neuroscientists have considered "the brain to be the most complex physical entity in the known universe" (Gunn et al., 2007, p. 47). The human brain has an infinite number of possible interconnections, operating with a high level of structural cooperation to process a wide variety of information all at once (Caine et al., 2005; Jensen, 2005). The brain's search for meaning is innate and relies on patterning to provide organization of information (Gunn et al., 2007).

  For transfer of learning to occur from short- to long-term memory, the learner must make sense or meaning for understanding. Making connections with existing knowledge and past experiences hooks the learner's attention for new knowledge to be processed, encouraging deeper learning. Use of emotional content that has relevancy for the student and is authentic, reflecting real-life situations, encourages meaningful learning. Assimilation of learning is assisted when a sense of whole (big picture) is linked with parts (use of chunking) of new information, providing a greater sense of meaning and understanding (Caine et al., 2005). Research supports that best instruction involves complex and multi-sensory environments (Caine

et al., 2005; Jensen, 2005; Sousa, 2006). This type of environment accommodates varying learning styles of students, thereby attending to the uniqueness of each individual's natural process of learning.

Connecting Brain Research to Learning Environment Instruction

Learning occurs most optimally when students are able to use their natural learning process, according to Smilkstein (2003). To complete the literature review and identify the theoretical framework for this study, a review of Smilkstein's Natural Human Learning Process (NHLP), Caine and Caine's (1997) 12 Brain/Mind Learning Principles, and Caine and colleagues' (2005) three fundamental elements for optimal brain-based learning instruction are presented.

Natural Human Learning Process (NHLP) research. Smilkstein, a lifelong educator, conducted action research with over 7,000 participants in an attempt to better understand the natural process of learning (Gunn et al., 2007; Smilkstein, 2003). The inquiry began as Smilkstein (2003) observed learners in her own classroom, struggling and displaying frustration, believing they could not learn. Knowing students were successful at learning such skills as the use of new technology and other out-of-school learning tasks, she embarked on classroom research to uncover how they naturally learn.

Research activity conducted in the classroom included participants from different countries, cultures, and socioeconomic groups, with ages ranging from second grade through graduate school as well as faculty (Gunn et al., 2007). In an attempt to understand the natural learning process, Smilkstein (2003) asked students to identify something they had learned to be "good at" outside of school (drawing on their natural learning). The students were asked to

describe in writing the process of (a) how they learned to do it, (b) how they progressed in their

learning, and (c) how they became good at it. Next they were to share their individual

experiences in a small group and report back to the larger group. To Smilkstein's surprise, every

group of students reported a process of learning consisting of a four-, five-, or six-stage

taxonomy, which she labeled the Natural Human Learning Process (NHLP). The six stages of the

NHLP consist of interest, motivation/responding to a stimulus (Stage 1), beginning

practice/doing it (Stage 2), advanced practice/increase of skill and confidence through practicing

trial and error (Stage 3), skillfulness/making it your own/feeling success/confidence (Stage 4),

refinement/further improvement/becoming second nature (Stage 5), and mastery/broader

application (Stage 6) (Gunn et al., 2007, p. 32).

 Smilkstein's (2003) action research is a metacognitive activity, relying on each person's

ability to figure out meaning. The NHLP pedagogy first relies on the person's construction of his

or her own perception of how he or she naturally learns. Use of small- and whole-group learning

activities provides students with opportunity for discussion, reflection, and the giving and

receiving of feedback. Students are empowered to take ownership of their own learning and

"figure out" how they uniquely naturally learn; metacognitive knowledge can replace self-doubt

with confidence, a sense of self efficacy, and motivation (Gunn et al., 2007).

 Smilkstein's (2003) NHLP parallels the six sub-stages of Piaget's sensorimotor stage of

cognitive development, birth to 2 years. Jean Piaget spent 60 years establishing the basis for a

dynamic constructivist theory of knowing, believing the motivation for the construction of

knowledge often comes from an experience of cognitive conflict or puzzlement (Piaget &

Inhelder, 1969). Smilkstein's (2003) research demonstrated and supported the notion that natural

learning is socially constructed, sequentially, by an individual in interaction with the

environment. The NHLP converges and parallels brain learning, which consists of growing new,

different, and more complex neural networks as a result of experiences and practice. It provides a

research-based, brain-based conceptualization of learning for instruction.

12 Brain/Mind Learning Principles: Application for instruction. Caine and Caine

(1997; Caine & Caine, 2001) conducted action research related to brain-based learning in

elementary, middle, and high schools in the United States as well as in New Zealand over a

period of years, resulting in a set of 12 general brain-compatible learning principles. The 12

brain/mind learning principles reflect the brain-based learning research that has been presented in

this study (Caine et al., 2005). The principles provide a theoretical foundation for developing

pedagogical strategies congruent with the NHLP. Each principle is equally important and each

carries a belief in the capacity of the learner. The 12 brain/mind principles, with corresponding

learning capacities, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The 12 Brain/Mind Principles, With Corresponding Learning Capacities

12 Brain/Mind Principles	Belief in Learning Capacity
All learning is physiological	Engage the physiology in learning
Brain/mind is social	Engage social interactions
Search for meaning is innate	Engage learners' innate search for meaning
Search for meaning occurs through patterning	Engage learners' capacity to recognize and master essential patterns
Emotions are critical to patterning	Engage emotional connections

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Table 1.*The 12 Brain/Mind Principles, With Corresponding Learning Capacities* (continued)

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12 Brain/Mind Principles	Belief in Learning Capacity
Brain/mind processes parts and wholes simultaneously	Engage abilities to perceive both details and the larger view
Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception	Engage both abilities to focus attention and learn from peripheral context
Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes	Engage both conscious and unconscious processing
There are at least two approaches to memory: archiving isolated facts and skills, and making sense of experience	Engage capacities to learn from memorizing isolated facts and biographical events
Learning is developmental	Acknowledge and engage developmental steps and shifts
Complex learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat associated with helplessness	Reduce threat and enhance self-efficacy
Each brain is uniquely organized	Engage individual style and uniqueness

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Note. Adapted from *12 Brain/Mind Learning Principles in Action* by R. N. Caine, G. Caine, C. McClintic, &. K. Klimek, 2005, pp. 3-4, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks. CA.

Three elements for optimal, brain-based learning instruction. Emerging from the 12 Brain/Mind Learning Principles, Caine and colleagues (2005) identified three fundamental interacting elements necessary for what they term "great teaching" (p. 4). The three essential instructional elements for meaningful learning include (a) create an environment of *relaxed alertness* to strengthen and take advantage of the biological links necessary to support great learning, (b) provide *immersion in complex experience* to create an optimal opportunity for

learning, and (c) provide *active processing of experience* to consolidate learning (Caine et al., 2005).

Relaxed alertness refers to a person's physiological state when experiencing low threat and high challenge, which is optimal for learning (Caine et al., 2005). Fifty percent of a person's state of relaxed alertness is attributable to heredity (e.g., personality) and the other half results from environment, such as school and relationship experiences (Siegel, 1999). Patterns are established by experience, and to alter a person's state, new experiences are needed. Therefore an important role for instructors is to create an emotional climate of safety and trust where students have opportunities to experience relaxed alertness. By doing so, students can feel empowered to take charge of their own learning, become self-regulated, and gain a sense of capability and self efficacy (Bandura, 2000; Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Students who feel they are capable and believe in themselves, who find meaning and purpose in learning, are "more likely to feel competent and confident" (Caine et al., 2005, p. 22).

The second element of great teaching, immersion in complex experience, refers to the educator's role to provide an enriched and complex experience for learning. Research by Diamond (1988) and Greenough et al. (1987) suggested that neural networks grow and learning occurs in enriched environments that are stimulating, complex, and challenging, with opportunity for socialization. The human brain learns through sensing and making connections between what is experienced and what the experience means to the learner. A good example of a complex experience is an educational strategy called Modified Problem-Based Learning, which is used in social work education to promote student inquiry, solve highly complex challenges, and simulate a "real life" situation (Barrows, 2002; Chang, Scott, & Decker, 2009). A real-life situation is

presented lacking sufficient information for full understanding (need for inquiry). This allows for multiple perspectives and ideas for interpreting the case with no correct answer (Barrows, 2002). Students identify and solve the problems by drawing from existing knowledge, seeking new information, and sharing with classmates to expand their understanding, using their natural learning process.

"*Active processing* is the art of digesting, thinking about, reflecting on, making sense of experience and of consolidating learning" (Caine et al., 2005, p. 179). For great teaching, experiences must be processed with the learner to be sure learning is actually occurring (Caine et al., 2005). Practice and rehearsal may be what is needed to move information from short- to long-term memory for transfer of knowledge. Stages 4 through 6 of the NHLP parallel active processing and consolidation. The natural learning activity in these stages includes the gaining of confidence and skillfulness, while continuing to refine until the learning becomes second nature, ending with the mastery and broader application (Gunn et al., 2007). Active processing is imperative for metacognition and improving self-regulation. Reflection is used to explore how one is learning by assessing strengths and weaknesses to self-improve and deepen learning. Active processing, involving the activities of self-assessment, refinement, and consolidation of learning, enhance a sense of competency and confidence (Caine et al., 2005).

Caine and colleagues' (2005) research, along with Smilkstein's (2003) identification of the NHLP, provides a constructivist instructional approach congruent with brain-based learning. Learning is viewed as student-centered, based on the interconnectedness of the learner's affective, mental, and physical functioning. Designing the optimal environment to engage and support the brain's natural learning process informs the role of instruction. Use of the NHLP and

Caine and colleagues' (2005) model, consisting of the three essential instructional elements for meaningful learning, represents the basis for this study's theoretical/conceptual framework to develop an instructional design and assessment for the teaching-learning of interviewing skills in an online hybrid environment.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

For this study, a learning model was developed using the theoretical framework shown in Figure 3. The diagram illustrates the convergence of the student's natural learning process—the person—with the hybrid learning environment created by using constructivist and brain-compatible learning principles—the environment—to develop an instructional design. The student's transaction with the learning environment produces an outcome of confidence and competency gains in performing interviewing skills. Consideration of the transaction of the student's learning in a hybrid learning environment is congruent with the social work perspective of *person-in-environment* (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2009).
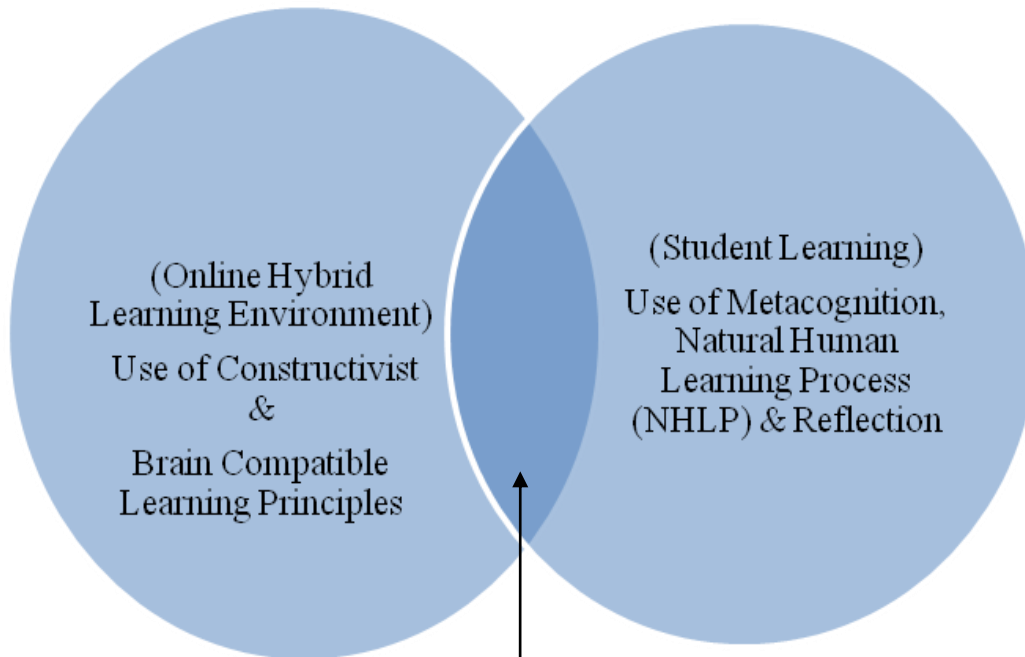
Figure 3. Study's theoretical framework. Person-in-environment transaction = confidence and competency gains in performing interviewing skills.

Online Learning and Pedagogy

With the rapid growth and use of web-based delivery in higher education, online instruction has emerged as an alternative mode of teaching and learning as well as a widely used supplement to traditional instruction. Studies using outcome measures of test scores, course grades, cumulative GPAs, and authentic performance of learned content have provided substantial evidence that online learning can be as effective and sometimes more effective than traditional education (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Research indicates that advantages of online learning are rooted in the quality of the instructors' design and implementation of course content rather than the instructional delivery medium (Berge, 2002; Clark, 1994; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Developing and delivering a quality instructional design relies on sound pedagogical principles (Berge, 2002; Carmean & Haefner, 2002; Jaffee, 2003). The emphasis is on creating an optimal

learning environment using technology for enhancement (Berge, 2002; Carmean & Haefner, 2002; Jaffee, 2003). Course designers need to consider the uniqueness and distinct medium of web-based delivery (Moller, Foshay, & Huett, 2008; Yoon, 2003). Moller et al. (2008) described the challenge for online instructors:

> Educators in the distance medium are faced with new pedagogical issues surrounding student interactions, course content, design and delivery, multiple levels of communication, defining new types of assignments and performance expectations, and different assessment and evaluation techniques (to name a few). (p. 67)

With the exponential growth in online course delivery, an increasing body of knowledge on what constitutes strong instructional designs and best practices is emerging. Technology provides the medium for course delivery and is changing more rapidly than education can integrate and keep pace with (Brown, 2000; Moller et al., 2008). The computer and the World Wide Web (WWW) introduce unprecedented options for teaching, learning, and knowledge building, while allowing for extensive interaction and collaboration among communities of learners (Brown, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2005; Pringle, 2002). The challenge and opportunity for online instructors, according to Brown (2000), are to create "new *learning* environments that will use the unique capabilities of the web to leverage the natural ways that humans learn" (p. 13).

Identifying empirically supported, online pedagogical methods and facilitation strategies that specifically converge with the advances in brain-based learning research is the next focus of study. This section begins by addressing "[the] need for a theoretical base for teaching effectively in distance education to help the educational developer and instructional designer" (Koymen, 1989, p. 247) link theory with practice. The context of the online learning environment is then presented, which includes areas that pertain to learning in this milieu:

identifying roles of learner and instructor**;** creating a community of learners; generating interaction; and promoting meaningful learning (interactive and collaborative) using reflection and ongoing assessment.

Linking Learning Theory to Online Pedagogy Practice

Earlier in this chapter, a continuum of learning theories, including behaviorist, cognitivist, and constructivist paradigms, was presented. The continuum reflects an instructional shift from teaching to learning; from the passive transfer of knowledge to the active construction of knowledge through authentic collaborative experiences. Constructivism theorists claimed knowledge is socially constructed according to the learner's personal reality (Gibson, 2003; Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, & Haag, 1995; Kehrwald, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). Constructivism has been aligned with the learner-centered nature of online learning (Berge, 2002; Carmean & Haefner, 2002). Neuroscience research regarding how people learn concurs and provides biological evidence to support the constructivist view (Diamond & Hopson, 1998; Eriksson et al., 1998; Greenough et al., 1987). However with closer examination, overlapping ideas and principles of the three schools of thought can be translated into practical applications when designing online learning environments (Ally, 2004; Ertmer & Newby, 1993).

> According to Ertmer and Newby (1993), the three schools of thought can be used as a taxonomy for learning. Behaviorists' strategies can be used to teach the "what" (facts), cognitive strategies can be used to teach the "how" (processes and principles), and constructivist strategies can be used to teach the "why" (higher level thinking that promotes personal meaning and situated and contextual learning). (Ally, 2004, p. 7)

The behaviorist orientation views learning as a change in behavior. This approach is often used by instructors when developing learning modules (inclusion of content and knowledge

domains), course objectives (learning outcomes), and evaluation measures (formative and summative) (Ally, 2004; Bellefeuille, 2006; Ertmer & Newby, 1993).

Cognitivists believe that learning is an internal processing of information involving insight, memory, motivation, metacognition, perception, reflection, and self efficacy (Merriam et al., 2007). The cognitivist approach informs instructional strategies to empower learners' abilities to maximize internal processing for learning (Ertmer & Newby, 1993; Hannafin, Hill, Oliver, Glazer, & Sharma, 2003).

Constructivism, with its principles rooted in a learner-centered approach, converges naturally with the computer-mediated environment, where learners ultimately have choice to decide when, what, and how they are learning (Bellefeuille, 2006; Durrington, Berryhill, Swafford, 2006; Herie, 2005). In the asynchronous environment, the learner is separated from the instructor by both time and distance. Each learner is unique, with a distinct learning style, personality, and set of experiences that affect how he or she makes meaning of knowledge. The constructivist perspective supports individualization with its view that learning begins with what the learner already knows and links new knowledge for deeper understanding (Bransford et al., 1999; Brooks & Brooks, 1999). Learning is the responsibility of the individual. Online students need to be self-directed, reflective, possess good communication skills, and be active participants in their own learning (Kauffman, 2004; Miller & King, 2003; Zimmerman & Schunck, 2001). The teacher's role shifts to being one of a facilitator, guide, and coach. The teacher has the responsibility of developing a learning environment using multiple perspectives, methods, and tools to engage the uniqueness of each learner (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Conceicao, 2006; Durrington et al., 2006).

A web-based instructional design may reflect a mix of theoretical learning theories as has been identified briefly here. When constructing an online course, it is important to be mindful of the reciprocal relationship among learning theories, knowledge content of the course, and research-supported online pedagogical strategies, including technologies best suited to encourage student learning.

Online Learning Environment Context and Pedagogical Strategies

The online learning environment is unique and requires educators to rethink instructional strategies and create relevant pedagogy. Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) proposed that "knowledge is situated, being in part a product of the activity, context and culture in which it is developed and used" (p. 32). Online learning is the result of construction, collaboration, reflection, and negotiation within a rich social and experiential context (Berge, 2002; Brown et al., 1989; Vrasidas & McIsaac, 2000). With the evolution of digitalization, Brown (2000) suggested educators need to move toward what he refers to as a *learning ecology.* He defined learning ecology as an "open, complex, adaptive system comprising elements that are dynamic and interdependent" (p. 19).

The web presents multiple applications for discovery-based learning situated in a community of practice (Brown, 2000; Bruner, 1986). The use of electronic networks changes the way students and instructors interact, share information, and communicate. The web has the capability of providing a unique medium for learning, because it is "the first medium that honors the notion of multiple intelligences…. abstract, textual, visual, musical, social and kinesthetic" (Brown, 2000, p. 10). Students can draw on their innate learning styles and natural strengths. The environment also supports relationships among individuals, serving as a powerful constructivist

milieu to support interaction and collaboration for community building (Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2005).

The following section of this chapter considers the pedagogical strategies to create an online learning environment that will optimize the natural ways humans learn. Many aspects of current best practices in online course development parallel what would be used to develop any effective learning environment. Identifying how these practices can be designed to be most effective in an online environment constitutes the focus.

Roles of learner and teacher. The shift from learning in a physical classroom to a virtual environment impacts the social roles and relationships that govern the teaching and learning processes (Brown, 2000; Jaffee, 2003). Ally (2004) defined online learning as follows:

> The use of the Internet to access learning materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience. (p. 5)

The definition reflects a learner-centered approach. It implies a student's readiness to learn with ability and confidence to be educationally self-directed and autonomous (Huang, 2002; Kauffman, 2004; Kim & Bonk, 2006). The online teaching-learning process relies on a learner-centered approach, consisting of new patterns of instructor and student interactions and roles. Crucial to the web-based environment is collaborative learning, active student engagement.

For students to be successfully engaged and independent learners, metacognitive knowledge—"thinking and knowing about how they learn, about how they know" (Smilkstein, 2003, pp. 35-36)—is essential for self empowerment. Metacognition involves more than knowledge and awareness of one's own cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes; it involves volition (learner intent) to willfully act on a chosen intent (Anderson & Bourke, 2000;

Davies, 2006; Efklides, 2006; Flavell, 1979). Research findings have indicated that metacognition serves as a positive predictor for academic achievement (Anderson, 2001; Boekaerts, Pintrich, & Zeidner, 2000; Santhanam, Sasidharan, & Webster, 2008; Shen, Lee, & Tsai, 2007). Metacognitive activity includes goal setting, organizing, reflection, self-awareness, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation (Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Reingold, Rimor, & Kalay, 2008; Zimmerman, 1990).

Students in online courses receiving instruction in goal setting achieved higher learning outcomes than students online who did not receive goal setting instruction, in studies conducted by Shen et al. (2007) and Santhanam et al. (2008). In the Santhanam et al. (2008) study, students instructed in self-monitoring posted higher achievement outcomes compared to students who did not receive self-monitoring instruction. Despite researchers' agreement that metacognition and self-regulation skills are more necessary in online courses than f2f courses, integrating metacognitive knowledge is frequently overlooked in course delivery (Kauffman, 2004, Kim & Bonk, 2006; Reingold et al., 2008).

Metacognitive knowledge needs to be integrated at the beginning of an online course, with the instructor facilitating feedback and encouraging student reflection. The initial tasks are to help students assume responsibility for learning by deepening their understanding of how learning occurs. Using discussion, the instructor can facilitate exercises to encourage self-awareness, such as the Natural Human Learning Process (Smilkstein, 2003). (See the NHLP activity described earlier in this chapter.) The student assessing prior learning validates what he or she knows and links it to new knowledge (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).

The instructor can use a number of metacognitive activities in discussion or as assignments to provide understanding in a variety of areas (e.g., brain learning neuroplasticity, identification of learning styles, goal setting, and use of reflection). These activities encourage introspection and help students take control of their own learning (Bransford et al., 1999; Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Gunn et al., 2007; Jensen, 2005; Smilkstein, 2003). Using the metacognitve approach throughout a course facilitates sense making, self-assessment, and reflection of what worked and what needs improvement contributing to the students' ability to transfer learning to new settings (Bransford et al., 1999; Caine et al., 2005; Jensen, 2005).

The primary role of an online instructor is to facilitate a learner-centered (active learning), collaborative, and egalitarian milieu (Conceicao, 2006; Coppola, Hiltz, & Rotter, 2002, Heuer & King, 2004; Prestera & Moller, 2001). The instructor orchestrates learning from the sidelines and serves in a variety of roles to structure and promote interactions. Prestera and Moller (2001) described the facilitative nature of the online teacher in the following six roles: guide, mentor, coach, catalyst, feedback giver, and resource provider. Coppola et al. (2002) identified three roles of online faculty: cognitive, affective, and managerial. The cognitive role attends to the mental processes of learning: metacognition, reflection, and knowledge building. The affective role involves the establishment of a community of learners: the interaction and relationship among students, faculty, and the learning environment. The managerial role is concerned with class structure and course management: developing schedules; setting objectives and corresponding learning activities; developing and organizing various aspects of the content, including evaluation; creating rules and guidelines; and responding to problems and questions.

An online instructor needs to be concerned with the affective and cognitive interaction of the learner-in-environment from planning to development through delivery (Coppola et al., 2002).

Community building. From the research linking emotions to cognition, the social dynamics of teaching and learning are critical to successful web-based learning (Damasio, 2003; Dolcos & McCarthy, 2006; LeDoux, 1994; Pert, 1997). Establishing a collaborative community of learners has provided a successful pedagogical approach to combat the lack of human contact and feelings of isolation often associated with online learning (Hara & Kling, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2005, 2007; Rovai, 2002a; Wenger, 1998). Characteristic of a sense of community are the members' feelings of "connectedness, cohesion, spirit, trust, and interdependence among members" (Rovai, 2002a, p. 201). The task of the online instructor is to foster a sense of connectedness among class members and "commonality of learning expectations and goals" (Rovai, 2002b, p. 322). With a sense of shared community, members' feelings of trust and safety flourish to encourage a climate of openness and participation, which is essential for effective collaboration (McFadden, 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2005; Rovai, 2002b). Palloff and Pratt (2005) identified the cyclical nature of the relationship between collaboration and developing a sense of community: "Collaboration supports the creation of community and community supports the ability to collaborate" (p. 5).

Lave and Wenger, 1998 coined the term "community of practice" as a result of their inquiry of apprenticeship as a learning model. According to Wenger (2006), knowing is a social act and knowledge is constructed in communities of practice "formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor" ("What are Communities," para. 1). Constructing a community of practice involves three elements: (a) commitment to a

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domain reflective of shared competency; (b) engagement in building relationship and knowledge

through joint activity; and (c) shared *practice* of resources, experiences, and tools (Wenger,

2006). This model views a person's intent to learn and fully participate in the learning

environment as a process that evolves with interaction and social engagement. As relationships

build, members bind together with a shared purpose and sense of belonging in community.

Facilitating the feeling of connection and community among learners has been studied

and reported as *social presence* (Aragon, 2003; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Kehrwald, 2008;

Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 2001; Tu & McIsaac, 2002). Gunawardena (1995)

defined social presence in an online environment as "the degree to which a person is perceived as

a 'real person' in mediated communication" (p. 151). Social presence was found to be a strong

predictor of satisfaction in online environments (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). Hackman and

Walker (1990) and Shin (2002) reported a positive relationship among social presence and

perceived learning as well as satisfaction. Social presence was found to facilitate the building of

trust and self disclosure within an online learning environment (Gunawardena et al., 2001).

Contradictory findings regarding the relationship between social presence and student learning

were reported in studies by Picciano (2002), who found a positive relationship, whereas Wise,

Chang, Duffy, and del Valle (2004) did not.

Online instructors can use a variety of affective and cognitive strategies to encourage

social presence and sense of community. When beginning the class, including introductions,

making connections regarding commonality and instituting a photo gallery help to build cohesion

in the group. During the course, interjecting humor, using emoticons (anthropomorphic symbols)

as expressions of emotion, referring to students by name, using compliments and affirmations,

providing feedback, and asking questions in discussion are all ways to build relationships and community (Aragon, 2003; Palloff & Pratt, 2005, 2007; Wise et al., 2004). Collaboration online can be enhanced by using small group activities in assignments, problem solving with real-life case studies, discussion (asynchronous or synchronous), shared facilitation, and assignment postings for mutual feedback from class members (Palloff & Pratt, 2005; Vrisadas & McIsaac, 1999; Yoon, 2003).

There are a variety of web-based communication tools that can enhance the social aspect and interactivity of the students. To encourage informal communication and encourage a strong sense of community, the use of email, virtual office hours, instant messaging (IM), electronic bulletin boards, wikis, and chat rooms can be instituted (Nicholson, 2002). Web-conferencing programs, such as Wimba, Elluminate, and Adobe Connect, make it possible for multiple participants to talk to each other, allowing for f2f interviewing and group and class meetings. Web conferencing has the capability of recording for later viewing. Students have reported a greater sense of connection with classmates using web conferencing (Vitartas, Rowe, & Ellis, 2008). A core objective of the instructor's facilitating role is to ensure a high degree of interactivity and participation to engage learners. Developing a sense of social presence and community encourages interaction among all members of the community.

Generating online interaction. Interaction is acknowledged as an essential element for student learning and for effective distance education (Berge, 2002; Hillman, Willis, & Gunawardena, 1994; Kearsley, 2000; Kim, Liu, & Bonk, 2005; Sher, 2009; Thurmond & Wambach, 2004). Interaction, defined by Thurmond (2003), is

> the learner's engagement with the course content, other learners, the instructor, and technological medium used in the course. True interactions with other learners, the

instructor, and the technology results [*sic*] in a reciprocal exchange of information. The exchange of information is intended to enhance knowledge development in the learning environment….Ultimately the goal of interaction is to increase understanding of the course content or mastery of the defined goals. (p. 4)

Thurmond's definition includes four types of interaction: learner-learner, learner-instructor, learner-content, and learner-interface with technology. The first three were originally put forth by Moore (1989), who identified them as present in traditional and web-based environments. The fourth type, learner-interface, refers to learner and technology interaction (Hillman et al., 1994). According to Swan (2003), interaction is "central to the concepts of both learning and computer mediation" (p. 16).

Interaction and communication are foundational to Chickering and Gamson's (1987) Seven Principles for Good Practice in undergraduate education. The Seven Principles consist of (a) encouraging student/faculty contact, (b) developing reciprocity and cooperation among students, (c) engaging in active learning, (d) providing prompt feedback, (e) emphasizing time on task, (f) communicating high expectations, and (g) acknowledging and respecting diversity in talents and learning styles. These principles have been employed for setting standards in undergraduate education (The Ohio Learning Network Taskforce, 2002). Relevancy and active use of the Seven Principles to support best practices are found in all types of educational delivery systems today, including online (Batts, 2008; Batts, Colaric, & McFadden, 2006; Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996; Taylor, 2002).

Batts et al. (2006) surveyed both instructors and students in online undergraduate courses ($N = 548$ students and 31 instructors from two universities) to study whether instructors were using the Seven Principles. Comparing the mean ratings of the students for each principle with the mean of the instructors revealed agreement on the perceived usage of the Seven Principles.

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Gomez Alvarez's (2005) quantitative survey study found students' perceptions of the Seven

Principles were positively related to perceived learning and satisfaction.

An espoused assumption among numerous educators is that there is an inherent reduction

in the types and levels of interaction between instructors and students in a web-based course

(Lavooy & Newlin, 2003; Sher, 2009). The major criticism is a loss of f2f interaction between

students and instructors and among students (Gilbert & Moore, 1998; Sher, 2009). According to

Lavooy and Newlin (2003) "This assumption does not appear to be based on any empirical,

experiential, or significant anecdotal evidence" (p. 158). They argue that this view ignores a

fundamental aspect of web instruction: Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). In actuality,

class time available to each student is greater in an online course as compared to the traditional

setting (Gilbert & Moore, 1998; Yoon, 2003). Web-based education allows for more frequent

interactions and collaborations with instructors, peers, and other experts through online

communities (Thurmond & Wambach, 2004; Yoon, 2003). Digital interactions have the benefit

of being "stored, retrieved, and disseminated anytime and anywhere" (Yoon, 2003, p. 21).

Sher (2009), with the intent of departing from the traditional comparative design,

conducted an empirical study ($N = 208$ randomly selected students) using a web-based

instrument and regression analyses to investigate the relationships among students' perceived

learning and interaction dynamics within a web-based learning environment. The study reported

student-instructor interaction and student-student interaction as significant contributors to

perceived student learning and satisfaction. Frederickson, Pickett, Shea, Pelz, and Swan (2000),

examining asynchronous learning, found perceived learning was positively related to teacher

interaction, student participation, and peer interaction.

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Web-based communication can provide a nonthreatening climate and allow reflective time and greater equality for discussion participation (Gilbert & Moore, 1998; Moller et al., 2008; Yoon, 2003). Larson and Keiper (2002), comparing qualitative data from a f2f class discussion with an online electronic threaded discussion, reported some students who did not participate often in the f2f class talked more in online discussion. Jiang and Ting's 2000 study revealed students perceived a better experience in learning in courses that emphasized online discussion. Students were found to be more satisfied and perceived they learned more when more of the course grade was based on discussion participation (Swan, 2001).

Prompt and timely feedback, one of the Seven Principles for good teaching, has been identified as a critical variable in student learning (Berge, 2002; Chickering & Erhmann, 1996; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Hara & Kling, 2000; Vrasidas & McIsaac, 1999). For example, in a qualitative study using tape recordings, observation, and semi-structured interviews, students ($N = 7$) reported a major influencer for engagement and participation was the teacher's prompt feedback (Vrasidas & McIsaac, 1999). Lack of prompt and timely feedback regarding students' performance can contribute to frustration and/or ambiguity about how they are progressing and what they can do to improve (Chickering & Erhmann, 1996; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Hara & Kling, 2000). "Interaction with the teacher is the most significant contributor to perceived learning" (Frederickson et al., 2000, p. 24). Web-based learner-instructor interaction was directly related to students' perceived learning, in a quantitative study by Jiang and Ting (2000), and was found to be the best predictor for online and traditional course effectiveness by Hay, Hodgkinson, Peltier, and Drago (2004).

The technical (learner-interface interaction) aspects of online delivery, including issues of navigation, the interpreting and following of instructions, the locating of information, and confusion with text layouts and choices, can result in students' feeling negative emotions, such as frustration, confusion, anger, and/or isolation, to name a few (Astleitner & Leutner, 2000; O'Regan, 2003; Redden, 2003; Wegerif, 1998). Moreover, assessing emotions online is difficult without the range of non-verbal cues observed in body language, facial expressions, gestures, and voice intonation (McFadden, Maiter, & Dumbrill, 2002; Vrisadas & McIsaac, 2002). Redden (2003) recommended that instructors personalize communication, provide encouragement, and respond quickly to online learners' problems, because such problems usually involve some type of emotion. Inviting students to post questions or concerns about design and expectations early on provides a timely and immediate way for resolution.

Although Swan (2003) and Thurmond and Wambach (2004) reported agreement on the importance of interaction as an essential element for learning online, they suggested caution in making a causal relationship between interaction and learning effectiveness. They cited the inconclusiveness of research in this area, because it is grounded primarily in the perceptions of learning and satisfaction and not in actual learning outcomes. Thurmond and Wambach reviewed over 100 research studies involving the four types of interaction discussed earlier. Their literature review reported a lack of experimental design studies, with the majority of studies using descriptive and exploratory designs conducted in the natural setting. Thurmond and Wambach recommended the development and use of a valid and reliable psychometric instrument to assess interaction in web-based courses.

Meaningful learning. An intentional web-course design, implemented using strong

facilitation skills to maximize interaction and promote a sense of community, provides the milieu

for deep meaningful learning. The acquisition of meaningful learning involves interactivity

(learner-content interaction), use of reflection (metacognition), and assessment activities, which

are the final areas to be reviewed in this section regarding the development of an online learning

environment and pedagogical strategies. These elements provide the way and the extent to which

learners acquire understanding and subsequent transfer of knowledge (Berge, 2002; Bransford et

al., 1999; Carmean & Haefner, 2002; Zhang, 2005). Laurillard's conversational model,

specifically developed to address learning in a web-based environment, presents a conceptual

framework to understand the construction of meaningful learning (Laurillard, 1993, 2002). The

model emphasizes the role of iterative dialoguing between instructor and student(s) and the

supportive role of information and communication technologies in developing activities and

tasks necessary for optimal learning.

Laurillard's model posits the necessity of dialogue occurring at both a theoretical and

practical level for deeper learning (Laurillard, 1993, 2002). Therefore dialogue occurs on two

levels: *discursive* (conceptual/theoretical) and *interactive* (active, practical, and experiential).

Learners bridge the two levels by engaging in *adaptation* and *reflection* (Laurillard, 1993, 2002).

Aligning with Vgotsky (1978), a premise of this model is that learning is more than observing

and experiencing the world. It involves examining other people's experiences, arguments, and

perceptions through social interaction. The instructor's task is to deliver content in a culture of

inquiry through tasks and activities generated from the course's learning objectives. This entails

identifying the best use of available technologies for delivery. Students review the course

objectives, assess their existing knowledge, and identify learning goals. Instructors gather

assessment data, including the students' beginning knowledge and experiences, along with their

learning styles to inform the delivery of course content. New knowledge is constructed through

the process of *discursive* and *interactive* dialoguing (between learner(s) and instructor), using

adaptation and *reflection* in an environment supported by a variety of technologies. Frequent and

timely instructor feedback is an essential element of the learning process. Practical use of

formative and summative assessments can be developed by the instructor, using challenging

"real" world situations to examine, interact, and reflect in the promotion of meaningful student

learning (Laurillard, 2002). Research and a more extensive literature review of key components

of this process, including interactivity, reflection, and assessment, are discussed.

Interactivity. Interactive learning refers to knowledge acquired "through inquiry-based

collaborative interaction with other learners; teachers become co-learners and act as facilitators"

(U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 4). The term *interactivity* derives from the word

combination of interaction and activity, referring to the active engagement and participation in

the building of understanding and knowledge through interaction with peers, instructors, content,

and technology (Berge, 2002; Jaffee, 2003; Laurillard, 2002; Moore, 1989; Palloff & Pratt, 2005;

Zhang, 2005). Core principles, for engaging the learner in what Carmean and Haefner (2002)

referred to as "deeper learning," were identified based on advanced learning research (Bransford

et al., 1999; Brown, 2000**;** Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996; Marchese, 1997; Merrill, 2002).

Meaningful understanding of content is achieved when learning is social, active, contextual,

engaging, and student-owned (Carmean & Haefner, 2002). Knowledge is built as students make

meaning of what they are learning and why they are learning, personally connecting with the

content through complex and challenging collaborative activities. Active engagement and critical thinking are facilitated by instructors presenting relevant authentic projects, tasks, or investigation of real-world, problem-solving activities (Carmean & Haefner, 2002; Gunn et al., 2007; Shen et al., 2007; Silberman & Auerbach, 1998). The pedagogical strategy of individual, small group, and whole group sequencing facilitates deeper learning (Gunn et al., 2007; Smilkstein, 2003). Use of small group and whole group discussions elicits multiple perspectives and challenge students' suppositions (Berge, 2002; Carmean & Haefner, 2002; Hannafin et al., 2003). Inquiry-based questioning, storytelling, metaphors, debate, and games constitute other pedagogical tools found to facilitate effective online learning (Berge, 2002; Carmean & Haefner, 2002; Hannafin et al., 2003; Silberman & Auerbach, 1998; Wang, 2005).

The learner's experience is closely tied to the concept of learner control, explored by Zhang (2005). Zhang's empirical study reported that students performed better when they experienced learner-content interaction in a multimedia web-based environment (active and experiential learning) with control of a flexible learning process (choice in academic tasks and activities) than students did in a traditional classroom. A flexible combination of independent and group activities mediated by technology provided effective interactive learning (Zhang, 2005). The study supported the value of technology as a medium for enhancing interactivity in a web-based environment, aligning with Laurillard's conversational model.

Metacognitive activity and use of reflection. Aligning learning goals, learning activities, and feedback/assessment promote an effective learning online environment (Berge, 2002; Jaffee, 2003). A course consistent with these characteristics would begin with a clear, specific description and structure, objectives, and orientation for navigating the online environment and

technology. Students assess prior knowledge they bring to the learning situation and begin the

metacognitive activity of identifying individual learning goals, including how they will monitor

and regulate their own learning (Berge, 2002; Bransford et al., 1999; Hannifin et al., 2003).

Metacognition has been found empirically to be a predictor of academic achievement (Anderson,

2001; Reingold et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2002). Student deficiencies were attributed to a lack of

metacognitive awareness of personal limitations, in a study by Zimmerman (2002). Students

were asked to set goals for themselves and self-record effectiveness in achievement. Those who

were able to complete the task reported superior achievement perception for personal efficacy

(Zimmerman, 2002).

The influence of metacognition on the outcome of learning is empirically linked to the

processes of reflection (Anderson, 2001; Efklides, 2006; Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Saito & Miwa,

2007; Shen et al., 2007). John Dewey described *reflective thinking* as "active, persistent, and

careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that

support it and the further conclusion to which it tends" (Dewey, 1933, p. 9). The reflection

process provides a way to make meaning of experience: to analyze, integrate, and apply

knowledge, which is constructed through the interaction between the learner's existing schemas

and external experiences. Learning occurs when there is a displacement or disequilibrium: New

information does not align with what the learner already understands, resulting in the learner's

constructing a new cognitive framework to accommodate the new information (Fosnot, 2005,

Gagnon & Collay, 2001; Piaget, 1971). Revising or reframing interpretations of existing

knowledge and beliefs occurs as the learner uses reflective strategies of questioning and self-

monitoring (Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Johansen, 2005). The instructor's guidance and feedback

can function as a system of scaffolding, encouraging the reflective learning process (Efklides, 2006). Reflection provides a strategy for integrating theory and practice (Dewey, 1933; Efklides, 2006; Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Saito & Miwa, 2007; Shen et al., 2007).

Self-reflection is described as both a competency and a process for assessing and improving the learner's progress (Berge, 2002; Mozzani-Miller, 2006; Reingold et al., 2008; Yang, 2010; Zimmerman, 1998). A four-step process for self-reflection, identified by Zimmerman (1998), includes (a) self-evaluation--learner assesses his/her efforts in relation to a standard or goal, followed by (b) attribution--identification of why he/she achieved the results, (c) self-reaction and assessment of the source of learning errors, and (d) adaptation-- the learner considers strategies for improvement. A reflective cycle consists of planning, monitoring, and evaluating (Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998). This cycle is iterative as the learner identifies goals (planning), monitors progress for achievement, and evaluates whether goals are met.

Reflection is a metacognitive activity integrated throughout the web course in a number of ways, including journaling, assignments, discussion, and assessment (Benyon & Forchuk, 1998; Johansen, 2005; Kessler & Lund, 2004). An empirical meta-analysis study that evaluated research-supported practices identified online courses with the strongest evidence for effectiveness of learning as having a mechanism for prompting self-reflection and self-assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Assessment. Learning is the central aim of all educational coursework. Reeves (2000) described *assessment* as "the activity of measuring student learning and other human characteristics such as aptitude and motivation" (p. 102). More than outcomes, assessment can be

a natural extension of learning, improving the quality of learning through active involvement and interaction of faculty and students (Angelo & Cross 1993; Comeaux, 2005; Herron & Wright, 2006; Robles & Braathen, 2002). According to Herron and Wright (2006), among others, assessment should drive the design of the course (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Bransford et al., 1999; Herrington & Oliver, 2000). From this perspective, assessment should be embedded in the course as an ongoing process to reflect the pace and degree of student learning. The process requires clear learning objectives for criteria, assessment measures for learning outcomes, and continuous feedback between student(s) and instructor, with the opportunity for revision (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Berge, 2002; Bransford et al., 1999; Reeves, 2000; Robles & Braathen, 2002). Three key components of assessment, described by Robles and Braathen (2002), are "(1) measurement of the learning objectives, (2) self-assessment for students to measure their own achievement, and (3) interaction and feedback between and among instructors and students" (p. 40).

Assessing online course/learning draws on multiple measures to address learning objectives and encourage application of knowledge. The development and use of a variety of *formative assessments*, which provide students information about their learning on an ongoing basis, and *summative assessments*, which provide outcomes achieved from the course, are necessary for addressing the complexity of web-based learning (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Gayton, 2005; Robles & Braathen, 2002). According to Gibson (2003), technology mediates learning in new ways that help the instructor to know what the learner knows, in ways that are different from the traditional classroom. Gibson's premise lies in the belief that assessment is unique in a web-based environment due to the accessibility of global knowledge, expanded range of tools for

inquiry, more interactive and responsive applications, and available social networks and schools of thought.

The online learner-centered environment situates students to be actively engaged in every stage of the assessment process—to self-assess, reflect, and self-monitor the learning process in order to identify knowledge and skill gaps and achievement. A variety of assessment techniques support the process. Use of an ungraded pretest provides honest, immediate feedback for assessing where students are at the beginning in relation to learning goals (Gayton, 2005; Robles & Braathen, 2002). Subsequent individual and group assignments with regular and detailed feedback and opportunities for revision provide continuous self-assessment and opportunity for students to negotiate learning and self-correction (Gayton, 2005; Yang, 2010). Formative assessment increases students' learning and transfer of learning. Opportunities to work collaboratively in groups can increase the quality of feedback available from the instructor and peers (Bransford et al., 1999; Gayton, 2005; Robles & Braathen, 2002). Deliberate reflection and continuous assessment of learning are enhanced when the instructor is actively involved in online monitoring of both individual and group activities, providing ongoing and timely feedback (Bransford et al., 1999; Comeaux, 2005; Reeves, 2000; Robles & Braathen, 2002). Reflection and ongoing self-assessment promote transfer and consolidation of learning.

Effective formative assessment relies on the student's thinking being made visible (Bransford et al., 1999). Web-based technology provides possibilities for knowing, analyzing, and documenting students' understanding. Gibson (2003) described the technology role in online assessment as a new perspective, with the potential "to create a body of 'evidence' of useable and available knowledge observed in natural settings of the learner" (p. 311). A typical but

unique tool used online, which allows instructors to better assess and monitor students' progress of understanding, is the threaded discussion (Singh & Pan, 2004).

Reeves (2000) proposed the use of alternative assessment in online courses due to the nature of the student-centered learning environment. He suggested three categories of alternative assessments: (a) cognitive assessment, (b) performance assessment, and (c) portfolio assessment. *Cognitive assessment* pertains to the development and use of critical thinking skills and processing of higher order thinking for meaningful learning. Cognitive assessment can provide a measure of students' performance and understanding. Problem-based learning, a form of cognitive assessment, provides an authentic and real-world application of knowledge and ways to measure higher-order thinking skills (Barrows, 2002; Chang et al., 2009; Reeves, 2000; Robles & Braathen, 2002). Problem-based learning can be used as a formative or summative measure. Baturay and Bay (2010) found that students who worked on problem-based projects felt much more "connected" to other class members and scored higher in the posttest according to the study's language scores than did the control group.

Performance assessment refers to the demonstration of learning through application of knowledge and skills (Gayton, 2005; Reeves, 2000). Web-based environments use advantages of multi-media technology, such as of web-conferencing and interactive simulations, to deliver performance assessments. Video recording and web-based simulations, engaging students in complex problem solving, are two of many ways to demonstrate applied knowledge (Gayton, 2005; Reeves, 2000; Robles & Braathen, 2002). Performance assessments can be self, peer, and instructor evaluated. The use of a rubric increases formative assessment by providing clarity of the assignments' expectations and feedback.

The final category, *portfolio assessment*, consists of the use of electronic portfolios. Use of this type of assessment captures growth and progress of student learning over a period of time. It provides students and instructors a method to review progress and document what learning has occurred. Typical documents that comprise a portfolio may include assignments, logs, reflections, projects, and instructor's feedback (Lynch & Purnawarman, 2004; Reeves, 2000).

In summary, knowledge from online learning research has moved instructional designers beyond the use of web-based versions of traditional classroom courses to construction of learning environments based on research-supported online pedagogy. Online learning strategies can facilitate collaborative, interactive, student-centered, authentic, and reflective environments to socially construct knowledge for meaningful learning. With the knowledge of learning theories (brain-based learning and social constructivism) and awareness of the strengths of synchronous and asynchronous environments, the question arises whether a single mode of instructional delivery can provide "sufficient choice, engagement, social contact, relevance, and context needed to facilitate successful performance" (Singh, 2003, p. 51). An alternative advocated by many educators is the use of a hybrid or blended delivery of instruction.

Blended/Hybrid Delivery

A merging of online and traditional course delivery is referred to as *blended* or *hybrid learning* and is evolving in higher education (Ayala, 2009; Dziuban et al., 2004; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003). Ayala (2009) defined blended learning as the "purposeful integration of traditional (i.e., face-to-face) and online learning in order to provide educational opportunities that maximize the benefits of each platform and thus more effectively facilitate student learning" (p. 277). Dziuban et al. (2004) refined the delivery mode criteria by stating that blended learning

refers to "courses that combine face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning and reduced classroom contact hours (reduced seat time)" (p. 2). Reduced seat time distinguishes blended learning from what can be termed *enhanced learning*, which refers to other traditional delivery modes that incorporate online opportunities without loss of seat time (Dziuban et al., 2004; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004).

A continuum of instructional designs, ranging from fully f2f to fully online learning environments, with enhanced and blended designs between the two, can generally be found in higher education institutions. Blended/hybrid learning is more than determining the percentages of time to be spent online and f2f. It is a pedagogical approach that uses an intentional design for delivering a course to support deep and meaningful learning (Ayala, 2009; Dziuban et al., 2004; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003). Blended/hybrid learning reaches beyond the potential of each delivery mode, with the aim of creating a new entity by transforming both structure and method of teaching and learning. "Blended learning endeavors to purposely and seamlessly integrate online and traditional learning in order to create a distinct, new approach with its own merits" (Ayala, 2009, p. 279). Instructors intentionally identify the pedagogical strengths and weaknesses of each delivery mode to design complementary instruction to maximize learning (Dziuban et al., 2004; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003). Blended delivery of a course requires a reconceptualization and reorganization of the teaching-learning process in relation to the specific course objectives and content. Blended/hybrid designs are as diverse as course offerings. Each design is uniquely tailored to address the course content and learning objectives, and integrates the strengths of synchronous

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(f2f) and asynchronous (text-based) learning environments (Ayala, 2009; Dziuban et al., 2004; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003).

Osguthorpe and Graham (2003) suggested that educators may have similar purposes for developing and using blended/hybrid learning environments, including pedagogical richness, access to knowledge, social interaction, and learner control (self-directedness and increasing personal choice). Theory-based pedagogy for improving learning reflects the social constructivism tenets of a student-centered environment, rich in interaction, collaboration, reflection, and social negotiation of knowledge within a community of learners. Using a blended learning design allows an instructor to use research-informed pedagogy to create the best learning environment to fit the needs of the learners.

An asynchronous online environment places the learner in an active role for continuous interaction and feedback with student(s) and instructor(s), facilitating a sense of engagement in a community of inquiry, using discussion, chat rooms, and email (Huang & McConnell, 2009; King, 2002; Rovai & Jordan, 2004; Swan, 2001; Yanes, Pena, & Curts, 2006). A benefit of online discussion is that all learners participate actively and are given opportunity for thoughtful and reflective dialoguing to debate, negotiate, and find agreement that encourages higher order thinking skills (Ally, 2004; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; King, 2002; Yanes et al., 2006). Asynchronous learning utilizes multiple technologies to promote interactivity, including authentic individual and group assignments with ongoing assessment, engaging students all week long (King, 2002; Yanes et al., 2006).

Synchronous (f2f) learning promotes socialization, providing learners the opportunity to interact verbally and distinguish non-verbal cues (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003; Rovai & Jordan,

2004). Traditional classrooms provide more spontaneity and enthusiasm, contributing to a sense of community and an affective climate of safety and trust to support learning (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Rovai & Jordan, 2004). Having an opportunity to meet f2f reduces the feelings of isolation and desire for personal contact and immediate feedback that students cite as problematic of fully online courses (Hara & Kling, 2002; Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006). Despite the social and non-verbal communication benefits of blended learning, drawbacks for this delivery include the demand for meeting at a designated time, potentially interfering with work and family schedules, child care needs, and transportation.

Blended/Hybrid Learning Research

According to Bonk (2004) and Ayala (2009), limited research regarding blended learning is available. Preliminary research findings indicating benefits for blended learning are beginning to be reported. At the University of Central Florida, after 7 years of research that tracked students' success (grades) and attrition rates, blended learning success rates and attrition were found to be comparable to those of f2f courses (Dziuban et al., 2004). Zhao, Lei, Chun Lai, and Tan (2005) conducted a meta-analysis study on distance education to identify factors that affect the effectiveness of learning. The study reported that although on an aggregate level most f2f and online course comparisons resulted in no significant differences, on closer scrutiny of the data, 67% of the studies revealed web delivery produced better student outcomes than did f2f settings. With deeper analysis, the delivery mode that resulted in the most positive learning outcomes consisted of blended environments, using both asynchronous and synchronous forms of interaction. Zhao et al.'s (2005) findings cited interaction involving the areas of instructor and media involvement as key to effective online delivery.

Rovai and Jordan (2004) used a causal-comparative design to study the relationship of sense of community among traditional, blended, and fully online courses in higher education. The instrument used for the study was the 20 self-report items of the Classroom Community Scale (CCS) to measure connectedness and learning (Rovai, 2002a). Sixty-eight graduate students enrolled in the three delivery modes. The blended course "possessed a significantly higher adjusted mean connectedness score than either the traditional or online courses with a large effect size" (Rovai & Jordan, 2004, p. 9). The blended course also had a significantly higher adjusted-mean learning score than did either of the other two modes of delivery, with a medium effect size (Rovai & Jordan, 2004). The findings of this study support the purpose of blended learning to optimize the strengths of both online and f2f learning.

A recent empirical meta-analysis providing blended learning findings was conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2009). Unique to this review was the evaluation of practices in exclusively online (web-based) learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Earlier meta-analyses included other forms of distance modes of delivery. Findings from the meta-analysis revealed, "*On average, students in online learning conditions performed better than those receiving face-to-face instruction*" (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. ix). The meta-analysis identified blended instruction as having a larger advantage, with an effect size + 0.35 ($p < .001$) relative to purely f2f instruction, than those studies comparing f2f with purely online instruction, with an average effect size + 0.14 ($p < .05$) (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Thirteen practices were analyzed as potential sources for the effectiveness of online learning compared to f2f designs. Two variables, blended rather than fully online instruction and the

expansion of time on task in the online delivery, were found to be statistically significant influences on effectiveness (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Studies comparing blended learning courses with those fully online were reviewed for closer analysis. Reviewing 10 studies in this category, the findings varied between no significant differences, favorable for purely online, and favorable outcomes for blended learning environments. Analysts attributed the variance in outcomes to conditions in terms of content and quality of instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Researchers suggested the effectiveness in courses is more likely to be a result of the intentional course design, in light of new instructional and technology choices, given the strengths and limitations of each rather than the delivery mode (Voos, 2003). Blended learning provides the instructor the opportunity to use the spectrum of course delivery to best meet the learning objectives of the course. Bonk (2004) predicted, "The vast majority of courses in higher education will undoubtedly have some Web component by the end of the decade" (p. 15).

Interviewing Skills

To fully inform the instructional design for teaching-learning interviewing skills in hybrid delivery, pertinent literature empirically supporting interviewing skills training and the use of online learning for skills acquisition is reviewed. The section begins with the definition and purpose of interviewing skills.

At the heart of social work practice is the importance of building a professional and helping relationship with clients. "The social work endeavor takes place in an interpersonal interactional process" (Johnson & Yanca, 2007, p. 164). Relationship building, effective use of verbal and nonverbal behavior, and proficiency in interviewing involve use of skills (Kirst-

Ashman & Hull, 2009). "Social workers spend more time interviewing than in any other single activity. Interviewing skills are the primary skills on which all other aspects of social work depend" (Kadushin & Kadushin, 1997, p. 22). Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, and Larson (2006) described the purpose of an interview as the activity to "exchange information systematically, with a view toward illuminating and solving problems, promoting growth, or planning strategies or actions aimed at improving the quality of life for people" (p. 44). The interview process has structure, direction, and focus, and relies on basic interpersonal skills selected and adapted by the social worker to support and foster client change. Skill learning is essential for effective social work practice. Acquiring skill competency is a developmental and maturational process relying on knowledge building, observation, practice, opportunities to self evaluate, and the giving and receiving of constructive feedback.

The term *skill* is defined in varied ways in social work textbooks. Morales, Sheafor and Scott (2009) refer to skill as the action component of practice and describe it as the appropriate selection of techniques for a particular situation and their effective use. Cournoyer (2011) provided a more comprehensive definition:

> *A social work skill is a circumscribed set of discrete cognitive and behavioral actions that are consistent and congruent with (1) research-based knowledge; (2) social work values, ethics, and obligations; (3) the essential facilitative qualities or the 'core conditions'; (4) the characteristics of professionalism; and (5) a legitimate social work purpose within the context of a phase or process of practice.* (p.7)

These previous definitions identify the role of skill in social work practice as facilitating action for implementation of the change process. Skills are essential for all social work activity and therefore indicate the need for professionals to understand and appropriately use a wide variety of skills in diverse situations. Interviewing skills have particular purpose and are used to

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establish a trusting relationship between worker and client as well as facilitate the change activity at the core of social work activity. To identify the specific basic interviewing skills used during this process, a list compiled by the *Social Work Encyclopedia* (2008) is useful:

> Attending and active listening, using open questions, seeking clarification and details, paraphrasing and summarizing, reflecting feelings and client's perceptions, use of silence, empathizing, noticing client's nonverbal behaviors, exploring client meaning, encouraging and complimenting, providing information, setting goals, reframing, educating, challenging and providing feedback and making suggestions (Bogo, 2006; De Jong & Berg, 2008; Ivey & Ivey, 2007; Kadushin, 1997). (p. 540)

Basic interviewing skills are taught as foundational skills in accredited undergraduate- and graduate-level social work programs in an effort to ready students for field placements and work with "real clients" (Chang et al., 2009; Cournoyer, 2011). The CSWE (2008) accreditation core competency, "2.1.10(a) - (d) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities" (p. 6), relates to the skill behaviors mandated for course content. Various skill and/or practice textbooks using similar teaching methodologies and strategies for learning interviewing skills are available for use in social work programs (Chang et al., 2009; Cournoyer, 2011; Cummins, Sevel, & Pedrick, 2006; DeJong & Berg, 2008; Ivey & Ivey, 2008; Kadushin & Kadushin, 1997).

The common learning approach is developmental, presenting one skill at a time, using a systematic learning process typically beginning with defining the skill and ending with active practice. Research-informed teaching-learning methodologies formerly used to develop skill competency rely on a combination of didactic and experiential methods (Chang et al., 2009; Hill & Lent, 2006; Ivey & Ivey, 2008; Mumm, 2006). The assumption of the didactic-experiential approach is that the student will translate theoretical knowledge into action during the

experiential phase of learning and will gain personal self-knowledge in the process (Chang et al., 2009; Cournoyer, 2011; Cummins et al., 2006; Ivey & Ivey, 2008).

Common teaching strategies and methods include a combination of reading for knowledge, writing exercises, discussing case studies using problem-based learning, demonstrating or modeling skill use, and practicing (rehearsing) using role-play (recording for replay). A combination of instructor, peer, and self evaluation is typically used in these methods in varying degrees for facilitating learning and assessing skill competency (Chang et al., 2009; Cournoyer, 2011; Cummins et al., 2006; DeJong & Berg, 2008; Ivey & Ivey, 2008; Kadushin & Kadushin, 1997).

Interviewing Skills Training Research

Reviewing interviewing skills literature indicates that over 40 years ago, researchers were identifying and categorizing skills essential for effective helping relationships, with the purpose of developing effective training programs to be used in helping professions, such as social work, psychology, and counseling (Carkhuff, 1969; Ivey & Authier, 1978). A call for accountability to demonstrate effective social work practice was the emphasis at the *Big Sky Summer Symposium* in 1977, resulting in the seminal book, *The Pursuit of Competence in Social Work*, a collection of papers from distinguished educators and practitioners from several countries (Clark & Arkava, 1979). Central to the symposium was a call for empirical evidence related to the structured interviewing skills training programs developing in related disciplines in the 1970s. Teaching social work practice skills at the time included the systematic training programs of Carkhoff (1969), with emphasis on human relations, Ivey's (1971) "microcounseling," emphasizing a

developmental approach using single skill acquisition, and Kagan's advances in use of video equipment, with Interpersonal Process Recall, among others (Briar, 1979).

Meta-analyses from the related disciplines of psychology, counseling, counseling psychology, and social work have concluded that microcounseling is effective for teaching a wide variety of helping skills (Baker & Daniels, 1989; Baker, Daniels, & Greeley, 1990; Dickson & Bamford, 1995; Hill & Lent, 2006; Sowers-Hoag & Thyer, 1985; Wodarski, Feit, & Green, 1995). Sowers-Hoag and Thyer (1985) reviewed 14 empirical studies that evaluated the effectiveness of specific approaches in teaching graduate or undergraduate social work student interviewing skills. Most studies found a skills increase, with the best outcomes occurring when training consisted of teaching discrete skills in a highly systematic format, indicative of the microcounseling approach (Sowers-Hoag & Thyer, 1985). Other reviews and meta-analyses, spanning 25 years from 1980 to 2005, indicated (a) experiential strategies (e.g., use of feedback, role-play/practice, demonstration/modeling, self observation via video play-back) were more successful than (b) didactic techniques (e.g., lecturing, discussing, and reading written material), and (c) using a combination offered an effective skill training paradigm (Baker & Daniels, 1989; Dickson & Bamford, 1995; Hill & Lent, 2006; Mumm, 2006; Sowers-Hoag & Thyer, 1985; Wodarski et al., 1995). Uses of self-report and simulated interviews were the primary measures of assessment during this period. Carillo, Gallant and Thyer (1993) used student videotaped simulated interviews, evaluated by independent raters, as an alternative outcome measure.

Concerns regarding methodological weaknesses were repeatedly cited in the meta-analyses by Dickson and Bamford (1995), Hill and Lent (2006), Sowers-Hoag and Thyer (1985), and Wodarski et al. (1995). Weaknesses included overall low internal validity, with training

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conditions (context and structure of training) inadequately described, and failure to isolate which techniques were contributing to skill gain. Other concerns were small convenience samples and lack of random assignment. Research during this period focused on the influence of specific methods of instruction and training curriculum on skill learning (Carillo et al., 1993; Hill & Lent, 2006; Mumm, 2006). An issue raised during this period was the tendency for research to be restricted to the impact of training on students' performance after intervention and within the training context, raising the issue of transfer of skill learning and "teaching.

Current Context of Skill Learning: Competency, Assessment, and Related Research

Accredited schools of social work education are required by CSWE to comply with the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) in demonstrating students' mastery of core competencies, including the use of interviewing skills. A required core competency relates to the social work student's ability to facilitate appropriately the skills needed to promote "the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation at multiple levels" (CSWE, 2008, p. 6). Social work instructors must develop assessment measures to provide evidence of students' learning and performing interviewing skills.

Despite the ongoing need for identifying student acquisition of interviewing skills and appropriate outcome measurement procedures to reflect student skill competency, research in this area "has slowed to a virtual standstill" (Hill & Lent, 2006, p. 164). Hill and Lent (2006) conducted a helping skills meta-analysis, concluding the following recommendations for future training study:

- Use specific training procedures to provide a clearer link between training content and outcomes;

- Provide trainees with theoretical framework of how helping skills fit into the therapeutic process;

- Use multiple outcome measures (e.g., pre and post performance; pre, during, and post self-efficacy; and transcription) to identify skills use;

- Use real, unscripted problems for volunteer clients;

- Use multiple assessment perspectives (e.g., trainee, peer, instructor, client, and external judges);

- Use skill maintenance plan;

- Consider structural aspects of training (e.g., time and sequence);

- Use good research methodology.

Although limited, the most recent studies of outcome measures used to determine students' performance in learning interviewing skills from the past decade are reviewed. These include recent studies examining (a) the use of training manuals for effective skill learning, (b) effective pedagogy (including theoretical base) and learning environment for skill acquisition, (c) assessment measures for skill competency, and (d) alternative delivery of skill training using a web-based learning environment.

Use of training manuals to facilitate skill competency. Recent studies, with the purpose of validating manual-based training programs to teach introductory interviewing skills and relationship building, include the dissertations of Baez (2003) and Menen (2004). The chosen curriculum in both studies was Chang and Scott's (1999) *Basic Interviewing Skills*: A

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Workbook for Practitioners. Baez chose the training manual based on three specific techniques

believed to be effective in skill training and increasing self-efficacy. The three techniques

include:

> (a) Establishing clear, well defined goals and steps…; (b) allowing sufficient opportunity
> to practice the skills in order to promote mastery; and (c) increasing the learner's
> awareness of progress and achievement by using supervisor, peer and self-evaluation
> throughout the process. (p. 8)

Baez's (2003) study involved 32 first-year graduate psychology students, using a within-

subjects design to examine the influence of Chang et al.'s (2009) training program on developing

various skills. Learning outcomes were identified using a one-group design and pre/posttest

videotapes of students' interviews, evaluated by four independent raters. Eight skill categories

were evaluated and found to have improved significantly at the $p < .0001$ level. The degree of

mean improvement ranged from .53 to 1.63 points on a 5-point Likert scale, producing a large

effect. During the course of training, the skills first learned showed a greater proficiency than the

skills more recently introduced (Baez, 2003).

As a follow up to Baez's study, Menen (2004) conducted a study with similar design and

use of Chang et al.'s training manual to assess the effectiveness of the training program in

developing therapeutic relationship skills. This study considered the effectiveness of the same

eight skill domains evaluated in Baez's study. The study consisted of 30 first-year psychology

graduate students who videotaped pre and post training, brief therapy sessions using standardized

vignettes, which were evaluated by four trained raters (Menen, 2004). The findings, after

training, indicated significant increases in seven of the eight skill domains and all core

interpersonal categories, including developing relationship skills.

The two studies supported the value of using a systematic approach for effectively teaching-learning basic interviewing skills, as in a training manual. The studies reflected the use of student video recordings (pre and post), assessed by external raters, to determine skill growth and change as a performance measure. Limitations preventing generalizing conclusions are present in both studies, including small convenience samples, weakness of research design (single group, pre/post test), and no comparative method.

Pedagogy, learning environment, and related theoretical literature. Although limited studies in social work are available, the more prolific and recent research appears to be coming from social work researchers in the United Kingdom (UK) (Cartney, 2006; Hargreaves & Hadlow, 1997; Koprowska, 2003; Moss et al., 2007). Impetus for U.K. social work research comes from England's 2002 Department of Health requirements related to the new social work degree that all students will learn communication skills and be assessed (Cartney, 2006). Funding was made available to promote teaching and assessing skills, with many U.K. universities establishing labs for skill training (Cartney, 2006; Moss et al., 2007). Research reflected the funding impetus for studies that focused on teaching-learning pedagogy supported by theoretical approaches as well as best practices for assessment (Cartney, 2006; Koprowski, 2003; Moss et al., 2007).

Theoretical perspectives and teaching-learning process promoting interviewing skill competency. Skills' training is under-conceptualized, with few studies providing a theoretical approach for the teaching-learning experience regarding skill competency (Bernotavicz, 1994; Hill & Lent, 2006; Koprowska, 2003; Moss et al., 2007). Interacting forces found to impact skills training include (a) students' characteristics, (b) design of skills training, and (c) learning

environment (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Koprowska, 2003). To affect competent skill development, an instructional design that integrates meta-competencies of self-assessment and reflective practice within a safe learning environment can address all three interacting forces (Bernotavicz, 1994; Koprowska, 2003; Moss et al., 2007; Schon, 1983).

Theoretical perspectives identified as influencing the instructional process and climate for skill learning include Vgotsky's (1978) social constructivism , Kolb's (1984) experiential and active learning cycle, Schon's (1983) concepts of reflection in and on action, and Bandura's (1977, 1986) self-efficacy theory (Bernotavicz, 1994; Koprowska, 2003; Moss et al., 2007). The assumptions drawn from these theoretical frameworks are that learners participate "actively in their own learning, making discoveries, formulating hypotheses, testing these out and learning from experience" (Koprowska, 2003, p. 294). The optimal skill-learning environment is perceived to be interactive, knowing that learners come with past experiences, goals, and expectations of learning, while the instructor has the opportunity to establish and influence the context for maximizing learning. Koprowska (2003) developed ideal skill training based on these assumptions.

Koprowska's (2003) ideal skill training included the didactic method of lecture to provide knowledge about a specific interviewing skill and experiential methods, including video recording of role play scenarios, using real-life practice situations in a small group context, along with instructor demonstration (Gask, 1998; Hargreaves & Hadlow, 1997; Moss et al., 2007). Role play is provided for learning by doing, and the small group context provides an opportunity for self-assessment and peer feedback. Trust and safety, along with ground rules, are established in the beginning to reduce anxiety. Belief in a sense of self-efficacy is reflected in student

proficiency. To begin this process, students are asked self-reflection questions about what they would like to improve in regard to skills and how their small group might be helpful. Kaprowska's (2003) skill learning process is learner centered and constructivist, giving the lead to the student whose work is being viewed to direct the feedback (Gask, 1998). Skill courses can spark conflicting emotions, including anxiety and desire to excel. Developing a climate of trust, a learner-centered environment reduces personal preoccupations that can interrupt meaningful skill learning (Koprowska, 2003; McFadden, 2005; Moss et al., 2007).

Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to organize and carry out actions to accomplish a task successfully and produce desired results (Bandura, 1977). "Self-efficacy is more than a self-perception of competency. It is an individual's assessment of his or her confidence in their [*sic*] ability [to] execute specific skills in a particular set of circumstances and thereby achieves a successful outcome" (Holden et al., 2002, p. 116). Self-efficacy theory, a component of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, is being examined in the social work discipline as a promising theoretical perspective to guide skill learning as well as a valid measure for assessing skill competency (Holden et al., 2002; Petrovich, 2004; Rishel & Majewski, 2009). Extensive empirical research relating self-efficacy beliefs to performance and motivation has been applied to a variety of academic, professional, and work-related performance and behavior settings (Larson & Daniels, 1998; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991). Bandura and Locke (2003) evaluated nine large scale meta-analyses across diverse spheres of functioning that used a wide range of methodological and analytic strategies, finding converging evidence to verify "that perceived self-efficacy and personal goals enhance motivation and performance attainments" (p. 87).

A central model to self-efficacy theory, *triadic reciprocal causation*, considers personal factors, behaviors, and environmental events as interacting and influencing each other (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2002; Parker, 2006). The model suggests the way individuals interpret their performance attainment alters their self-beliefs and their environments, leading to altering their subsequent performance (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1996). This process occurs through self-reflection, which Bandura described as the most uniquely human capability, because it allows a person to evaluate and alter her or his thinking and behavior (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1996).

The triadic reciprocal causation model provides the educator a perspective for understanding students' varying levels of performance. The model also distinguishes ways for instructors to structure the learning process to encourage performance acquisition by using and building on constructive experiences (Parker, 2006; Petrovich, 2004). "Academic confidence…is proposed as a mediating variable between the individual's inherent abilities, their learning styles and the opportunities afforded by the academic environment of higher education" (Sander & Sanders, 2003, p. 4). The educator's challenge is to get the learner to believe in his or her personal capabilities to successfully perform a given task. Bandura (1977, 1986) identified four information sources or types of experiences from which an individual's self-efficacy expectations are derived. The four sources provide instructional guidance in developing a learning environment that improves self-efficacy and confidence of the learner. They consist of

- Vicarious experiences--observing valued models;
- Enactive mastery--successful practicing of skill or performing a behavior (self-confidence enhanced when learning skill is broken down into easily mastered subskills and presented in a systematic manner);

- Verbal persuasion--receiving encouragement and support from valued others;

- Physiological arousal--maintaining one's emotions (e.g., anxiety) at a

    self-supporting level rather than harmful level (Petrovich, 2004).

Petrovich (2004), a social work professor, proposed using self-efficacy theory in social

work teaching to enforce Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and promote confidence in skills

learning. The teaching-learning strategies recommended by Petrovich include

- Frequent practice opportunities and ability for students to observe themselves and

    others performing successfully (e.g., demonstrations, role plays, and video feedback);

- Continuous feedback with emphasis on strengths and positive feedback;

- Developmental training, systematically presented by breaking skills into identifiable

    subparts and by enhancing student awareness of strategies used;

- Student's subjective appraisal of each practice application as well as self-appraisals of

    past performances – student use of self-assessment and reflection for self-appraisal of

    competency and ability;

- Learning process to promote students' ability to overcome difficulties over time

    through sustained effort. Use of real-life scenarios to include complex and

    challenging client scenarios and journaling to record experience;

- Strategies to improve management of physiological and affective states-- journaling

    about challenges and appraisal of personal efficacy.

Research has suggested a student's performance and motivation are linked to his or her

self-beliefs of efficacy and confidence. Understanding the role of student confidence in learning

and performing skills becomes an essential part of the instructional design as well as the evaluation process to measure gains in skill competency.

Outcome measures for interviewing skills learning. The concept of self-efficacy (confidence) as a potential outcome assessment measure has been studied in social work in the past decade (Holden, Anastas, & Meenaghan, 2003, 2005; Holden, Barker, Meenaghan, & Rosenberg, 1999; Holden, Barker, Rosenberg, & Onghena, 2007, 2008; Petrovich, 2004; Rishel & Majewski, (2009). The Foundation Practice Self-Efficacy scale (Holden et al., 2003, 2005) and the Evaluation Self-Efficacy scale (Holden et al., 2007, 2008) "have been shown to have high internal reliability, have evidenced content validity, and have demonstrated sensitivity to change" (Rischel & Majewski, 2009, pp. 365-366). As a construct, self-efficacy has appeared frequently in social work literature, "although it has not been widely used to assess the outcomes of social work education itself (Holden et al., 2002, p. 116).

Literature in related helping professions provides support for using self-efficacy as an outcome variable to examine helping skills (Hill & Lent, 2006; Larson & Daniels; 1998; Lent, Hill, & Hoffman, 2003). Hill et al. (2008) suggested self-efficacy "may be an interesting outcome variable to examine on its own right, as it reflects growth in confidence as a helper" (p. 360). Hill et al. recommended the use of multiple perspectives (trainee, external rater, and instructor) and multiple measures to gather data related to skill competency. They conducted a study with 85 undergraduates in three helping-skills classes using multiple perspectives and measures, including changes in self-efficacy. A retrospective method was used, and weekly ratings of self-confidence in using helping skills were collected. An increase in trainees' self-efficacy for using helping skills, both in relation to weekly confidence ratings and end-of-

semester evaluations, was found. At this time, no social work study using self-efficacy specifically as a performance measure for learning interviewing skills has been identified. Given recent development of valid and reliable self-efficacy measures to evaluate practice and overall student competencies, it appears the use of a confidence measure for learning interviewing skills is indicated (Holden et al., 1999; Holden et al., 2003, 2005; Holden et al., 2007, 2008). Multiple measures and perspectives are recommended when assessing gain in skill competency (Hill & Lent, 2006; Hill et al., 2008; Larson & Daniels, 1998; Lent et al., 2003).

Video-recording formative-summative assessment measure. Supported by literature, video feedback has been argued to be "*the* most effective method for improving oral communication skills" (Cartney, 2006, p. 829). The technique has been successfully used as a formative assessment tool for self-observation, self-assessment, and reflection across disciplines, including psychiatry, medicine, nursing, psychology, counseling, social work, and other helping professions (Cartney, 2006; Gask, 1998; Hill & Lent, 2006; Paul, 2010; Zick, Granieri, & Makoul, 2007). Video recording provides opportunity for students to role-play real-life scenarios as practitioner, playback for feedback and self-assessment identifying areas of strengths and areas of improvement. Goals can then be determined with ongoing self-monitoring of learning skills (Cartney, 2006; Moss et al., 2007; Winters, Hauck, Riggs, Clawson, & Collins, 2003).

Cartney (2006) conducted a case study using video for feedback as a summative measure to assess interviewing skills with 32 undergraduate social work students. Recognizing the need for reliability and validity, it was determined the students would first assess themselves. The instructor reviewed the video with use of the student's self assessment to ensure that the student's performance was not over- or underrated (Cartney, 2006). Framed as a learning

experience, each student video recorded a real practice scenario with a professional actor. At the end of training, the student provided a self-reflective account of skill use and relationship building, reflecting on positive aspects and areas for improvement. A questionnaire ($n = 25$ returned) was given, along with an opportunity to participate in a focus group to provide reflection on the assessment experience. Student feedback included feelings of anxiety regarding their video performance and several concerns relating to the artificial nature of the interview process, such as use of an actor, time limited, and the lab setting. Unanimously, the use of a self-reflective, written account of the video was valued as a meaningful learning experience (Cartney, 2006).

Moss et al. (2007) used a summative assessment, similar to Cartney's measure with students, recording a 20-minute interview and writing an evaluation of the skills used. For preparation, students were given criteria and expected skill use prior to the summative activity. Real-life practice scenarios were used for the student-paired role plays. The final grade reflected a combination of scores from the instructor's review and the student's written assessment of the interview. Student feedback indicated performance anxiety and an acceptance of the important and compulsory part that video recording plays in training (Moss et al., 2007). Students reported the value of self-assessment and reflection as a learning activity (Moss et al., 2007). Moss and colleagues found this activity to be time consuming but provided the potential for a "safe and ready for practice" (p. 721) method for students to achieve confidence and competency in skill use. Video recordings provide an outcome measure with multiple assessment perspectives, including those of the students and the instructor (Cartney, 2006; Moss et al., 2007). It provides a quality measure for performance assessment by demonstrating the student's learning of

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knowledge and skills (Reeves, 2000). Continued research to refine and replicate the use of video recording for summative assessment to measure competency is indicated.

Online Interviewing Skills Training Research

Research reviewed relating to learning interviewing skills in an online environment completes the areas explored to inform the development of the study's instructional design. Social work literature regarding web-based skills learning is limited. Studies span the last decade, with focus on practice and interviewing skills related to child welfare, crisis intervention/brief treatment, suicide prevention, and direct intervention (Bellefeuille, 2006; Collins & Jerry, 2005; Jerry & Collins, 2005; Ouellette et al., 2006; Seabury, 2003, 2005; Siebert et al., 2006; Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006; Youn, 2007). Although other forms of distance education, such as satellite broadcasting, interactive television, and computer-aided instruction, have preceded and are currently being used to teach interviewing skills, they are not the focus of this study.

Upon review, the studies related to learning skills in a web-based environment indicated an application of accumulative knowledge. See Table 2 for a summary of the studies and their citations of earlier research included in their study. The first studies by Seabury (2003, 2005) and Siebert et al. (2006) were comparison studies, designed to determine whether students gained skill knowledge using an online (computer-mediated) delivery as compared to the traditional classroom setting. Finding no differences, these researchers gave consideration to what type of web-based learning strategies and environment would best support students' learning of skills.

Table 2

Studies of Online Interviewing Skills Training in Social Work

Researchers	Date	Studies/ Related Course Designs	Findings	Recommendations	Cited by
Seabury	2003	Students learning clinical skills using interactive, simulated video online.	All students passed basic skills quiz.	Conduct comparison study with online/f2f (w/control) groups using same interactive simulated programs.	Siebert & Spaulding-Givens (2006); Youn (2007)
Seabury	2005	Comparison of learning skills (outcome measures) f2f and online, with use of control group (no training).	Using quiz scores, students online scored highest, f2f next, with control group the lowest, with no significant difference.	Encourage other faculty to develop similar programs.	
Jerry & Collins	2005	Discussion of web-based use of video clips for online skills training (2-year action research on technology and pedagogy).	Challenges of web-based technology--delivery format, bandwidth issues, faculty development, teaching time.	Comparison of learning outcomes f2f/online; managing and moderating effect online.	Youn (2007)
Collins & Jerry	2005	Description of hybrid skills training--development/implementation, including delivery, technology, and pedagogical employed.	Program evaluation: 73% retention--1st hybrid cohort, 88% retention--2nd hybrid cohort, comparable to retention rates of on-campus programs.	Compare learning and student satisfaction between equivalent, on-campus hybrid and online courses.	Youn (2007)

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Table 2. *Studies of Online Interviewing Skills Training* (continued)

Researchers	Date	Studies/ Related Course Designs	Findings	Recommendations	Cited by
Siebert & Spaulding-Givens	2006 (Feb)	Description of development , design, and implementation of online clinical skills course.	Need to further explore student assessment and online teaching-learning strategies/Students reported desire for more f2f time.	Consider hybrid, explore technology.	Siebert, Siebert, & Spaulding-Givens (2006); Youn (2007)
Siebert, Seibert, & Spaulding-Givens	2006 (Sp-Su)	Comparison of skills learning in equivalent online and f2f courses, using final assignment, course evaluations, and student perceptions from questionnaire.	Online students reported significant increase in skills, desire for more f2f time, no significant difference in learning outcomes.	Consider synchronous activity; web-conferencing, hybrid delivery.	Youn (2007)
Ouellette, Westhuis, Marshall, & Chang	2006	Similarities and differences in the acquisition of interviewing skills comparing web-based and f2f delivery.	No significant differences in skill acquisition between web-based and f2f delivery.	Shift from comparison studies to focus on effective online pedagogy for teaching-learning skills.	
Bellefeuille	2006	Formative evaluation --multiple measures to assess reflective practice skills acquisition in online delivery. Students' perceptions, survey and focus groups. Theoretical perspective.	Skills effectiveness on final exam 93% average, students perceived online learning and instructional strategies as effective.	Instruct students on how to be an effective online learner, faculty professional development in online pedagogy.	
Youn	2007	Effectiveness of web-based environment for increasing students' clinical skills (using experiential learning theory).	Significant change in skills knowledge after using the web-based learning module.	Larger sample to conduct comparison study.	

Subsequent studies considered what theoretical framework (research-informed online pedagogy, including hybrid delivery) and methods would be optimal for developing an instructional design for teaching-learning practice (interviewing) skills in a web-based environment.

Seabury (2003) reported the evaluation of two interactive online programs, designed to teach students how to apply basic practice concepts using a simulated scenario. The interactive programs, originating from interactive video discs (IVD) developed by Seabury and Maple in 1993 at the University of Michigan, focused on skill concepts used for crisis intervention and suicide assessment. The clinical skills training programs were transferred to web-based systems, allowing students access to use the video programs any place with web connectivity. Seabury reported that students ($N = 44$) completed the two programs online and passed a quiz over the basic skill concepts in the courses.

In 2005, Seabury expanded earlier research by conducting a comparison study involving three social work classes (convenience sample) learning about crisis intervention in different conditions: One class ($n = 24$) used a self-instructed interactive program online (referred to as a web-based tutorial); another class ($n = 19$) experienced a traditional presentation of the content; and the third class, as the control group, participated in the outcome measure prior to receiving instruction on crisis theory ($n = 26$). The outcome measure was a quiz consisting of students' responding to a crisis practice case immediately following the educational experience. Two experienced social work educators scored the case results without knowledge of group membership. High interrater reliability resulted after revisions to the scoring measure were administered at $r = .97$. The self-instructed online (web-based tutorial) group performed the best on the outcome measure, significantly better than the no-training (control) group. The within-

class group also performed better than the no-training (control) group but to a lesser extent on the outcome scores. Although the within-class group did not score as well as the web-based tutorial group, the difference was not statistically significant (Seabury, 2005). A limitation to this study is that there was no follow-up to see if the skills learned would be transferred to the practice setting or maintained over time. Seabury summarized the benefits of online delivery by stating, "A well-designed, interactive, on-line tutorial may be less biased, more readily available, more efficient, and more effective as an educational technology, than the traditional classroom experience" (p. 113).

Florida State University College of Social Work developed and implemented the first CSWE-accredited, online Master of Social Work Program (Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006). A web-based course, *Crisis Intervention and Brief Treatment*, was the focus of a comparative study between students enrolled online and those in a content-equivalent f2f format (Siebert et al., 2006; Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006). Identical assignments were established, although the method of instruction warranted modification due to the two learning contexts. Uses of lecture (text-based online), discussion, presentations (video recorded online), and role play were examples of the course activities. Although content of the role plays was identical, the online students used the synchronous "chat" mechanism within the course with telephone or instant messaging. In addition, field supervisors were utilized in a role play assignment to provide face-to-face interviewing for those learning skills online (Siebert et al., 2006). Noteworthy is the inclusion of interactive video clips, a previously studied method, to promote learning in a web-based environment. With permission, the researchers/instructors incorporated Seabury's (2003)

crisis intervention program online, in order for students to access the videos from the University of Michigan website (Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006).

Qualitative and quantitative measures were used to compare the two learning environments. To evaluate knowledge of clinical skills, students were given a recorded client-interview role play to view and instructed to develop a case summary, including an assessment and intervention strategy. One instructor graded the assignment for both sections (online $n = 11$ and f2f $n = 18$) using a standardized assessment rubric. The resulting mean scores were not significantly different ($p = .47$). Student responses on the qualitative measure were more descriptive of differences between the two formats, with students from the online learning delivery indicating they felt at a disadvantage not having direct f2f contact with instructors. To address this issue, the instructors/researchers recommended additional research regarding a blended/hybrid format of the course to determine if some f2f time would make a difference in student learning (Siebert et al., 2006).

Collins and Jerry (2005) reported on the development and implementation of a predominantly web-based, blended delivery, instructional design to teach master's level, clinical skills in the Psychology Counseling Initiative in Alberta, Canada. The web-based delivery was the first distance and online, applied-psychology graduate program in Canada, responding to the needs of students in the workforce and those "coping with multiple demands on their time and resources" (Collins & Jerry, 2005, p. 100). Unique features of this program include (a) collaboration of three major universities in Alberta to develop the structure and content of the program, (b) use of a competency-based model to guide curriculum development, and (c) reliance on research-supported, online pedagogy to construct an intentional instructional design

reflecting hybrid delivery and aspects of synchronous and asynchronous environments for effective student learning (Collins & Jerry, 2005).

The instructional design was developed conceptually from constructivist pedagogy and the use of Bloom's taxonomy. Constructivist pedagogy helped promote an environment that was learner-centered, using active and experiential learning activities, socially interactive within a community of learners. Bloom's taxonomy was used for course objective development and assessment (Jerry & Collins, 2005). The skills course design involved 5 weeks of web-based delivery, using weekly discussions to clarify and synthesize skill readings, digital video clip demonstrations, and the chat room for skills practice. Students could download and use the instantly transcribed session for skill analysis and identification. Follow-up, f2f meetings were held on weekends to provide learners with live feedback on skill development. Outcome measures included graded video quizzes, discussion participation (quantity and quality), counseling skill performance using live and videotape practices, and a final reflection paper (Jerry & Collins, 2005). After 2 years of revisions and implementation, Jerry and Collins (2005) reported optimistically that learning clinical skills in online delivery, particularly using a blended approach, is a viable method.

Ouellette et al. (2006) conducted a study to explore similarities and differences in the acquisition of interviewing skills of two groups of undergraduate students: One group was taught in a classroom environment and the other in online delivery by different instructors. The question was

> To examine how students' perceptions of their learning experience and their perceived level of skill acquisition with respect to interviewing were similar or different from their actual interviewing skill acquisition irrespective of the teaching medium used to learn the skills. (Ouellette et al., 2006, p. 56)

Using a quasi-experimental design, students self-selected to the two groups ($N = 59$). The instruction was equivalent in regard to text, syllabus, and reading materials. Similar teaching and learning principles were applied during 15 weeks, with slight modification due to the delivery mode.

Three sets of data were collected using quantitative and qualitative measures including a demographic survey, end-of-semester questionnaire of students' perceptions, and a videotaped individual interview, to evaluate acquisition of actual interviewing skills. A 21-item interviewing scale (rated by an independent evaluator) was used. This interviewing instrument, the Basic Practice Interviewing Scale (BPIS), was developed through a process involving the use of a four-person panel of content experts to review interviewing scales in order to assist in item development and provide content validity (Ouellette et al., 2006).

Both courses used a six-step circular process for teaching-learning interviewing skills. The six-step process, constructivist in nature consisted, of (a) describing the skill, (b) demonstrating the skill, (c) practicing the skill (using role play), (d) observing the skill, (e) evaluating the skill (using the evaluation instrument for self-assessment), and (f) acquiring feedback from the instructor (Ouellette et al., 2006). The online group experienced a slight modification of how the six-step teaching-learning process was delivered: The description came by way of interactive notes from the instructor; demonstration was achieved by streaming video segments; and students video recorded interview segments with simulated role plays with peers to practice skills and use for self-assessment. The videos were viewed for peer feedback as well as individualized instructor feedback (Ouellette et al., 2006).

Findings from Ouellette et al.'s (2006) study suggested the acquisition of beginning interviewing skills taught in two instructional settings was approximately equal at the completion of the course, with a 95% confidence interval effect size ranging from -.66 to 1.47 (Ouellette et al., 2006). There were no statistically significant correlations of "the independent evaluators' ratings of the students' acquisition of interviewing skills" with "students' perception of satisfaction of their learning experience" (Kendall's tau_b = .216 and p = .557) and student's "perception of interviewing skill acquisition" (Kendall's tau_b = .557 and p = .215) (Ouellette et al., 2006, p. 68). Ouellette and colleagues' (2006) findings were supported by Seabury (2005) and Siebert et al.'s (2006) previous comparison studies, which found no significant difference between learning interviewing (practice) skills in a web-based delivery and a traditional f2f classroom.

Ouellette et al.'s (2006) study pursued more than performance as a way to measure learning effectiveness, because it included students' perception of the learning experience. Limitations of this study included the use of a small sample, one rater, limited testing for instrument reliability, and the brevity of the interview used for rating, which limited the number of competencies to be assessed (Ouellette et al., 2006). Recommendations from the study's researchers were to better understand "what constitutes good teaching and good learning in an online instructional environment" (p. 69). For future research they suggested the focus be less on comparison studies and more on specifically examining online pedagogical strategies that support learning skills.

The purpose of Bellefeuille's (2006) formative study was to consider the effectiveness of using a fully online environment for learning practice skills in a competency-based child welfare

course. His study is unique and valuable, because it intentionally developed a theoretical

instructional approach compatible with features of an online learning environment to optimize

participants' learning. Discussion and description of two commonly used instructional models

were provided: the objectivist and constructivist paradigms. Drawing from both models,

Bellefeuille (2006) constructed a blended approach, using objectivist instructional design

methods to define traditional knowledge domains and core practice competencies, while using

constructivist learning principles to define the dominant teaching strategies, with emphasis on

students' use of critical reflection. The teaching methods included direct sequenced learning

material, indirect and experiential learning, independent study, interactive instruction,

scaffolding strategies, and real-life case studies (Bellefeuille, 2006).

Using multiple methods to enhance the validity of the study and provide triangulation,

Bellefeuille (2006) employed quantitative measures (tests scores and a survey) to measure the

acquisition of learning skill sets for reflective anti-oppression social work practice. Qualitative

data (focus groups and surveys), collected at the end of the study and 9 weeks later during the

students' child protection field practicum, provided deeper understanding of learners'

perceptions of the online learning experience. In addition, the analyzed data informed the

effectiveness of online activities and instructional strategies for learning (Bellefeuille, 2006).

Overall, students' responses were positive about the effectiveness of the online learning

environment and activities. On the entry-level competency exam, administered by the Ministry

of Children and Family Development, all students ($N = 16$) passed the exam, posting an average

aggregate score of 93% (Bellefeuille, 2006). The value of considering instructional pedagogy

when teaching in a web-based learning environment was confirmed. Bellefeuille (2006)

submitted that "when learners take charge of their learning, the computer serves as an effective facilitative medium that expands their learning options" (p. 97).

The last study to be examined is a dissertation by Youn (2007), who used knowledge garnered from all but two researchers reviewed here for preparation of his study (see Table 2). Accumulative knowledge informed the researcher's theoretical framework and construction of a virtual learning environment for increasing clinical skills knowledge (Collins & Jerry, 2005; Jerry & Collins, 2005; Seabury, 2003; Siebert et al., 2006; Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006).

Youn (2007) hypothesized that social work students' knowledge of clinical skills would increase learning in a Clinical Skills Virtual Learning Environment (CS-VLE). Experiential learning theory, specifically Kolb's (1984) experiential mode, provided the theoretical premise of Youn's study. The Microcounseling Skill Discrimination Scale (MSDS), developed by Ivey and Authier (1978), provided the pre and post measures to evaluate skill attainment. Before and after a 90-minute skills training (web-based) session, the students completed the scale. The survey consisted of the students' viewing 44 video segments of a client-worker interview focusing on listening skills. Half of the segments demonstrated appropriate uses of reflection of feeling and paraphrasing skills, whereas the other half demonstrated inappropriate uses. Students rated the role play, and their assessments were compared to expert raters' scoring to measure knowledge gain.

Participants consisted of 118 social work students (40 undergraduate, 62 master's level, and 14 Ph.D.). Findings indicated a significant change in knowledge after using the web-based learning module. Youn (2007) suggested online learning may be effective for teaching clinical skills content. A major limitation of his study was the lack of a comparison group (intended as

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part of the original research design but not utilized due to lack of participation). Instead, the researcher chose to have a larger sample for the intervention to provide a more robust analysis.

Reviewing the research on web-based learning of practice (interviewing) skills has provided this researcher with cumulative knowledge from the past decade to apply to this study. The development of an intentional instruction design, grounded in learning theory, to inform the teaching-learning process of interviewing skills online was indicated for improving skill competency (Bellefeuille, 2006; Collins & Jerry, 2005; Ouellette et al., 2006; Youn, 2007). The studies by Bellefeuille (2006), Collins and Jerry (2005), and Ouellette et al. (2006) indicated that utilizing an instructional design, based on the convergence of online pedagogy, research-supported skills training, and constructivist learning theory, provides an effective learning environment for online skill learning. It is noted that the studies of Ouellette et al. (2006), Baez (2003), and Menen (2004) each used the constructivist teaching-learning system designed by Chang and Scott (1999). Overall, the findings of studies using online learning are favorable for providing skill acquisition but could be more compelling. It appears that use of a hybrid delivery, combining online and f2f learning, may be preferred by students, giving them an opportunity to practice skill building f2f, along with the opportunity for immediate feedback from peers and the instructor (Jerry & Collins, 2005; Siebert et al., 2006).

Inconclusive from the studies of online instruction is what types of formative and summative assessment measures best promote learning and reflect training outcomes in this delivery mode. A myriad of measurements were used, including grades on quizzes, tests, and course assignments; knowledge gain measured by pre and post scales (self-reported and independent raters); and pre and post satisfaction/perception of learning reported on

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questionnaires and in focus groups. The studies revealing congruency in how skills are most effectively learned using a constructivist theoretical perspective and similar formative and summative measures are those completed in the United Kingdom and by Bellefeuille (2006), Collins and Jerry (2005), and Ouellette et al., (2006). These studies provide research-supported evidence to inform the theoretical perspective and measures used for designing the present study.

Literature Review Summary

The intent of this literature review was to inform the study using research evidence to identify optimal ways to design instruction for learning interviewing skills in a web-based environment. As a result, a theoretical model, *person-in-environment,* was chosen to situate learning as the social interaction of *person* (student) *in environment* (learning environment). This interactive process involves the students using their natural human learning process in metacognitive and reflective activity to interact in an environment facilitated by social constructivist and brain-compatible learning principles.

Doubt prevails in the social work education community regarding whether learning interviewing skills can occur in an online environment (Moore, 2005a; Vernon et al., 2009). Online delivery can be as effective as traditional classroom delivery, and blended delivery, at times, can be a better approach for learning than either f2f or online formats (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Online learning environments, designed to establish a community of learners and facilitate learner-centered interactivity with ongoing reflective, metacognitive, and assessment activities, may provide a positive mode of delivery for skill learning.

The literature has indicated that there are a number of didactic and experiential teaching strategies that are effective for skill acquisition, many similar to those identified 30 years ago,

including knowledge building; observing demonstrations (modeling) of desirable responses; role playing (simulated or real-life practice); cognitive and behavioral rehearsal; self-observation/assessment via video-playback; video recording with simulated, real-life, and/or standardized clients; direct verbal feedback; and coaching. The teaching-learning process and the way the context of learning is established have a great impact on the effectiveness of skill acquisition. The literature has suggested that students need a trusting environment to not only construct learning and confidence through use of reflection, self-assessment, and practice for continuous improvement, but also to promote the transfer from instruction-learning to practice in the field.

Accredited schools of social work are required to demonstrate competency-based learning with measures of performance related to program objectives. This literature review attempted to identify research-supported training, pedagogy, and assessment measures to inform the optimal approach to teaching-learning interviewing skills. Evidence for learning gain in skills acquisition was identified in fully online delivery as well as potentially in the blended delivery mode, although studies are extremely limited. In the following methodology chapter, this study's intentional instructional design and assessment measures, grounded in research-informed literature, are presented.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this action research case study was to explore the experience of social work undergraduate students' learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice class. This chapter describes the methodology and begins by presenting the research design, followed by a description of the case study, including the researcher's propositions. Next, the chapter identifies the data collection procedures and instrumentation by describing the intentional instructional design (teaching-learning process), its implementation, and the multiple measures employed for assessing students' learning and experiences, thereby relating to the action plan of the research study. The chapter concludes with the study's data analysis procedures and how validity, reliability, and trustworthiness were handled in the study.

Research Design

This study employed an exploratory, mixed methods case study design using action research (teacher inquiry). "Action research is characterized as systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical, and undertaken by the participants of the inquiry" (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990, p. 148). As one form of applied research, its intent is to investigate and address specific problems within an identified setting, such as a classroom or workplace; it is conducted by practitioners who are interested in practical solutions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The reflective process begins with the development of questions. Action implies the practitioner will be acting as the collector of data, the analyst, and the interpreter of findings. The protocol is iterative or cyclical in nature and is intended to foster a deeper understanding of complex situations (Hopkins, 2002). The action research inquiry process employed for this study is Glickman et al.'s (2004) five-phase cycle: Identify the problem,

research the problem, design the action plan, carry out the action plan, and evaluate and reflect on the findings.

A case study approach using mixed methods design was chosen by this researcher due to the good fit with Yin's (2003) definition of case study as a comprehensive research strategy that

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident;
- Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result,
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result,
- Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (pp. 13-14)

This study entailed a single case study of undergraduate social workers, enrolled in a specific section of a hybrid practice course for spring, 2011. The unit of analysis was bounded by space and time, anchored in a real-life situation (Yin, 2003). Merriam (2009) reported that a case study approach is a preferred method when "how" questions are posed. Case studies allow a close-up investigation and opportunity for understanding the human experience (Merriam, 2009). A case study approach using mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) to collect data was the most desirable design for examining how social work students perceive learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course.

Typically, case studies are considered qualitative in nature, although Yin (2003) and Merriam (2009) described use of quantitative measures, indicating that a mixed methods design is appropriate. An advantage of using multiple sources of evidence in a case study "is the development of *converging lines of inquiry,* a process of triangulation" (Yin, 2003, p. 98).

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Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) referred to the triangulation design as implementing

quantitative and qualitative methods concurrently through separate data collection and analysis.

The intent of this design and its use was to bring together the differing strengths and

weaknesses of each approach, with the belief that one can be used to inform the other for deeper

understanding (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) of whether students learn and gain confidence

using interviewing skills and how they experience learning skills in a hybrid practice course.

This study used three sources of data for inquiry, collected concurrently and analyzed separately.

The collection periods included pre, during, and post interviewing skills training. Quantitative

data sources included a pre and post interviewing skills training confidence scale (student

reported) and video evaluations by independent raters to assess students' competencies of

interviewing skills via video recording. Qualitative data was drawn from students' reflections,

collected pre, during, and post interviewing skills training.

Single Case Study Description with Researcher's Propositions

This study was conducted by a social work faculty member of Metropolitan State College

of Denver (MSCD). A large urban college, MSCD offers bachelor- and master-level degrees,

with a diverse student body including 28% students of color in 2010. MSCD is a teaching

institution with average class size of 19. MSCD's social work junior class of 81students, from

which this study's participants were drawn, has a similar diverse population, with 25% students

of color. Age represents another diverse characteristic, with 32% of juniors being over the age of

34. Females dominate the program and make up 89% of the junior social work class.

In 2005-2006, MSCD's social work program became the first accredited online

undergraduate program in the United States. As part of the 3-year pilot project prior to

accreditation, this faculty member was asked, as lead practice faculty, to develop the distance

education practice sequence using a hybrid delivery, beginning spring 2005. Since development

and delivery of the first practice sequence, continuous cycles of planning, implementing,

evaluating, and revising have occurred. Concurrently, this faculty member is a candidate in a

doctoral program with the aim of improving classroom instruction and student learning, hence

the purpose of this action research study.

Researcher's Propositions

When undertaking an action research inquiry to understand and improve one's own

practice and students' learning, the researcher's personal theory of practice and its relationship to

the research needs to be examined (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990). "Teachers develop, through

actions, interrelated sets of beliefs and practices about matters, such as how students learn, what

they should learn, and how motivation occurs" (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990, p. 144). According

to McCutcheon and Jung (1990), when the researcher identifies a class problem, it is in the

context of a lived theory. A personal theory of practice helps the instructor *choose* the route to

follow in doing the research, *makes sense* of the data collected, and *guides* an action plan for the

teaching situation (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990). This researcher's theory of practice has evolved

over a 6-year period of inquiry, investigating how students learn practice knowledge, values, and

skills (particularly interviewing) in a hybrid environment. The propositions and assumptions

underlying this researcher's personal theory of practice include

- Believing in a positive learning environment, reflected by a sense of community,
  mutual respect, inclusion, safety and trust, acceptance of diverse views, and open
  communication;

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- Facilitating student-centered activity, trusting the natural innate process of the learner to take an active role in constructing her or his own unique meaning of experience through cognitive processes (metacognition, reflection, and self-assessment);

- Believing all learners have the capacity for competency and their needs, interests, and experiences provide the motivation for learning;

- Believing in the role of instructor as facilitator, with responsibility to provide course material and foster critical thinking skills and problem solving, using experiential learning with opportunities for real-world application;

- Believing learning is social and collaborative, and occurs in interaction and dialogue among students and between facilitator and students, with discussion and ongoing feedback.

Drawn from practice experience, research, and professional development, these propositions guided the development and delivery of the intentional instructional design used in this study, with the belief that it facilitates learning.

Participants and Course Content

The unit of analysis for this case study was 19 undergraduate social work students enrolled in the spring of 2011 in SWK 3410 Generalist Practice I, distance hybrid section. The hybrid section was open to any MSCD social work student in the major (junior status), but distinctly designed to accommodate those who lived geographically distant (over 100 miles) from campus within the state of Colorado. A demographic survey (see Appendix A) was completed by this group, yielding a description of age, gender, ethnicity, experience in online learning, and extent of previous use of interviewing skills with clients (reported in Chapter 4).

SWK 3410 Generalist Practice I is the first of a sequence of two foundation courses to provide social work practice knowledge, values, and skills. The primary goals for generalist practice students are to learn relationship-building, interviewing, and problem-solving skills necessary to work with systems of all sizes, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Generalist Practice relies on the theoretical perspectives of person-in-environment (ecological perspective), systems, strengths, and empowerment. Students learn a planned change method that provides a step-by-step helping process, applicable in collaborative relationships with clients. The planned change process includes engagement, assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, termination, and follow-up (see Appendix B for SWK 3410 syllabus). The two-course practice sequence at MSCD divides the planned change process into two parts. The first practice course (SWK 3410) focuses on the knowledge, values, and skills essential for relationship building to engage and begin assessment within a client system. The rationale for the practice-sequence curriculum design relates to the students' field experience. Social work students participate in a 2-day-a-week (16 hours) internship during their senior year. Beginning knowledge, values, and skills for engaging and knowing how to begin to assess client needs are essential as students commence the field experience. By beginning in the spring semester prior to students' actually commencing direct service, the practice content is intended to parallel and prepare students for field and direct work in agencies.

SWK 3410 Generalist Practice I is a 15-week course using a hybrid delivery, which translates into 4 of the 15 sessions, meeting for 3 hours and 40 minutes face-to-face (f2f) in a studio in the media center on campus. The students who are at a distance utilize teleconferencing from multiple sites throughout the state. The media center studio is equipped to provide multiple

accesses of sites and technology, allowing all students and the facilitator to see and communicate, providing a full f2f experience.

As part of the 15-week practice course, interviewing skills training is a 4-week learning module, with collection of pre and post interviewing skills data at the beginning and end of this period. Students had one of the course's four f2f sessions during this module. The remaining three sessions of the interviewing skills module occurred asynchronous (online). Consistent with the content of the course, the emphasis for interviewing skills training was on the learner's development of confidence and competency in building a client-social worker relationship, engaging with the client, and using skills essential to begin the assessment process.

The specific interviewing skills targeted in this module included

- Learning the basic interpersonal skills of attending, observing, and active listening;

- Learning how to begin and close a meeting;

- Demonstrating expression of understanding, using skills of reflection of content and feelings;

- Exploring and assessing clients' needs, using open-ended and closed-ended questions.

How students in this hybrid practice course perceived the environment and strategies for learning interviewing skills and their change in confidence and competency in using these skills was the focus of this study. In the next section, the interviewing skills training procedure, including the intentional instructional design and the quantitative and qualitative methods (instruments) employed to collect data, is presented.

Procedures and Instrumentation

Institutional Review Board approval was granted from the college where the study resided and the university of the researcher's doctoral program, prior to implementing the procedures and data collecting. Although the course protocol and requirements were expected of all students enrolled in SWK 3410, written informed consent was gained from students volunteering to participate in this study (see Appendix C). At the beginning of the course, students were given an explanation of this study, invited to participate, and given full disclosure that participation had no bearing on course grade. They were advised they could withdraw their consent for the use of their data for the study at any time. To maintain confidentiality, each student's data was randomly assigned a number as each document and video was collected. Labeling data did not commence until the students' grading was completed and the assignments returned.

This section divides the procedures and measures used for data collecting into three stages, reflecting when they were implemented: pre skills training (Weeks 1-5), during skills training (Weeks 6-9), and post skills training (Weeks 10-11). After discussion of each of these stages, a table is provided, which represents an overview of each of the three time periods, including a description of the respective plan and corresponding data collecting measures.

Pre Interviewing Skills Training: Weeks 1-5

Procedures. Practice content instruction in the first 2 weeks of the course integrated knowledge, values, and skills associated with personal development as an essential step toward the development of a competent practitioner. Self awareness, including how a person best learns, was discussed and experienced using a number of metacognitive activities, such as identifying

students' Natural Human Learning Process (see Appendix D). A constructivist perspective of learning was presented to provide foundational understanding of the learning environment as learner centered. From this viewpoint, each student brings prior knowledge, skills, and experiences for which new learning develops. Thus, students assessed their unique learning style and identified types of course activities most supportive of their individual approach to learning.

In addition, the constructivist approach was used to help students begin to understand the concept of *use of self*. This concept is essential for students beginning the practice sequence, because they have a constructed idea of *self* developed over time and based on the way they perceive themselves (Chang et al., 2009). Self-awareness and an understanding of how one perceives the world, including knowing that all human beings have an unique world view, are crucial elements for effectively using the helping process and avoiding assessing a client situation from a personal perspective. During the beginning phase of the course, the climate was developed with the intention of promoting a sense of trust, safety, inclusion, mutual respect, and community. Discussions provided an ongoing venue for continuous interaction, feedback, and opportunities to identify commonalities among students to enhance a positive learning environment.

Week 3 was a face-to-face (f2f) meeting on campus, continuing the work of the previous weeks and providing students full participation, including the ability to visually observe non-verbal communication with other students and the instructor. During Weeks 3 and 4, the use of web conferencing technology (Wimba), was presented and practiced. Wimba is a synchronous technology allowing participants separated by distance, using an Internet-connected computer, webcam, and headset, to see, hear, type, share, and record information.

More specifically, in the f2f session, web conferencing (Wimba) was introduced and demonstrated. The technology was accessed at the course site in Blackboard, along with written instructions for signing on. Instructions and contact information for troubleshooting were provided. This technology was used by students to practice interviewing with a student partner during the interviewing skills module. To follow up in Week 4, students signed in using Wimba during a scheduled meeting with the instructor as a way to practice and become comfortable with the procedure. This allowed the instructor the opportunity to support the students' comfort and ability in using web conferencing (Wimba) and check for any technology difficulties. Students were assigned interviewing partners to conduct practice sessions, at a time of their choosing, using web conferencing (Wimba).

During Week 5, baseline data were gathered, providing an opportunity for students' reflection, self-assessment, and exploration of skill level and confidence using basic interviewing skills. Each student completed a 10- to 15-minute video recording of an initial interview with a classmate and completed the pre interviewing skills training confidence scale. Distance necessitated the use of a nonstudent interviewee for students who lived outside the Denver metro area. Students were informed that the video recorded interview provided baseline data for the purpose of assessing their beginning interviewing skills ability and were asked to refrain from engaging in preparation for the interview. The intent was for self-assessment of baseline interviewing skills and no grade was attached to the interview performance.

Given the distance from campus for a number of students, use of a standardized client was not feasible. The teaching model used for the student-client interview was developed based on Askeland's (2003) reality play. This teaching model provides an interviewing process that

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builds on the theoretical perspective of social constructivism. The student, as social worker, interviews a person with a real-life recent challenge or problem. The idea is for the interview to be authentic and provide a challenging learning-and-doing situation, with a sense of immediacy for the student (Askeland, 2003).

In this study (as well as for the course), interviewing nonstudents with authentic issues raised the demand for guidelines and consent. The consent form provided by the researcher reflected an agreement that the interviewee understood the purpose and use of the video recorded interview for learning and research. Students were instructed on use of full disclosure and were required to procure a signed consent (permission release) from the interviewee if he/she was not a classmate (see Appendix C).

Through discussion and in written directions, students were provided guidance, direction, and criteria for recruiting an interviewee and setting parameters to engage with appropriate challenges and problems (see Appendix E). Nonstudent interviewees were limited to those interviewed by five students living at a distance from campus.

Once the interview was completed, the students reviewed his/her video to complete a guided reflection and self-assessment (see Appendix E). When finished, the video recording was submitted to the instructor-researcher to be stored securely for independent rating.

Instrumentation. Three instruments were used in Weeks 1-5. Two scales, the Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale (ISCS) and the Interview Evaluation Rater Scale (IERS), were quantitative; and the third measure, consisting of guided student reflection and self-assessment, was qualitative. The ISCS was designed by this researcher to measure students' perception and belief in their ability to perform basic interviewing skills (see Appendix F for the

ISCS). This scale includes the six skill categories that were introduced in the 4-week

interviewing skills training module. These categories are (a) *communicating involvement*, (b)

observing, (c) *active listening*, (d) *beginning the interviewing process*, (e) *using reflection*, and

(f) *questioning*. Within the six skill categories are lists of behaviors inherent to the broader

category**.** For example, *communicating involvement* consists of a list of four behaviors: open and

accessible posture, congruent facial expression, regular eye contact unless inappropriate, and use

of minimal encouragers. The six skill categories include 20 items to be rated using a six-point

scale (*not confident at all* = 0 to *very confident* = 5). Students were instructed to mark the

interval that best described their degree of confidence to perform the interviewing skill at that

time. The identical confidence scale was repeated in the post interviewing skills training.

The second quantitative measure, the Interview Evaluation Rater Scale (IERS), was used

to assess the students' interviews both pre and post skills training (see Appendix G). The

measure was developed by Chang and Scott (1999) and validated in 2004 as having high internal

consistency reliability, a clear factor structure, and construct validity (Pike, Bennett, & Chang,

2004). The measure uses a five-point scale representing levels of ability across skill categories.

The scale, measuring the competency level of the skill, ranged from *ineffective and/or*

inappropriate = 1 to *highly effective and appropriate* = 5. An objective description for each of

the scale's five levels provides specific behavioral indicators for rating skill level (see Appendix

G). Skill categories are arranged in sequential order relative to when they are presented in the

training. The skills included in the rating scale are *communicating involvement, beginning*

process, reflecting (content and feeling)*, questioning* (open and closed)*,* and *closing*. Scores from

each skill scale are added for a point total for the interview, with a maximum score of 25.

The third and final measure used in the pre interviewing skills training period is qualitative, examining students' reflections and self-assessments. Students are asked to review their recorded interview and confidence scale to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement. To guide this process, the Student Interview Evaluation (SIE) form (Chang et al., 2009), provided in the training text, was used. The evaluation form reflects the basic interviewing skills to be learned in the 4-week module. Students identified at least three goals reflecting areas for improvement. Included in the guided questions for reflection were inquiries regarding students' perceptions of the use of reality play, their overall experience with video recording, and feelings associated with the interviewer role (see Appendix E). Table 3 provides an overview of the pre skills training procedures and instrumentation.

Table 3

Pre Skills Training Procedures and Instrumentation (Weeks 1-5)

Procedures	Instrumentation
Week 1 & 2 (online)	
Instruction content and self-awareness:	
Learning knowledge: How people best learn - neuroscience, constructivism, self-efficacy	
Metacognitive Natural Human Learning Process (NHLP) activity (Appendix D)	
Student identification and reflection of unique learning style	
Importance of understanding self - linking self-awareness and learning	

Table 3. *Pre Skills Training Procedures and Instrumentation (Weeks 1-5)* (continued)
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Procedures	**Instrumentation**

_____

Week 3 (f2f) & 4 (online)

(Week 3 - f2f)
   Introduce technology to be used in
   interviewing module (Wimba)

(Week 4 - online)
   Practice use of Wimba with
   instructor and interviewing partner

Week 4 & 5 (online)

Collection of baseline data	**Baseline measures**
Students completed:	
1. Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale (ISCS) (Appendix F)	1. Interview Skills Confidence Scale-student reported (Appendix F)
2. Video recorded interview (as interviewer) using reality role play situation	2. Interview Evaluation Rater Scale - used for independent rating of pre skills training interview-independently rated (Appendix G)
3. Reflection/self-assessment	3. Reflection/self-assessment guided questions of reflection -student reported (Appendix E)

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Interviewing Skills Training: **Weeks 6-9**

   Procedures. The intentional instructional design chosen for this study reflects a

constructivist approach resting on the belief that all students have a unique natural learning

process. Chang et al.'s (2009) *Developing Helping Skills: A Step-By-Step Approach* (the course's

text), utilizes a teaching-learning system for learning interviewing skills that helps "students

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become competent, self-reflective professionals, able to evaluate their practice and identify strengths and areas of growth related to skill development" (p. xxii). The text reflects a constructivist perspective, using multiple, active-learning methods to support the unique ways students learn. The teaching-learning system used includes

- *Reading* about concepts and tasks related to interviewing skills and how the knowledge is applied to practice;

- *Thinking and writing* about ideas related to the concepts and skills presented. Homework exercises provide students the opportunity to reflect on how the concepts relate to their own life experiences and consider how they will actively work with them;

- *Watching and discussing* a demonstration of appropriate skills use. In discussion, students evaluate and identify the practitioner's use of skills and consider alternative approaches;

- *Working with cases* to give students the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills to the complexities of specific situations;

- "*Practicing* the skills in a simulated interview" (Chang et al., 2009, p. xxii);

- "*Evaluating* the use of skills immediately after practicing them" (Chang et al., 2009, p. xxii), using an evaluation shown to be valid (Pike et al., 2004). Participants of the interview provide immediate feedback in respective roles (Chang et al., 2009).

Using the teaching-learning system, the students focused on one skill or group of skills at a time before moving on to the next skill or group of skills. Skill acquisition was developmental, with each new skill building on previously learned skills. Reading, thinking and writing,

watching and discussing, and working with cases are methods used consistently online and f2f. The practice and evaluating of methods varied depending on delivery.

In Weeks 6, 7 and 9, online practice occurred in dyads; students were assigned an interviewing partner for the 4-week module, scheduled a time to meet using Wimba weekly, and practiced interviewing using reality play, taking turns being the client and interviewer. Wimba was used to record and archive the interview for future review. Immediately following the practice, interview evaluation occurred to provide feedback. The student in the client role shared whether she or he felt understood and experienced a respectful connection with the student in the role of the social worker. The student, as social worker, shared her or his perceived strengths and weaknesses. Students evaluated their skill competencies by reviewing the recorded interview and completing a validated SIE form (see Appendix E).

In Week 7 (f2f meeting), the practice-evaluation methods were slightly altered. Reality play practice occurred, with students forming triads. The purpose was to allow for a third role in the interview practice process—that of a peer observer. The peer observer, as a non-participant in the interview, provided the student (in the social worker role) feedback reflecting on use of skills in the practice interview and completing the evaluation form. Feedback from the peer observer was to be constructive, reflecting areas of strengths and areas for improvement. Students practiced and evaluated using all three roles: client, social worker, and peer observer. The instructor was on hand for questions and observation of all triads.

Practice and evaluation methods of the teaching-learning system provided opportunities for ongoing formative self-assessment as well as immediate and continuous feedback. The full intent of the reality play was that by "exchanging experiences, feedback and reflections from

different positions" (Askeland, 2003, p. 351), students would better understand social work from the perspective of a social worker, a client, and an observer. As a teaching model, "'Reality play'…seeks to be a medium for building competence as it integrates knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Askeland, 2003, p. 352).

       Instrumentation. Weekly, as the teaching-learning system was implemented, the students were asked to post, in discussion, their reflection of the learning experience and any questions or concerns. Reflection was open-ended, giving students autonomy to reflect on the week's experience. Areas for guided consideration included (a) experience using the teaching-learning system; (b) hybrid delivery, technology, and interviewing practice experience; and (c) feelings about the process. (See Table 4 for an overview of the procedures and instrumentation used in this second time period.)

Table 4

Interviewing Skills Training Procedures and Instrumentation (Weeks 6-9)

Procedures	Instrumentation
Weeks 6-9	**Weeks 6-9**

Use of 6-step teaching-learning system:
  1. Reading
  2. Thinking and writing
  3. Watching and discussing
  4. Working with cases
  5. Practice
  6. Evaluating
 	
Teaching-learning system used to learn interviewing skills in the categories of
  - Communicating involvement
  - Active listening
    (content and process)
  - Beginning and closing process
  - Reflecting (content and feeling)
	Student discussion/reflection of interviewing skills training experience
	
	Students post, in discussion, reflections regarding their interviewing skills learning experience in the areas of
	  - Teaching-learning system
	  - Hybrid delivery
	  - Technology
	  - Interviewing practice
	  - Feeling about the process

Table 4. *Interviewing Skills Training Procedures and Instrumentation (Weeks 6-9)* (continued)

Procedures	Instrumentation
Weeks 6-9 Teaching-learning system (continued) - Questioning (open and closed)	
Online Weeks 6, 8, & 9 **Practice and Evaluation**	
Students in pairs *practiced* using reality play in role of client and social worker, using Wimba (record and archive)	
Student in client role provided immediate feedback, and interviewer engaged in self-assessment for discussion; Student reviewed archived interview in role of social worker to assess skills, using Student Interview Evaluation (SIE) form (Appendix E)	
On-campus (f2f) Week 7	
Practice and Evaluation Students practiced interviewing skills in triads, alternating roles of client, social worker, and peer observer	
Student in client role and peer observer provided immediate feedback.	
Interviewer engaged in self-assessment for discussion	
Peer observer and social worker completed evaluation form (SIE)	

Post Interviewing Skills Training: Weeks 10-11

Procedures. At the end of the interviewing skills training, students completed a 10- to

15-minute recorded interview with a person serving in the client role, as well as the post skills

training Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale (ISCS), identical to the pre ISCS. The recordings were reviewed by independent raters using the Interview Evaluation Rater Scale (IERS) to assess skill competencies (after the interviewing module and student grading was completed). In addition, the recordings provided a tool for students to complete a summative self-assessment.

The students' self-assessment entailed reviewing the post skills training interview recording to complete (a) a narrative response of skill use; (b) a transcription of the interview, including specific identification of skills used; (c) a SIE form; and (d) a rubric reflecting the assignment (see Appendix H: Final Interviewing Assignment).

The instructor reviewed the interview recordings (together with students, if desired, online or on campus) to evaluate the self-assessment assignments and provide a competency score derived from the instructor/researcher's scoring of the IERS. When finished, recordings were stored securely with the researcher, who maintained overall responsibility for the location and protection of each recording (and all associated data). Once the self-assessment interviewing assignment was done, the students completed the post skills training confidence scale (ISCS) and the final skills training reflection.

Instrumentation. Three instruments were implemented in the post interviewing skills training. Two of the instruments were quantitative, the ISCS (see Appendix F) and IERS (see Appendix G); and one was qualitative, the Interviewing Skills Training Reflection (see Appendix I). The confidence scale was identical to the pre confidence scale, listing the skills and group of skills presented in training. Students were instructed to mark the interval that best described their degree of confidence to perform the interviewing skill listed at that time, given that the training was over.

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The IERS was used by independent raters to evaluate the pre and post skills training recordings of the students conducting an interview of a beginning session with a client. Rating did not occur until training was over to allow for pre and post recordings to be randomly assigned to raters. Seven independent raters were recruited to evaluate the pre and post interview recordings. Practicing and experienced social workers holding a BSW (one rater), MSW and/or LCSW (six raters), with at least two years of post BSW/MSW work experience and non social work faculty, were recruited with the intent to assure student anonymity and lessen rater bias. Training and rating were conducted in a collective manner, meeting in a reserved campus lab to assure security and confidentiality of the students' recordings in a 1-day session. The raters were trained by reviewing the evaluation scale, including the targeted skills and behavioral descriptors for evaluating competency level of skill use. A practice recording was used for raters to evaluate, review, discuss, and compare ratings.

To assess interrater reliability, the instructor/researcher called for raters to report their scores in all five skill categories. The independent raters shared their scores, and in three of five scale categories, scores were within one point of each other (scales 1-5 in each category). These categories included *communicating involvement, beginning process,* and *questioning skills.* In the category, *reflecting skills,* five of seven raters were within one point of each other, whereas two raters scored the skill competency level two to three points lower. *Closing skills* ratings revealed that five of the seven raters scored within a point of each other, whereas two raters scored two points lower. It was noted that one rater consistently rated lower than all other evaluators in all categories. Follow-up discussion was held among raters to share what scores they had assigned to specific interviewing skill behavior. The instructor/researcher clarified what

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skill competency was expected regarding the categories to encourage consistency among ratings. Content understanding and raters' readiness for independent rating were reviewed prior to commencing.

After training, each of the raters worked independently to view and evaluate the pre and post skills training recordings, using the IERS. The raters were given a list designating the recordings they were to evaluate (randomly assigned pre and post skills recordings). Each student's pre interview recording was reviewed by at least two raters, and the post recording, evaluated by three raters. The IERS independent ratings provided the basis for mean scores for each of the five skill categories and an overall mean score for each interview.

Interrater reliability was again evaluated by the researcher after all independent ratings were completed. In reviewing all evaluations, no pattern regarding a specific rater consistently scoring skills lower or higher than another was identified. All categories reflected discrepancy among raters, with scores up to four points higher and/or lower for a skill on the rating form; however, no rater consistently performed in this manner. The category of *reflecting skills* had the greatest variance in raters' scores, with *communication involvement, beginning skills,* and *closing skills* having the least. This could be attributed to the specificity of tasks of each skill item attributed to these three categories on the evaluation form. The *reflecting skills* category consists of three items, more vaguely stated as "reflecting content, reflecting feeling, and reflecting feelings and content or meaning," thereby allowing more subjectivity in raters' interpretations.

The final measure was the students' post training reflection. The post reflection consisted of guided questions and statements, with the intent to provide an overall reflection of students' perceptions of the experience of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course. Areas

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for reflection included (a) the student's comparison of his or her pre and post confidence scales,

(b) the pre and post interview recordings to assess whether the identified pre training goals were

achieved, (c) how he or she felt about using each of the six steps in the teaching-learning system,

and (d) his or her overall perception of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid format (f2f and

online components) (see Appendix I). An overview of the post interviewing skills training is

presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Post Skills Training Procedures and Instrumentation (Weeks 10-11)

Procedures	Instrumentation
Weeks 10-11 Student completion of final interviewing assignment - summative self-assessment	
1. Completed a 10- to 15-minute interview.	1. Interview Evaluation Rater Scale - Completed by trained independent raters' assessing pre and post student interview recordings for competency in skills
Students reviewed and completed: - Narrative response of skills use - Transcription of the interview, including specific identification of skills used - SIE form - Rubric reflecting the assignment	
Instructor reviewed recording (with student, if desired) and final interviewing assignment for grade.	
2. Students completed Post Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale (ISCS)	2. ISCS - student reported
3. Students completed Post Reflection	3. Post Interviewing Skills Reflection-student reported

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process used to answer the study's research questions (Merriam, 2009). This section is organized by presenting the study's three research questions, one at a time, with the corresponding plan for data analysis.

Question 1: *What are the perceptions of students learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course?* The measures used to collect data to answer this question were qualitative and consisted of students' pre, during, and post skills training reflections, described earlier in the procedures and instrumentation section. Merriam (2009) referred to this form of data as personal documents that "are a reliable source of data concerning a person's attitude, beliefs and view of the world" (p. 143). The personal documents developed should be classified specifically as researcher-generated documents, according to Merriam (2009), because the reflections were generated by the researcher for the purpose of uncovering meaning and understanding participants' (students') perspectives. Given that the researcher and instructor are one and the same, the use of documents, computer generated and archived for the course, provided an information source that had the advantage of increasing stability without researcher bias (Merriam, 2009).

The analysis used was inductive and comparative, beginning after grading was completed (Merriam, 2009). An inductive, open-coding technique was applied to the reflection submissions by reviewing each student's direct thoughts and words, line by line, to begin the process of constructing categories and emerging themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Following this process, a review and an attempt to combine and group the open codes were conducted, referred to as *axial coding* (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). With this step, patterns and regularities of the data were

identified and became the categories and themes into which subsequent data were sorted and placed (Merriam, 2009). The categories and themes provided the findings of how students perceive learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course.

Question 2: *How do students' pre confidence scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post confidence measure?* Students completed an Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale in both pre and post training to provide an understanding of how their confidence using interviewing skills had changed. The data analysis for the confidence scale was descriptive due to the small number of participants in the study. The analysis consisted of summarizing the scale scores for each participant, using a spread sheet of students' pre and post scores on each of the 20 skill items on the confidence scale. A single cumulative score calculated the student's overall confidence—pre, post, and change, as reported in Table 7. Skill analysis was conducted to ascertain areas with most or least confidence gain. Table 9 presents the pre, post and change confidence scores by skill category, with percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Question 3: *How do students' pre competency scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post confidence measure?* Each student video recorded an initial interview. The interviews provided a baseline measure for students to assess their initial skill level prior to training and identified areas for improvement. The post interview recording and its evaluation provided comparison and change in interviewing skills competency after training. Data analysis was descriptive and similar to that of the confidence scale. Pre and post interview video recordings were evaluated by independent raters: two ratings for pre and three ratings for post. Pre and post scores were calculated by entering the

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raters' scale scores into a spreadsheet. A total score for each of the evaluated pre and post interviews was calculated. A mean of the two or three raters' assessments of each item and total interview scores were calculated. Table 10 reports the pre, post, and change competency scores for each student with percentages. Skill analysis was conducted to ascertain areas with most or least competency gains. A pre, post, and change mean were calculated for five skill categories by combining students' scores. Findings of the pre, post, and change competency scores, with percentages, means, and standard deviations by skill category, are presented in Table 11.

The three measures are analyzed separately, with findings reviewed using a comparative analysis for synthesis of the data. Triangulation of the data from multiple sources, reported as the findings pursuant to each of the three research questions, is explored. Areas of convergence and/or data from each of the multiple sources were reviewed to identify how one source of data informed another.

Reliability, Validity, and Trustworthiness

To establish the quality of this action research case study, reviews of four areas, along with the researcher's strategies, are presented. The four areas include (a) reliability (dependability); (b) construct validity (credibility), sometimes referred to as internal validity; (c) external validity (transferability); and (d) trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003).

Reliability refers to the ability to demonstrate that the procedures (data collecting) could be replicated with similar results (Merriam 2009; Yin, 2003). The purpose of reliability is to reduce errors and biases in the study. Detailed pre, during, and post skills training procedures were identified. The study's interviewing skills training procedure is drawn from *Developing Helping Skills: A Step-By-Step Approach* by Chang et al. (2009). The specific teaching-learning

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system described in this text for skill learning has been informed by findings reported in studies by Baez (2003), Menen (2004), and Ouellette et al. (2006). Consistent findings were reported in earlier studies, indicating positive change and acquisition of interviewing skills using this training approach. The Interview Evaluation Rater Scale measure used by trained independent raters was validated as having high internal consistency, a clear factor structure, and construct validity (Pike et al., 2004), providing a reliable measure to assess interviewing skills.

To meet the test of *construct validity* in case study research, according to Yin (2003), two steps must be covered:

1. Select the specific types of changes that are to be studied (and relate them to the original objectives of the study), and

2. Demonstrate that the selected measures of these changes do indeed reflect the specific types of change that have been selected. (p. 35)

The objective of the study was to understand how students experience confidence and competency of using interviewing skills learned in a hybrid practice course. The selected measures provided multiple sources (quantitative and qualitative) of evidence to address the research questions. The use of triangulation encouraged convergent lines of inquiry and data to be compared and cross-checked from different perspectives. The multiple data sources were evaluated using different assessors including independent raters and student's self report (assessment) to provide for further construct validity

External validity is concerned with whether the study's findings can be applied or transferred beyond the immediate case study (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) described generalization regarding case studies as analytical, with "the investigator striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory" (p. 37). The years of action research conducted

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prior to this study, coupled with the study's theoretical framework informed by the literature review, provide a broader theory for the study's findings to be generalized. To enhance the possibility of the findings being transferable to another setting, use of rich, detailed descriptions of the setting, participants, procedures, measures, and findings were provided (Merriam, 2009). The intent of the study was to provide deeper understanding of how students experience learning interviewing skills in a hybrid course and to identify strategies for learning and measuring confidence and competency of use of skills. The identified learning strategies and outcome measures may assist planning for CSWE accreditation for the researcher's social work department and have potential for enhancing transferability to other social work programs.

The final area to review is *trustworthiness.* This category relates to the ethics of the study and researcher. Patton (2002) identified three components critical for ensuring the credibility (integrity) of a study, citing (a) credibility of the researcher, (b) rigorous methods, and (c) "a fundamental appreciation" (p. 552) of qualitative inquiry. Examining a researcher's credibility calls for an explanation of biases and assumptions regarding the study to be undertaken. Action research relies on *reflexivity*: "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the 'human instrument'" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). Accordingly, the researcher recorded observations during the implementation of the research study's protocol and data analysis for report in the final chapter. As discussed earlier, in an attempt to reduce bias in the study, multiple sources of data were chosen, using scales (confidence and competency), personal documents (students' reflections), and rating forms (interviews), all reported by persons other than the investigator. The guided reflections were worded in a neutral manner by asking the students about their perceptions of specific content and learning strategies related to learning interviewing

skills. The researcher avoided all value-laden wording, such as advantages, disadvantages, benefits, and the like, and instead used open-ended questions for reflection of experience, providing possible areas for consideration, including the teaching-learning process, context of delivery and technology, and feelings related to skill development.

Throughout the action research process, the researcher remained vigilant to separate any personal biases and involvement as a faculty member teaching practice that might distort the participants' experiences. Overall, the researcher's intent and purpose for conducting action research was to continue the cycle of learning, understand how students acquire skills, and improve the teaching-learning process.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The findings for this action research case study of undergraduate social work students'

experiences learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice class are reported in this chapter. To

begin, demographic data describing students' characteristics are reported, with the remainder of

the chapter organized by the study's three research questions. The quantitative data related to the

students' pre and post confidence and pre and post competency using interviewing skills

precedes the qualitative data regarding the students' experiences. The qualitative data were

collected from students' reflections pre, during, and post skills training. The chapter closes with

a summary of key findings.

Demographics: Students' Characteristics

The participants in the study numbered 19, including one male and 18 females, as

profiled in Table 6. Beginning enrollment for the practice section totaled 20 students. One

student withdrew in the first week, citing no experience with online learning and was added to an

on-campus section of the course. Students' ages ranged from 22 to 54 years, with 42% in their

20s, 42% in their 30s, and 16% 40 or older. Ethnicity fell within three categories with 79% of the

students identifying as White (Caucasian) and

21 % reporting ethnicities of color. Eight students (42%) reported having children: 4 with

children ages 10 and under and 4 with children ages 11 and older. Work status revealed that 14

(74%) of the19 students worked 16 or more hours a week, and 4 students worked in a human

service agency. This statistic parallels the response to whether the students had previous

interviewing experience. Four students had more than 31 hours of interviewing experience, and 1

student had 21-30 hours of interviewing experience. Students reporting little or no previous

interviewing experience totaled 68%.

Table 6

Demographic and Experience Characteristics of Participants (N = 19)

Characteristic	N	%[a]
Age at time of survey (years)		
22-24	5	26
25-29	3	16
30-35	4	21
36-39	4	21
40-49	1	5
50-54	2	11
Ethnicity		
African American	1	5
Hispanic	3	16
Caucasian	15	79
Parenting children at home		
Ages 10 and under	4	21
Ages 11 and older	4	21
No children	11	58
Current work status[a]		
Not employed	2	11
Employed 1-15 hours per week	3	16
Employed 16-31 hours per week	6	32
Employed 32+ hours per week	8	42
Currently employed, social work or human service agency		
No	15	79
Yes	4	21
Previous interviewing experience - (Hours)[a]		
0-10	13	68
11-20	0	0
21-30	1	5
31 +	4	21
Not answered	1	5

[a]Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Technology Availability and Experience

A key factor of the study related to students' learning in an online environment.

Questions regarding experience and familiarity with computers and online learning were

included in the demographic survey (see Appendix A). All students reported taking online

courses previously, with the number of courses ranging from 2 to 25. When asked if they had

taken previous online social work courses, 18 (94%) of the 19 students responded affirmatively,

reporting experiencing a range of 2 to 14 online social work courses. The high number of

previous online social work courses reflects those students who completed a minor in social

work prior to being admitted to the major. Three of the 19 students lived 100 miles from campus

and had taken all their social work courses online.

Technology capability and availability were surveyed to explore students' comfort and

ability to navigate online and use web conferencing (Wimba). All students reported having their

own personal computer, with at least 1 GB RAM. Computers with webcam capability were

available for 17 (89%) of the 19 students. Internet access with high speed DSL/cables/satellite at

home was available for 18 (95%) students. Although all students owned a computer and all but

one had access to Internet at home, 4 (21%) of the 19 students identified the use of some type of

video chat (e.g., Skype, Adobe ConnectNow, and I Chat). Reported use of some type of social

networking (e.g., Facebook, My Space, and Twitter) revealed an opposite finding, with all but 4

students participating.

A course requirement for interviewing skills training was the ability to video record a 10-

minute interview. Two questions were posed to gain a better understanding of students' ability

and access to technical capability for performing this task. In response to whether they had the

capability of making a 10-minute video recording on their own, 11 (58%) students reported *yes*, 6 (32%) were uncertain, and 2 (11%) stated *no*. Although 58% of students reported having the technical capability to make a video recording, when asked if they had shot/captured video in a digital format and saved it to a CD/DVD or emailed it to someone, 7 (37%) students had actually performed the task. The survey provided useful technology information about this group, indicating that all or a majority of the students had the hardware and accessibility (computer, 100%; webcam, 89%), but fewer had experience participating in video chatting (21%) or making a video recording to share (37%). Having students' technology-experience data informed instruction and planning.

Students' Confidence Using Interviewing Skills

Research Question 1: *How do students' pre confidence scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post confidence measure?*

To examine change in confidence, data were gathered pre and post training using a confidence scale designed by this researcher to measure students' perception and belief in their ability to perform basic interviewing skills (see Appendix F for the Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale (ISCS)). This scale consists of the six skill categories included in the 4-week interviewing skills training module: (a) *communicating involvement*, (b) *observing*, (c) *active listening*, (d) *beginning the interviewing process*, (e) *using reflection*, and (f) *questioning*. Within the six skill categories, students were asked to assess their confidence in using specific behaviors inherent in the broader category. For example, *communicating involvement* consisted of a list of four behaviors: open and accessible posture, congruent facial expression, regular eye contact unless inappropriate, and use of minimal encouragers. The six skill categories included 20 items

to be rated using a six-point scale (*not confident at all* = 0 to *very confident* = 5). Students were instructed to mark the interval that best described their degree of confidence to perform the interviewing skill at that time.

To report the change in students' confidence, gain scores were calculated using the students' pre and post confidence scores. Scores shown in Table 7, ordered from the lowest pre confidence score to the highest, indicate that all but one student's confidence increased, with ranges of scores at pre from 31 to 88 (mean = 56) to scores at post from 62 to 100 (mean = 80). Change scores ranged from -2 to 42 (mean = 23.6). (Also see Tables 9 and 11 for means for overall confidence and competency.) The student with the lowest pre confidence score made the most change, whereas the student with the highest pre confidence score showed the least change and in fact reported feeling less confident, with an overall -2 change after training. This student reported in post reflection more confidence and higher ratings in some categories but a drop in others, attributing this fluctuation to skill acquisition having been more difficult than anticipated when the pre confidence scale was completed.

After training, the range of students' scores from post confidence measurement (62 - 100 = 38) was less than the range of pre confidence scores (88 - 31 = 57). The gain in confidence, as indicated by the mean scores and the narrowing of the range of scores, may be linked to the teaching-learning process, especially the steps of practice and evaluation. After reading, thinking, and writing by way of assignment; watching sample interviews and discussing; and working with cases, the students participated in the final steps of the teaching-learning process of practicing and evaluating.

Table 7

Students' Pre and Post Training Confidence Scores with Change

Student[a] (N = 19)	Pre	Post	Change
17	31	73	+42
15	37	66	+29
3	38	65	+27
13	40	76	+36
2	42	62	+20
11	45	78	+33
12	46	65	+19
19	49	72	+23
14	60	88	+28
6	61	95	+34
18	62	76	+14
5	62	93	+31
10	63	78	+15
16	65	97	+32
7	66	77	+11
9	68	81	+13
4	72	100	+28
1	77	93	+16
8	88	86	- 2

[a]Ordered lowest to highest pre score.

Bandura (1977, 1986) cited four information sources or types of experiences from which an individual's self-efficacy is derived: (a) vicarious experiences, including observing valued models; (b) enactive mastery through successful practicing of skill; (c) verbal persuasion received by encouragement and support from feedback; and (d) physiological arousal by maintaining a self-supporting level of one's emotions.

The students' experiences that encouraged self-efficacy in this study are summarized in Table 8. The type of skill learning experiences included students' practice and evaluation of skill use weekly, with one of two formats. In 3 of the 4 weeks of skills training, they interviewed a

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partner using Wimba. During these weeks, the students served both as interviewer and

interviewee, using reality play. They received or gave immediate feedback (verbal persuasion) as

well as participated in self-assessment, with video playback of their recorded interviews,

providing opportunity for enactive mastery.

Table 8

Experiences for Building Self-Efficacy

Experiences Building Self-Efficacy[a]	Students Experiences (practice and evaluation)
Vicarious experiences	4 weeks practicing/evaluating interviewing skills with partner (3 weeks using Wimba/ 1 week f2f)
Enactive mastery	Self-assessment - video playback of recorded interview
Verbal persuasion	Immediate feedback from partner
Physiological arousal by maintaining supporting level of emotions	Watching self and others practice and the self-opportunity to reflect in online discussion and in class.

[a]Adapted from "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," Bandura, 1977, *Psychological Review,* Vol. 84, pp. 191-215.

The week the students met on campus, they participated in f2f interviewing, practicing in a triad

as the interviewer, interviewee, and process observer. This allowed the opportunity to practice

the skills as well as observe others and give and get feedback. Social comparative information,

including watching how peers succeed or fail at tasks, provides vicarious experiences for

developing one's self-perception of capability and confidence for performing tasks (Pajares &

Schunk, 2001).

Table 9

Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations of Pre, Post, and Change Confidence Scores by Skill Categories of Students (N = 19)

	Score							
Skill	Percentage [a]			Mean			*SD*	
(Maximum Score)	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post
Communicating involvement (20)	62	88	26	12.5	17.6	5.1	3.9	2.3
Observe physical indicators in client (10)	63	81	18	6.3	8.1	1.8	2.4	1.9
Beginning interview (30)	53	84	31	15.8	25.1	9.3	6.0	4.2
Active listening (10)	49	67	18	4.9	6.7	1.8	2.3	2.5
Reflecting (15)	51	71	20	7.6	10.7	3.1	4.1	3.0
Questioning (15)	59	79	20	8.8	11.8	3.0	3.0	2.3
Overall Confidence[b]	56	80	24	56.4	80.0	23.6	15.3	11.8

[a] Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
[b] Overall Confidence refers to the mean of the totals of students' individual confidence scores shown in the Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviation (*SD*) columns, respectively.

Gain scores identifying changes in students' confidence for each of the six specific

interviewing skills designated on the confidence scale were computed. Table 9 reports scores for

each of the six skill categories. Reviewing the six skill categories, the percentage scores at pre

confidence were at or below 63%. Post skill confidence increased in all skill categories.

Students' confidence scores in all skills were 71% or higher, except that of active listening

(67%). Three skill categories, *communication involvement*, *observing physical indicators*, and *beginning the interview*, reflected post confidence scores of 81% or higher. These skills were introduced at the beginning of the training, providing the opportunity for the most practice. The findings indicated that the teaching-learning process increased students' levels of confidence to perform each of the skill categories.

Students' Competency Using Interviewing Skills

Research Question 2: *How do students' pre competency scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post competency measure?*

To report the change after training of students' competency, gain scores were calculated using the students' pre and post competency scores derived from independent ratings of students' pre and post interview recordings (completed approximately six weeks apart). Pre interview video recordings were rated by at least two independent raters, and the post interview recordings by at least three. Means were derived by averaging the independent ratings for pre and post competency scores. The results provided in Table 10, ordered from the lowest pre competency score to the highest, indicate that l6 of the 19 students improved their skill competency. Three students had post ratings slightly lower than their pre competency score, ranging from -0.30 (1% decrease) to -2.70 (11% decrease) of a possible 25 points. Two of the 3 students with lower post scores had pre competency percentages of 80 and 82 respectively, dropping to 79 (a slight decrease) post.

To understand the three students' perceptions of decreased post competency scores, this researcher reviewed their written post training self-assessments and post reflections. In the post reflection, students were asked to specifically compare their pre and post confidence scores;

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however, they were not specifically instructed to compare their pre and post video recordings. Instead, students were asked to review and compare their pre and post video recordings in relation to the three goals they had identified pre training for skill improvement and to evaluate progress. They were asked to assess their strengths and areas for improvement using their post interview recording to set new skill goals. Each of the three students with decreased post competency scores identified the omission of describing the helping process (role of client and worker) as a limitation. Two of the three students cited limitations in using reflection and exploring for strengths. Performance anxiety was reported by two of the three students, who stated they had rushed the interview due to these feelings.

Despite the lower competency scores, the three students all had increased confidence, ranging from a gain of 13 to 31 from pre to post. The student with the lowest competency score (a decrease in skill competency from pre to post of -2.7) reported an increase in confidence, with a gain of 13 points. The student identified greater confidence in all areas except that of observing the client's physical indicators, which stayed the same. Although admittedly forgetting to use all skills, especially in the areas of beginning and closing an interview, the student reported having confidence in knowing how to use these skills. To improve clarity in understanding how students perceive pre to post competency change, this researcher will revise the reflection questions by adding an open-ended question to ask students to make the comparison in relation to their perceived change in competency for subsequent course offerings.

Table 10

Students' (n =19) Pre, Post, and Change Competency Scores with Percentages

Student[a]	Score[b]			Percentage[c]		
	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post	Change
18	7.0	11.7	+ 4.7	28	47	+19
1	9.0	20.0	+11.0	36	80	+44
4	9.0	23.7	+14.7	36	95	+59
10	9.5	18.7	+ 9.2	38	75	+37
16	10.0	16.7	+6.7	40	67	+27
3	11.0	19.0	+8.0	44	76	+32
14	11.5	20.3	+8.8	35	81	+46
13	12.0	16.7	+4.7	48	67	+19
2	12.0	18.0	+6.0	48	72	+24
8	12.0	18.0	+6.0	48	72	+24
17	12.5	20.0	+7.5	50	80	+30
9	13.0	10.3	-2.7	52	41	-11
7	13.0	16.0	+3.0	52	64	+12
15	14.0	17.3	+3.3	56	69	+13
11	14.5	21.3	+6.8	58	85	+27
6	16.0	22.0	+6.0	64	88	+24
5	20.0	19.7	-0.3	80	79	- 1
12	20.5	19.7	-0.8	82	79	- 3
19	23.0	24.3	+1.3	92	97	+ 5

[a]Students ordered by lowest pre score to highest.
[b]Possible score range = 5 to 25.
[c]Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

Of the 16 students with post competency scores greater than their pre scores, change from pre to post ranged from 1.3 to 14.7 (5% to 59%) of a possible 25 points. Although no clear pattern emerged, students with lower pre competency scores generally had higher gains than students with higher pre competency scores.

The five skill areas evaluated by independent raters on the Interviewing Evaluation Rater Scale (IERS) included (a) *communicating involvement*, (b) *beginning process,* (c) *reflecting,* (d)

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questioning, and (e) *closing*. For each of the five skills, gain scores identifying change in students' competency were computed. Table 11 indicates skill category scores as percentages, means, and standard deviations for pre, post, and change.

Table 11

Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations of Pre, Post, and Change Competency Scores by Skill Categories of Students, N =19

Skill (Maximum Score)[a]	Percentage[b]			Mean			*SD*	
	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post	Change	Pre	Post
Communicating Involvement (5)	71	80	9	3.55	4.00	0.45	1.05	0.96
Reflecting (5)	50	65	15	2.50	3.26	0.76	1.34	0.95
Questioning (5)	69	79	10	3.47	3.95	0.48	0.95	0.78
Beginning Process Skills (5)	36	80	44	1.82	4.00	2.18	0.89	0.87
Closing Skills (5)	36	68	32	1.79	3.39	1.60	0.90	0.98
Overall Competency[c]	53	74	21	13.13	18.60	5.47	4.19	3.50

[a] Possible score range = 5 to 25.
[b] Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
[c] Overall Competency refers to the mean totals of students' individual competency scores shown in the Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviation (*SD*) columns, respectively.

Students' competency increased most in skills related to the *beginning process*, with a mean gain of 2.18 (44%) and the *closing process*, with an increase of 1.60 (32%). Skills related to these two categories demand specific tasks, such as identifying the role of the worker, explaining the helping relationship, informing the client of agency policies and duty to report, and summarizing content of the meeting. Such tasks are not typical when communicating and relating to another person outside of the professional relationship, whereas skills related to

communicating involvement, *reflecting,* and *questioning* are part of regular conversations. Students' pre competency ratings reflected stronger ability in these categories, suggesting why there was less of an increase in post scores.

Confidence and Competency Correlation

In regard to using interviewing skills, is there a correlation between the students' post confidence scores (Table 7) and their post competency scores (Table 10)? This researcher first created a scatter plot using the two sets of scores to determine if there was an association (relationship). The graph in Figure 4 shows a slightly positive correlation, with the plotted scores falling in the upper right quadrant in a flat formation sloping upward. To obtain a specific statistic indicating the strength of the confidence and competency association, a Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted. The correlation coefficient score was $r(17) = +.192$. According to Cohen's 1988 guidelines, this association falls between a weak (+.1) and medium (+.3) association.

To investigate the relationship further, this researcher reviewed individual students' scores, finding 12 students with higher confidence than competency and 7 students demonstrating higher competency than confidence, according to their post scores. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to organize and carry out actions to accomplish a task successfully and produce desired results (Bandura, 1977). The findings revealed that more students seem to have a higher sense of self-efficacy for performing skills than their competency measures indicate. The findings of this study indicate a weak to medium relationship between confidence and competency as reported by the post scores of these variables.
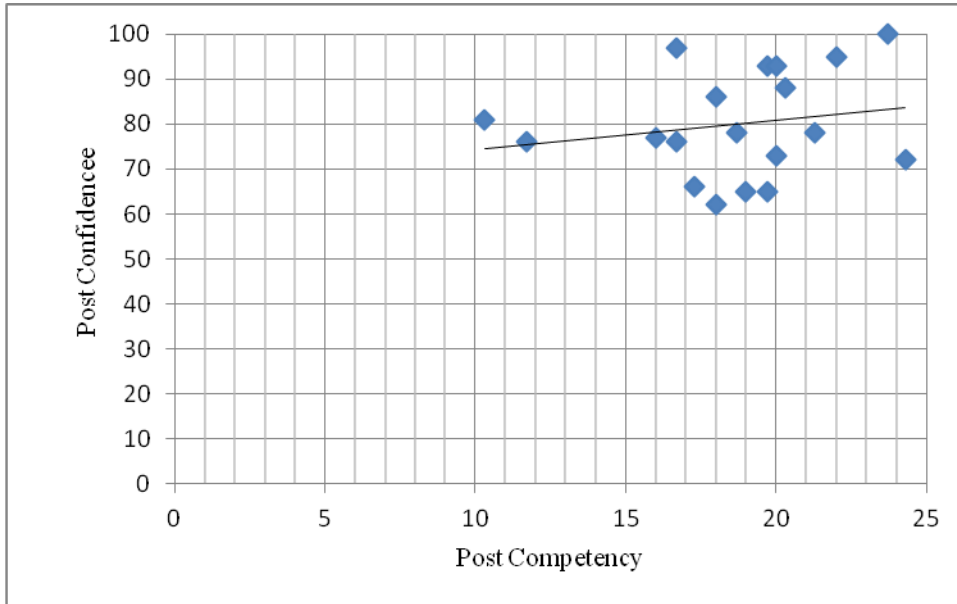
Figure 4. Correlations of post confidence and post competency scores.

Student Perceptions of Learning Interviewing Skills in a

Hybrid Learning Environment

Research Question 3: *What are the perceptions of students learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course?*

To understand the students' perceptions and experiences of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course, pre, during, and post reflection, were collected. Data were collected from students' individual reflections, which were computer generated and archived as responses to guiding questions/statements posed by the instructor. This was accomplished (a) initially in assignments, (b) as noted in email correspondence, and (c) per response to discussion questions. The guiding questions/statements were constructed using the following key elements of the intentional instructional design for teaching-learning interviewing skills in a hybrid environment:

- Students' experiences and perceptions of using reality play

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- Video recording

- Self-assessment for goal setting, with pre and post comparison of goal attainment

- Pre and post comparisons of confidence scale scores

- The six-step teaching-learning process

- The hybrid format

- Wimba.

The assignment for pre reflection followed students' video recording of a pre training interview as interviewer and completion of the pre confidence scale. The reflection questions/statements were designed to guide students' self-assessment as they reviewed their pre-recorded interview. In order to develop at least three goals for skills training, they were asked to identify their perceived baseline interviewing skill strengths and areas for improvement. Students were also asked to reflect on the use of reality play, the video recording process, and the experience of being in the interviewer role. This provided a way to review feelings associated with the interview process and identify any factors that may have affected their ability to conduct the interview.

The post reflection assignment was the final student activity of the 4-week skills training module. Guiding questions/statements were developed to assist the students' evaluation of the entire teaching-learning process of interviewing skills in a hybrid environment, including a review of their post interview video recording, post confidence scale, and their final interview assignment. To include all aspects of learning skills in this practice course, the instructor's guiding questions/statements encompassed (a) the teaching-learning instructional design, (b) the hybrid format, (c) students' comparisons of pre and post confidence, and (d) students'

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assessment of pre goal attainment. During skills training, as a way to support and provide encouragement, it was suggested that students post in discussion their perceptions and experiences of skill learning. They were also encouraged to post any questions regarding the learning process, for the purpose of problem solving.

Findings were organized and presented according to the students' responses to the guiding questions/statements posed in pre, during, and post skills training. Content analysis was used for data reduction and sense making of students' lived experiences to identify meanings (Patton, 2002). An inductive, open coding technique was applied to the reflections by reviewing each student's recorded thinking and reflecting, line by line, to identify themes and patterns of perceptions and experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Emergent themes and patterns within each category are incorporated in the findings presented below.

Pre Reflection

Students completed a pre skills training reflection after reviewing their individual responses to the confidence scale (considered baseline) and 10- to 15-minute initial interview (video recorded) for self-assessment. The initial pre interview provided a baseline to identify skills and natural tendencies students had for facilitating an interview prior to training. Students were instructed to use reality play (Askeland, 2003) for the interview so that the interviewee (student or nonstudent, according to class guidelines) would present a recent real-life challenge or problem, as described in written instructions and discussion (see Appendix E).

The pre reflection consisted of responding to three guiding statements:

1. Reflect on the process and provide your perception by describing the use of reality play, overall experience of video recording, and feelings associated with the interviewer role.

2. Identify and describe areas of strengths and areas that need improvement.

3. Construct at least three goals reflecting areas you have identified for improvement (this activity will be discussed in the post reflection section).

It should be noted that each of the 19 students did not respond to all three of these guiding statements.

Perceptions of reality play, recording, and interviewer role. Corresponding to the first guiding statement, students' experiences and perceptions using reality play, video recording, and being in the role of interviewer were reviewed by the researcher and analyzed for presentation. Where possible, the exact words of the students have been provided to support the researcher's analysis of the data.

Reality play. Of the 13 students who shared their reflections using reality play for the interview, 6 reflected a positive experience using a real-life concern and indicated that it enhanced learning assessed as a theme by the researcher. Favorable responses regarding the use of reality play and its significance for learning include,

> I felt the process of reality play was extremely helpful. I had anticipated that because I am familiar with the others who I did the project with we wouldn't be able to gain a sense of reality. I was wrong; we quickly realized that although the problems being discussed were minor, we still had to utilize the same skills and knowledge as we would in a real social work setting.

> Overall I enjoyed the experience of live play. I think it was very helpful in getting me ready for the real thing.

> Reality play was helpful but also very challenging.

Doing the whole "reality play" was an excellent it gave us an idea how the first meeting with a client can go. "Reality play" also gave me practice on what I need to work on when first meeting with a client.

I liked the use of reality play as it gives me experience before I go out into the field. The use of real problems will help me learn rather than a made up scenario that I know what the outcome should be.

I have always felt uncomfortable making up dialogue or other creative ideas on the spot. I didn't mind being the interviewee, and when it was my partners turn to interview me, I didn't have a problem with it at all. Obviously, there is far less pressure when you're just telling someone about a true part of your life, but I didn't have a problem with it.

For seven students, an identified theme of "not knowing" how to interview was reflected

as unfavorable perceptions of reality play. Students revealed this theme when stating,

This was the first time I ever used "reality play" and I have to admit I was a little uncomfortable, which you will clearly see in my video. I was unsure about how real the interview should be and without a script, so to speak, I felt like I was flying blind, which only added to my anxiety level.

It was a lot more difficult "reality playing" an interview with my sister than I thought it would be….Because of the fact that I was uncomfortable, I missed some very important components of the interview process.

I know that some of this difficulty and awkwardness is also related to not knowing how to properly interview and address client's problems.

Several students reported they would have preferred a script or pretend problem and

character. These responses led the instructor/researcher to wonder whether the students

understood the intent and application of reality play. The central purpose of reality play is to

conduct an interview wherein the interviewer and interviewee act as themselves, sharing and

responding to real-life challenges. "The participants are expected not to play games with each

other but to be authentically themselves, personally and professionally" (Askeland, 2003, p.

353). The reflection process revealed that a number of students perceived the interview using

reality play as feeling like a role play and pretending. The second theme for these students

appeared to be a lack of understanding of the full concept of reality play. The following students'

comments reflect the varying perceptions/misperceptions of how reality play was experienced:

> Overall this experience was difficult to play interview while using actual[ly] problems that we were having as the subject matter. I think I would have found it easier if [partner's name] had used a pretend problem and character.

> I liked being able to practice a mock interview but found it difficult to come up with a scenario that I felt would be relatable to what we would be dealing with as social workers without making it a heavy topic. The result seemed to be more superficial problems that seemed harder to come up with solutions for and seemed to make the interviews a bit awkward.

> I think it is always awkward doing a role play.

> Human beings learn things best through practice. This includes *reality play*, which is using mock situations to practice such things as interviewing. Having these mock interviews will help me to feel much more comfortable with the process. It will help me to practice skills that I am unfamiliar with and to become much more sensitive to my facial expressions and body language and those of the person I speak with.

> I'm not great at role playing either. Give me a script, and I can act, but I am not great at improvising while "pretending". I think I do well in normal conversation and interviews with people when it's real.

Students' references to "pretending," performing a "mock" interview, and/or role playing

indicated to this instructor/researcher that the point of using reality play was not understood. It is

unclear if the terminology, reality play, was confusing for students who possibly focused on

"play" more than "reality." Given the students' misperceptions, a re-assessment of the use and

instruction of the concept of reality play is indicated, including early student feedback.

   Video recording. Three prevailing themes surfaced in the students' reflections of their

experiences regarding the video recording of their baseline interviewing skills for self-

assessment. The first theme addressed the feelings that the video recording process provoked; the

second theme related to the value of using video recording as a learning and assessment tool; and a third theme involved the issue of technology.

Regarding the first reoccurring theme, students expressed feelings that the process was "uncomfortable, unnatural, and anxiety provoking." Two students reflected they were less bothered by the recording aspect once the interview started. These students stated, "Being video recorded was initially intimidating but once engaged in the dialogue, I paid little attention to the recording;" and "Before the interview, I was extremely nervous and anxious. Once it got started, I felt much better because I was actually doing it." Comments of students impacted adversely by the recording process include,

> I was uncomfortable videotaping myself, which made me less confident in playing my role.

> The process didn't seem natural and as a result I feel I didn't act very naturally. I know lot more about interviewing then what comes across on the tape, but as soon as the recording started I couldn't remember a thing.

> I am quite used to conducting interviews that are recorded but found this interview very stressful because it just did not feel natural.

> I am no different from anyone else and dread seeing myself on video; this really increased my anxiety.

> I think being recorded and knowing that it was going to be viewed really made me nervous.

> I felt uncomfortable during the process, especially because…knowing it was being taped.

> I was much to[o] aware of the recording equipment to be focused on the interview as I would have liked to be. It made me feel like I was performing rather than interviewing or having a conversation.

> I was really nervous being the interviewer. I felt like I was doing it all wrong.

> Video recording added to the stress of interviewing.

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The video recording made me feel like I was being judged and that all my mistakes were being recorded….I felt as if the attention that I was trying to give to my client was competing with knowledge that I was being video taped and that it would be reviewed.

The second theme to emerge from the students' reflections was the recognition that video recording was a valuable tool for learning and self-awareness. Students related that recording provided a tool for identifying strengths and natural abilities as well as revealing areas needing improvement in the use of interviewing skills. Recording provided the opportunity for interview playback and self-assessment. Generally, the reflections portrayed students' sense that video recording provoked a feeling of being uncomfortable, while at the same time valuing what it provided by way of feedback. Insights and self-awareness gained from the experience seemed to affirm students' acceptance and motivation for continuing use of this method for practicing as an essential part of training. Students' reflections included the following statements:

After reviewing the video, however, I realized how useful of a tool recording interview sessions can be. I realized that even though I made many mistakes, there were some positive skills that could be assessed from the video and that made me feel a whole lot better. By reviewing the video, I could actually see what skills I was or wasn't using during the interview process rather than trying to remember if I was using them or not during or after the interview. The video recording turned out to be a valuable resource and learning tool. I think that I would feel more comfortable using it in the future.

I think this was a wonderful experience. It helped me to see what somewhat else sees when talking to me. There is so much that we don't realize when we speak, facial expressions are so important.

During the interview I noticed that I said, "Um" quite a bit and I moved around A LOT. I was cringing as I watched myself fidget. I am not sure if it was because of my nerves or if I just wasn't comfortable, but I did not notice it while I was doing it. Perhaps I do it all the time and am just not aware of it.

This was a really good experience for me. I learned that I had more strength when it comes to interviewing. I found out what things I need to work on to get better at interviewing….I did better than I thought I would at being the interviewer.

I have to become more comfortable with watching myself so that I can for practical purposes critique me.

Having the camera on me did not help…though I know the importance of going back to watch yourself in order to improve.

I am sure with more practice and exposure to it, I will learn to ignore or be comfortable being taped….I see the value in practicing interviewing with peers and classmates before being in a situation where the interview matters more.

But in the end, it was very helpful for me to see how I was during the interview and to see what I need to work on in the future.

It was good to be able to watch the interview and see the areas I am lacking….
Now I know what to work on next time.

Overall this was a great experience for me as I am developing skills that I will need later on in life once out in the field.
It was a good learning experience to be able to watch myself and critique my mannerisms and ways of asking questions, as well as my listening skills.

Technology, the third theme, surfaced in pre reflection but was more pronounced in post reflection, despite not having been being identified as a guiding question. In pre reflection, technical difficulties were experienced by a few students as being distracting during the pre video recording process. For two students, the issue was figuring out how to get both students in the camera line of sight and still be heard, whereas another student mentioned having trouble getting the video to work. One student reported it was not video recording that was difficult but figuring out how to export and email the video to the instructor.

Interviewer role. Students were asked to consider their feelings about being in the interviewer role. Seven of 19 students did not specifically reference this aspect of interviewing. From reviewing students' responses, an emerging theme was the students' perceived level of competency and/or self-efficacy (confidence) to perform the interviewer role. Of interest were 3 of the students who had work experience with interviewing. Whereas the response of one of

these experienced interviewers reflected a sense of self-efficacy: "[I] felt comfortable for the most part," those of the other two did not. One of the experienced students described her feelings of confidence as having been affected by the level of preparation for the interview:

> [I] felt like a fish out of water because we were asked not to prepare for the interview. Normally I like to do my homework, read the case file and any other identifying paperwork. I like to review (in my mind) possible scenarios of the crisis (or current concern) and outcomes (whether positive or negative).

Students' reflections indicating their perceptions of being in the interviewer role are presented below. The theme of whether they felt competent and/or confident in the role is reflected.

> This was a really good experience for me. I learned I had more strengths when it comes to interviewing….I did better than I thought I would being the interviewer.

> I did enjoy being in the role of the interviewer as I have always felt comfortable asking people about their lives and situations and enjoy listening to what they have to say.

> I really liked being in the interviewer role! I believe I'm going to really enjoy this once I become more confident and experienced in helping people.

> My feelings about being in the interviewer role and the entire process are not very good at this point, but that stems from my perceptions of my abilities rather than a dislike of the process.

> I felt nervous to be the interviewer than the interviewee, as I fixated on making sure all of my words, motions and body language was welcoming and professional.

> I felt awkward being the interviewer. I kept thinking to myself, "Am I asking the right questions?" "Are they stupid questions?" "What else [I] should ask?"

> It was also difficult to stay in an interviewer role. I felt sort of silly so it was difficult not to become distracted.

> Going into this assignment, I was very apprehensive about performing my role as an interviewer since I scored very low on the Pre Interviewing Skills Confidence Test. This may be due to the fact that I have never experienced being an interviewer nor have I ever been placed in a situation similar to this.

The role of the interviewer was much more challenging than being a client….The interviewer may feel to be perceived as the problem-solver and having all the answers. I think it's important to establish what the real relationship is between the client and the interviewer and what the interviewer can offer the client.

An additional theme related to how the choice of who the students interviewed affected them. Experiences and perceptions differed among students, with one student reporting, "I also learned that this assignment would have been more beneficial if I would have done it with someone in the class I'm not best friends with." In contrast, another student stated,

I am glad that my first practice interview was with someone I already had somewhat of a relationship with so I could get comfortable with just the setting and the task at hand, and not have to worry about establishing a comfort level with the new person.

Students' pre strengths and areas for improvement (triangulation). The pre skills training section concludes with students' perceptions and self-assessments of skill strengths and areas for improvement, corresponding with the second guiding statement described above. Using the pre interview recording, students assessed their skill areas of strengths and areas for improvement using the Student Interview Evaluation (SIE). All students (except one who did not report strengths) reported a common theme among strengths as being those related to the skill category of communication involvement (i.e., open and assessable body posture, congruent facial expression, slightly inclined position toward the client, regular eye contact unless inappropriate, and minimal encouragement). This skill category ranked highest in pre competency scores (evaluated by independent raters), with a mean of 3.55 (71%) of a possible 5.00 (See Table 11). Students' pre confidence scores in the category of communication involvement, with a mean of 12.5 (62%) of a possible 20.0 (see Table 9), also reflected this pattern, being one percentage point lower than the highest skill category—observing physical traits in client (63%).

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Triangulation was employed using the three sources of data, revealing the strengths and natural tendencies of students' interviewing skills pre training in the category of *communication involvement*. Triangulation of this data from multiple qualitative and quantitative measures increases the credibility/reliability of the findings (Merriam, 2009).

A pattern emerged relating the two areas categories predominantly cited for improvement: *beginning skills* and *closing skills* (open and closing a meeting). Seventeen of 19 students identified one or both of these skill categories. Two students identified their appearance (tattoos) and distracting behaviors (gum chewing, drinking water during the interview, and body movements) as the number one area for improvement. *Beginning process skills* and *closing skills,* with respective means of 1.82 (36%) and 1.79 (36%) of a possible 5.00 (see Table 11), represented the two skill category scores ranked lowest of the pre competency scores (evaluated by independent raters). On the Pre Confidence Scale, *beginning skills* ranked as one of the lowest skill categories, with a mean of 15.8 (53%) of possible 30.0 (See Table 9). (*Closing skills* was not a category represented on the Pre Confidence Scale.) Triangulation consistently indicated these target areas for skills improvement as that of beginning and closing a meeting.

During Training Reflection

Interviewing skills training lasted 4 weeks: 3 online (Weeks 1, 3, and 4) and one f2f meeting on campus (Week 2, with videoconferencing for the three distance students). Weekly, as the teaching-learning system was implemented, the students were asked to post their reflections of the learning experience and any questions or concerns they were having in discussion. Week 2, during the on-campus class, students were given time to accomplish this, f2f or through the use of videoconferencing. Students were instructed to share or question any aspect of learning

interviewing skills, although guided areas for consideration included (a) experiences using the teaching-learning system, (b) hybrid delivery, (c) web conferencing (Wimba) technology and interviewing practice experience, and (d) feelings about the process.

One sole theme dominated students' reflections during training: the challenge of using Wimba (technology difficulties) for practicing interviewing skills each of the 3 weeks online. The six-step teaching-learning process of skills was commented on by one student, who stated, "I have to say that the practice interview this week was much more enlightening than my first practice interview. Having the knowledge of how to approach an interview, from the readings …, made a huge difference."

Web Conferencing (Wimba). Eleven of 19 students reported web conferencing technology difficulties at some point while attempting to practice interviewing online during the 3 weeks of online learning. Despite frustration with technological issues, including "delayed responses," "echoing," "background noise," "freezing screen," "cutting out," "hearing the partner but no video," and "problems archiving," themes of resiliency, problem solving and self-directed learning emerged in the students' postings. Postings (email and in discussion) indicated that students found web conferencing (Wimba) challenging, frustrating, and less than conducive for practicing and learning interviewing skills. However, they did not allow it to deter them from practicing skills as part of the teaching-learning process repeated each week of the training module. How students responded to the challenge, illustrating their resourcefulness and perseverance, is presented below:

> I am meeting with [student name] on campus tomorrow to do the interview session. Is it okay if I record it with my camera instead of using Wimba? I have to admit that I don't feel that Wimba is very conducive to this interview learning process. Having to press a "talk" button and having unwanted feedback is distracting.

We are having too many problems with hearing each other without long delays, and her image keeps going out. Also there was a problem with the archiving… could we meet in person again for this assignment.

Distance students working together stated,

[Student name] and I attempted this tonight for about 30 minutes. I could see and hear her just fine and she could hear me but not see me. Wombat was reading my webcam but it wasn't connecting somewhere. We called it quits and I went all the way out and came back in and of course it worked just fine… we will try again next Wednesday.

Ongoing communication and problem solving occurred primarily in the beginning of the training period regarding web conferencing (Wimba) issues. Students posted in discussion their experiences, along with responses for possible solutions shared by other students and instructor-assisted by the MSCD Educational Technology Lab. Students requested specific information to problem solve, including asking for a direct link to Wimba for troubleshooting. A student having trouble wrote, "Do you have a number for tech support for Wimba? I will also try to call Windows. Or if I cannot get it fixed should we just do our interview with my voice though she cannot see me?"

Six of 11 students experiencing technology issues with Wimba chose to meet on their own to practice and record. Students returned to the use of Wimba as their issues were resolved. According to one student,

Because of the difficulties that [student name] and I had with Wimba, we ended up working together face to face and I think that helped me a lot for this week….Now that those have been explained, I think we should be good for the next Wimba meeting.

Despite the numerous technical issues, students revealed determination and the ability to be resilient to practice skills weekly to complete all steps of the teaching-learning system. Students indicated in pre reflection the value of practicing for learning. The persistence to

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engage in this step of the teaching-learning system despite technology malfunctions was consistently revealed. A student, responding to another's posting in discussion, wrote during the first week, "[The instructor] spoke with tec. support and got some ideas we can try, I think she responded to my post with some solutions. It's going to take some practice, but I think we will benefit from the [w]hole process."

A lack of experience and familiarity using web conferencing (video chat) technology may have contributed to the students' self-efficacy beliefs regarding Wimba. The study's demographics revealed that all students owned a computer, and all but one had access to the Internet at home, but 4 (21%) of 19 had previous experience using some type of video chat similar to Wimba (e.g., Skype, Adobe ConnectNow, and I Chat). Several models of technology acceptance and use have been identified in the research literature, including Davis's technology acceptance model (TAM), Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of reasoned action (TRA), and Ajzen, Madden and Mathieson's theory of planned behavior (TPB). Despite their differences, "[all] models posit that individual beliefs or perceptions about, and attitudes toward, a new information technology (IT) are highly salient determinants of usage" (Agarwal, Sambamurthy, & Stair, 2000, p. 419). Students' familiarity and experience with web conferencing appear to warrant review to inform the extent of Wimba practice needed and/or feasibility of usage prior to commencing interview training/practice.

Post Reflection

For self-assessment, students reviewed their individual post confidence scale and 10 to 15-minute post interview (via video recording). The self-assessment provided the basis for the final interviewing assignment (see Appendix H), submitted prior to engaging in the post

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reflection (the final activity of the interviewing training module). To gather students' perceptions and experiences of skills training, four areas were addressed in the reflection of skills learning, using the following guiding questions/statements:

- Compare your Post Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale with your Pre Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale. What changes in skill development do you identify?

- Review the three goals you identified for skill improvement in the pre reflection prior to interviewing skills training. Evaluate your improvement.

- The teaching-learning process used to learn interviewing skills included a 6-step process:

  1. Reading

  2. Thinking and writing (assignments and discussion)

  3. Watching and discussing (DVD)

  4. Working with cases

  5. Practicing

  6. Evaluating

  Consider each of the six steps to provide feedback as to how each facilitated or did not support your learning of interviewing skills. What suggestions for improving this process for yourself and/or others do you have?

- Overall, what is your perception of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid format? Please reflect on both the f2f and online components of this class related to learning interviewing skills.

Students' perceptions of their experiences in these four areas were reviewed, analyzed, and are presented with emerging themes and/or patterns. It is noted that one student did not submit a post reflection; therefore *N* = 18 for this section. Findings will be triangulated with the quantitative findings from the post confidence and post competency of skill categories in the relevant sections to address credibility.

Pre and post confidence comparisons. Addressing the first guiding question regarding post reflection**,** a strong theme of increased confidence was perceived and reported by 17 students, comparing pre and post confidence scores. On a majority of items and categories, students reported increased confidence, along with fewer items that stayed the same or decreased. Post confidence reflections paralleled post confidence scores. In the post reflections, a pattern emerged of beginning skills as the category of most gained confidence. For example, students reported,

> The area I was most improved on was the beginning of the interview. I felt more confident and natural when I introduced myself and sought an introduction from my client I was able to clearly identify the purpose of the meeting in the post interview, something that I struggled with in the pre-interview. After much practice, I was able to feel fairly comfortable with identifying my role and the client's role in the meeting which I did not on the pre-interview. I also felt confident discussing ethical and agency policies which I did not even touch on in the pre-interview at all.

> Now I feel and believe that I can open an interview with a client competently, which was something I did not believe before we started this process.

> I see a large increase in my confidence of the skills needed to begin and conduct an interview.

> The most improvement was the beginning process of the interview (i.e. introductions, agency policies, and observing feedback).
> I was much more confident starting a session and knowing how to move along with everything.

First, I seemed to gain confidence and consistency in almost every aspect of interviewing. It seems that through practice and reading, I have gained a better understanding of what needs to be included in beginning interviews.

Students' identification of *beginning skills* as the category where they most increased confidence is consistent and coincides with the post confidence and post competency findings. *Beginning skills* was the category of greatest change on both the Post Confidence Scale (see Table 9), with a mean score of 9.3 (31%), and the post competency measure (rated by independent raters), with a mean score of 2.19 (44%) (see Table 11). Students in pre reflection identified and targeted beginning skills as the area most desired for skill improvement. Triangulation occurred post training as the findings from the three measures of the post ISCS, the independently rated IERS, and post reflection merged, indicating that the greatest skill improvement was *beginning skills*.

Another emergent theme, based on the students' perceptions, was the experience of having confidence to perform skills that were not executed in the post interview and/or that did not show a gain of confidence in the score evaluation. Three students were evaluated as having decreased skills scores post competency, yet their post reflections indicated they felt confident to use these skills but forgot to include them in the post interview. Of the three students, the one who showed the most decrease of pre to post competency scores (-2.7 of 25 possible points) stated, "During the interview process, I forgot a couple of steps that take place when introducing myself and my role….I am fully confident with seeking introductions." Another of the students commented that despite her reviewing the steps of interviewing, she "consistently forgot to use several of them." Reflecting a different reason for decreased competency in post reflection, one

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student perceived greater confidence than was reflected on the post interview, citing issues of context as interfering:

> First, let me say that my final interview did not reflect how comfortable I truly feel with interviewing. During class exercises and the times that I worked with another classmate, I felt very comfortable with the interviewing process and felt my skills improve. Interviewing for a grade, as well as interviewing my own husband…affected my comfort level, composure, and ability to listen and reflect effectively in my final interview.

Due to distance from campus, a small number of students interviewed a family member, which posed an unnatural interviewing situation, and for at least this student, affected the interview process.

The final theme in this post reflection section relates to what students attribute their increased confidence in performing interviewing skills. Generally, increased confidence resulted from the skills training, with some steps of the teaching-learning system reported as having more impact than others. One student illustrated this theme as follows:

> Generally speaking…I feel much more confidant now then I did four weeks ago for two reasons. First, I saw a great deal of improvement over a relatively short period of time, which provides me with hope for the future and secondly I feel as if I now have more resources in my arsenal that will help me continue to improve. Before starting this process I felt as if I was flying without a net, so to speak, but now I have a road map that provides me with clear and concise directions. I know where I am going and I have the tools available to get me there.

Students identified specific steps of the teaching-learning system that promoted a sense of confidence to perform skills. Practice was reported most often as the training activity that increased confidence. A few examples include,

> My confidence level in all of the interviewing skills increased….After all of the practice we have done, these skills have definitely grown! I was not very excited to practice interviewing skills but I can clearly see now why it is so important to practice and it has definitely boosted my confidence level.

> It seems that through practice and reading, I have gained a better understanding of what

needs to be included.

I made a significant improvement in most of my interviewing skills by reading, discussing, and practicing.

Skill improvement--goal attainment. The second guiding statement regarding post reflection instructed students to review and compare their goals for improvement, pre and post skills training. In pre skills training, students were asked to assess their pre interview recording to identify baseline interviewing skill ability. In general, each student begins skills training with a unique set of natural abilities and experiences. In this study, self-assessment provided an opportunity for students to determine their innate strengths and areas needing improvement. Once areas for improvement were identified, the students were requested to develop at least three goals reflecting targeted areas for learning. Identified goals reflected two major categories for improvement: (a) physical characteristics (e.g., appearance, gestures, body language, and facial expressions) and (b) technical skills (e.g., skills to begin and close a meeting, question, summarize, explore meaning, and identify client's strengths). After training, as part of the post reflection, students were asked to review their goals to evaluate level of improvement.

Emerging from the students' reflections was a theme of success related to the achievement of targeted areas for improvement (goals). Fifteen students identified two out of three goals or all three as being met with noticeable improvement. Two students omitted reporting goal status in post reflection. A pattern of identifying a new plan or refining the existing plan for continued improvement was described by students, referencing the goals that were not met and wanting further growth in areas of achievement. Students' reflections revealed a perception of skill acquisition as a self-regulated, ongoing process that needs continual self-awareness and self-assessment, with a plan for improvement. This pattern of planning for

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continued improvement is evident in the following students' quotes:

My goal to not make excuses still needs to be addressed, as there was some of that in my final interview. I plan to address this by communicating with friends, family and others about stressors in their life without offering excuses.

My first goal was to conduct an interview using the correct format. I believe I have reached....I understand the steps necessary, yet I feel I need more practice…. My third goal was to slow down during the interview. I believe I have come a long way…, but I still have a long way to go. I need to write an outline that I can have with me.

My 3 goals…were…1. Work on facial expressions (my face was pretty void because of my nerves because of the camera. 2. Work on the beginning of the meeting- I need to talk about confidentiality….3. Create some clear goals for future meetings. I believe I met all 3 of these goals…My goals after my final interview are as follows….I have learned to make my goals measurable, attainable, positive, and specific goals. I will be able to more accurately measure my success using these goals that I have set for myself.

As far as the third goal [I will learn not to give advice], I did not improve. I think I actually got worse….I definitely have to work on this.

I felt I did a pretty well at achieving my goals but there are still some of them I would like to work on.

There was an improvement in the area of explaining confidentiality and length of time we have to meet. I think I could have said more about the role of the client and the role of the social worker….I would like to work on my ending as far as asking for feedback from the client. I felt like I improved in this area…I would like to identify and point out the client's strengths. I feel this area still needs work.
I don't think I made much progress in my first goal, which was to look and feel more natural while conducting the interview….I was disappointed in my progress in this goal, but I plan on working on interviews over the summer to get more comfortable with …

I still need to work in identifying the client's strengths. I have already revised this goal for myself because I haven't shown much improvement. I am trying to look for strengths in people whenever and wherever I can. I am hoping by doing this it will become more natural for me to identify strengths quickly.

I believe I did increase my skills regarding this goal. However, this is an area of improvement for me and I will continue to work on this goal.

The greatest numbers of goals attained (student reported) were in the skill categories of

beginning and *closing*. Fifteen of 17 students who identified these skill categories as targeted

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goals for improvement reported a positive change. Successful goal attainment in these areas corresponds to the students' report of most increased post confidence in the same skill categories. In addition, post confidence and competency scores showed the greatest change in *beginning skills* and *closing skills*, consistent with triangulation of the quantitative measures with the qualitative finding regarding students' perceptions that most improvement occurred in these categories. Students reported a variety of personal and skill-technique goals that they assessed as not being achieved (e.g., advice giving, identification of client's strengths, and use of reflection); however, there was no one area of least goal attainment.

Teaching-learning system perceptions. The intentional instructional design chosen for interviewing skills training utilized a teaching-learning system of multiple, active-learning methods, with the intent to support the unique ways that students learn. As described earlier, the six-step process includes the activities of (a) reading, (b) thinking and writing (assignments and discussion), (c) watching and discussing (interview recordings), (d) working with cases, (e) practicing, and (f) evaluating. The third guiding question for post reflection asked the students to consider each of the six steps and provide their perception of how each affected their skills learning. They were also asked to provide suggestions for improving this process for future students.

Unanimously, the general theme in the students' post reflections was captured in the following statements: "The teaching-learning process used to learn these interviewing skills was quite effective. All of the 6 steps contributed to my learning." "I believe that all of the six steps are essential to my complete understanding." "The six step process was effective in helping me

develop a better sense of where I am and how I can improve as an interviewer." Again reflecting

this general theme, another student wrote,

> Looking back on the whole process, I would advise myself or others to really take the time to work on each step. They may seem trivial or unimportant at the time but in the end, the process really comes together as a whole and is of great value.

In general, all students related the usefulness of the teaching-learning process for learning

skills; however, most students highlighted specific steps of the process that were more

advantageous and relevant for their learning style than others. A pattern emerged of students

identifying the particular teaching-learning step(s) they perceived as being most or least

congruent with their natural learning style. Comments from some of the students regarding the

usefulness of certain teaching-learning steps include,

> Watching/Discussion of DVD**:** This by far was the most beneficial learning process for me. I am a visual person and I need to SEE how skills (I read about) are performed….I think practice, reading and watching the DVD's was the most helpful.

> Watching & Discussing**-** This part of the process was not all that helpful for me. I am not a very visual learner in the sense that watching others helps me improve. Reading**-**Seeing each skill in written form and reading examples about each one really helped me to more fully understand the totality of the skill. Practicing**-** This process was also invaluable. It is very difficult to determine whether you have mastered a skill and find areas you need to improve in if you do not use them over and over again.

> 1) Reading- … I attain more information from reading than I do from listening to a lecture…2) Thinking & Writing….The reason I learned more from this book [*Developing Helping Skills* text], was because it took a more hands-on approach which is my learning style. The assignments allowed me to do a lot of practice and observation. Because of this, I could apply what I read to real-life situations… 6) Evaluating - Being able to evaluate my videos was priceless in the way of learning.

> I think the ones [steps] that were most effective for me personally were the practicing and watching the DVD and example interviews and the thinking and writing in discussions and assignments….I learn by doing most of the time and being interactive in that capacity helps me.

I mostly learn by engaging in active learning by interviewing a person face to face and in person….I really liked watching videos because I was able to identify what the social worker did wrong and right and also able to share it with my classmates through discussions. My favorite one was practicing interviewing skills.

In regards to reading as part of the learning interviewing skills, I found this to be the least useful step for my learning….I am not very focused when it comes to reading and I don't retain much of what I read until I practice it or hear it aloud… Thinking and writing and using reflective exercises was pivotal for me in my progress of learning interviewing skills. Practicing…was useful and relevant…despite my hesitation to practice because it is uncomfortable….I find evaluation to be extremely advantageous to help process how I have grown….It also forced me to be very honest with myself and was a more specific and measurable way to observe where I started and where I am today.

Practicing- I think that practicing was the biggest contributor to my improvement. Evaluating was one of the most important aspects of helping me succeed with my communication skills.

Watching and discussing videos of other's doing interviews was one of the most helpful steps in the process….The videos all gave me ideas of what I may want to incorporate into my skill set as well what I would want to avoid….Practicing was the most valuable part of the process….Practicing allowed me to become comfortable with the process, what I was going to say, and my observing skills. The evaluation process has been another time consuming activity but well worth it. It was hard to watch myself on video but….Without having to do these evaluations, I would have realized that I had improved but I would not have known exactly how. Likewise, I would have not been able to specifically identify areas that needed work either.

Reading: I felt that I learned the most from the readings provided in our texts, lecture notes, and other articles….Reading is one of my most natural ways of learning.

Evaluating: This learning process was as significant to me as reading and practicing was. By reviewing my interviews, I was able to see my strengths and weaknesses from a visual perspective. Trying to recall interviewing skills without a visual recording makes the evaluation process more difficult. Having the videos on Wimba and on camera makes it easier to evaluate ALL of the skills necessary for interviewing.

Evaluation- I think that evaluating myself after the interviews has been the best tool for me in this learning process. Like I stated earlier it allows me to physically see what I am doing well and what I need to improve on.

The teaching-learning system and the Natural Human Learning Process (NHLP)

connection. Students referenced what they perceived to be the most useful steps of the teaching-

learning process, given their innate strengths for learning. In the first week of the course, students were asked to participate in a metacognitive activity to identify their NHLP. This activity mirrored Smilkstein's (2003) study, asking students to identify something they learned to be "good at" outside of school (drawing on their natural learning). The students were asked to describe in writing the process, step by step: (a) how they learned to do it, (b) how they progressed in their learning, and (c) how they became good at it. Findings from Smilkstein's study regarding the NHLP activity were similar to the students' experiences in this study, reported in the post reflection, varying in what supported their learning best: reading/knowledge building, watching others/demonstration, or doing/trial and error. The one activity all included as necessary for learning was practice.

To investigate whether individual students' experiences using the teaching-learning process were parallel to their NHLP, a review to compare students' responses of post reflection and the student's NHLP report was conducted. A strong pattern was revealed. A match between students' natural way of learning and what they found as the most useful learning activity for skill development was revealed. The steps that were most advantageous for learning interviewing skills paralleled the steps identified as being what was most natural for learning a new skill set. Thus, identifying one's natural learning process provided new awareness for the students. For example, "It did make me stop and think about 'how' we learn to do things. I had never really thought about that before." The value of thinking about and gaining self-awareness of one's natural learning pattern was summarized by another student: "I definitely see the value. For me the moment I realized how I learn and the best way to facilitate that learning was the moment I began to see my true potential."

To illustrate the parallel between the students' reported NHLP and their perception of the teaching-learning process, two representative examples are given below. In the first scenario, the student explained,

> [Student reflection of the six step teaching learning process] I think practice, reading and watching the DVD's was the most helpful…[Student's list of stages for NHLP as to how she learned to do rubber stamping and making cards] - I got a book and read about it -I had someone show me how to do it -I worked and practiced with it on my own for a while -I joined a group where we swapped cards and learned new stamping techniques….- I started following some stampers blogs and watching their techniques- I kept practicing on my own.

The students' natural learning process and reflection of most useful learning steps in the teaching-learning process were reading, watching (demonstration), and practice.

In the second example, a student, who identified four of the six steps (reading, watching for demonstration, practice, and evaluation) as being most relevant for her learning of interviewing skills, reported learning something outside of school and being good at it, using those same four stages. The learning activity involved training. She reported the following stages:

A. I started by finding an instructor and attending weekly classes
B. I learned the process by reading the instructors step-by-step instructions and watching
….
C. By practicing in class and receiving feedback I learned to effectively [execute the activity]. I also … continue[d] practicing.

Suggestions for improving the teaching-learning process. A few students included varying suggestions for improving the teaching-learning process, with no theme identified. Two students felt more interviewing demonstration—"REAL," if possible—would be beneficial, as shown by their responses: "I think showing correct interviewing videos could be expanded," and "Something that I think would have helped me would be to be able to watch actual REAL

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interviews and see how the professionals do it." The video demonstrations used in class were taken from the text DVD vignette and two previous student's interviews, providing as examples the beginning and conducting of an interview via role play. Two students recommended the continuation and importance of self-assessment by requiring students' comparative evaluations of their pre and post training video recordings. For example, one of the students wrote: "I would encourage everyone to do an honest and thorough evaluation of how they have grown and what areas they still have limitations in." Another student suggested practicing "interviewing live and not use Wimba," indicating that she would prefer having all practice in person rather than relying on both of the practicing formats used in class (Wimba and live interviewing during the on-campus week). The most distinct recommended change involved how the steps of practice and evaluation in the teaching-learning process could be altered by changing the evaluation/feedback format. One student stated,

> I have found that practicing with other students can sometimes be ineffective, nerve wrecking and discouraging. There is a level of desired acceptance, inclusion and slight competition among a student base. These factors of being a student can cause some complication in practicing effectively. However, I find practicing with someone in a higher position much more beneficial.

Student feedback and suggestions are reviewed and discussed more extensively by this instructor/action researcher in Chapter 5.

Hybrid learning perceptions. The fourth and last guiding question in the post reflection asked students to provide their perceptions of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid format, considering both the f2f and online components of the class. The most prominent theme was the students' experiences using the combined characteristics of the f2f (synchronous) and online (asynchronous) delivery to learn interviewing skills. The use of Wimba or f2f interviewing for

practice was a second theme identified from students perceptions of the hybrid learning environment. Learning-format preference, influenced by learning style and personality traits, was a theme identified in two students' reflections.

Students' perceptions of hybrid characteristics for learning interviewing skills. The most prominent theme regarding hybrid delivery was the students' perceptions of learning interviewing skills using the combined characteristics of the f2f (synchronous) and online (asynchronous) delivery. Varied perceptions were reported, including preference for what students perceived to be the optimal learning environment for skills training. Eleven students reflected a subtheme regarding the benefit of blending online discussion (self-directed learning) and f2f meetings for increased personalization. Four of 11 students suggested that more f2f meetings be held to accommodate more live interviewing skills practice. Additional subthemes consisted of students' identifying learning environment preferences, with 2 students declaring they would enroll in the hybrid Generalist Practice II course, Fall 2011, and 3 students stating that on-campus learning would have been preferred for interview skills. Four of the 18 students submitting post reflections did not reference the hybrid environment characteristics specifically. To gain a better understanding of the students' various perceptions, excerpts from their reflections are provided below.

Eleven students (4 of whom preferred more f2f meetings) reported perceived benefits of the hybrid format, given online discussion/interaction (self-directed learning) and the social/personal aspects of meeting f2f. The following student comments support this view:

> I loved the online/hybrid format. I think I got the best of both worlds that way. I love doing discussions and learning from them. I also liked going to class and meeting people face to face. I also think hybrid is helpful because you can ask the professor questions in person.

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I am actually quite surprised at how well interviewing skills are able to be taught and practiced in a hybrid format. I feel like the online content and discussions surrounding the interviewing process were more helpful in the learning process than being in lecture every week. I absorbed and processed the information much better through the online discussion because it really forced me to learn all the aspects and be able to articulate them better than if I was passively sitting in class listening to a lecture. Being able to meet monthly on campus was nice though and added a more personal touch to the class.

I enjoyed both the online and campus (video [conferencing]) parts of the course. I learned more from the online part of course because of the assignments and discussion. I felt like during the campus meetings there was a lot of announcements and explanations about what to expect. I liked this because it helped clear up some confusion about certain things. However, I don't believe that I learned as much on campus as online. I did enjoy getting to put faces to names however, and it made it more personal.

This was my first semester taking a hybrid class and I really like it. I am able to obtain the best of both worlds (online and in the classroom). I liked the online part because I am able to get different perspectives on other classmates and what they feel their strengths are during interviews. I also like that I can actively participate throughout the day and on my own time. I think I am learn a lot more through a hybrid class because more of my time is spent on learning the materials by reading and doing as opposed to just listening to lectures.

Overall, I really enjoyed learning interviewing skills in an online and hybrid class. It was great that we met on campus a couple of times so that we could match faces with who we were interacting with online during discussion. I really enjoyed the online section of this class, I learn best when I have to read everything instead of having it being read to me or the whole class.

I learned a lot from the online (hybrid) format….I really enjoyed the interaction with the other students on campus. Putting names to faces online was helpful…. Additionally, I liked being able to interact with my professor. Sometimes it feels like online classes aren't personal enough. Interacting with a professor at campus is important….In regards to the activity of learning interviewing skills, I believe I learned just as effectively in this class as I would have in a 100% on campus classroom setting. I do interact with other students when we meet on campus. However, there is a lot more discussion in the online setting due to the requirement of attendance through postings.

I like the online/hybrid format because I feel like I am more in control of my learning. If I was sitting in class listening to a lecture, I can tune it out. Online, I am responsible for getting all of the information and applying it.

Students favorable to hybrid learning of interviewing skills but wanting more f2f

meetings reflected,

> I feel that the best combination for me to learn in an online hybrid class for Generalist Practice I would be to do the assigned readings and discussions online but for all practice interviews to take place in the classroom face to face. This would probably mean that the number of on-campus classes would increase from something like four to six or eight but that time in class proved to be so valuable that I would increase it by at least two to four sessions. I would remove the week's discussion (module lecture) from the classroom however and instead leave all class discussions online.

> I think learning interviewing skills online is an okay format…Obviously it would be nice if the hybrid class could meet more than once per month for more opportunities to do interviews. I have taken several online classes and the format of this one was much more engaging by everyone in the class including the instructor. The questions in the discussion posed opportunities for critical thinking and not just book answers which is important because questions like that can become repetitive and more difficult to answer.

> The only problem I had was that I would have rather liked to complete interviews face to face more than 3 times.

> I would recommend maybe a little more face time in the hybrid course to enable the class to participate in whole class, organic discussions rather than formulated typed responses to specific questions.

The students' perceptions of the strengths and benefits of both online and on-campus

features of the hybrid learning environment parallel the change to research-supported pedagogy

described in Chapter 2 of this study. The asynchronous online environment places the learner in

an active role for continuous interaction and feedback among student(s) and instructor(s),

facilitating a sense of engagement in a community of inquiry with the use of discussion and

email (Huang, 2009; King, 2002; Rovai & Jordan, 2004; Swan, 2001; Yanes et al., 2006). The

benefit of online discussion is that all learners participate actively and are given opportunity for

thoughtful and reflective dialoguing to encourage higher order thinking skills (Garrison &

Kanuka, 2004; King, 2002; Yanes et al., 2006). In this hybrid course, students had an

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opportunity for continuous discussion of their experiences, acquiring interviewing skills using the six-step teaching-learning process.

Synchronous (f2f) learning promotes socialization, providing learners the opportunity to interact verbally and distinguish non-verbal cues (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003; Rovai & Jordan, 2004). Having an opportunity to meet f2f reduces feelings of isolation and promotes personal contact and immediate feedback that students cite as problematic of fully online courses (Hara & Kling, 2000; Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006). The students' perceptions reflect the value in being able to see their classmates in person and practice interviewing skills live.

Two students reported their intent to take the hybrid Generalist Practice II course as a result of their positive experiences in the blended environment:

> I think the hybrid class was excellent. The way it was set up made studying the material and then working with someone from my own home made learning the material easier. I intend to take Generalist Practice II in the hybrid format as well.

> I had thought about taking normal classes next semester, but I have decided not to after seeing how much more I learn in this realm.…I think with the process that we had to follow (discussion, face-to-face interviews, evaluations, Wimba, videos, and class room time) we had every opportunity to learn the interview process and think that the curriculum set up for this process is very effective.

In contrast, three students reported that they would have preferred an on-campus class for learning interviewing skills. Their comments include,

> I found that the in-person interviews were much more realistic and effective. They allowed for more observation and material-relevant learning and application…. Online classes do not allow for personal, in-person interaction ….Overall, I feel that personally I learn best by a strictly online or on campus course. I feel that the purpose and objectives of this course are based primarily on in-person interaction. I feel that I would have gained information more easily had the course been on-campus.

> Overall, I think that learning interviewing skills online was good but I would have preferred being in the class that met twice a week….I think more human interaction

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would help to get me more used to interviewing since I wouldn't be interviewing someone over the computer.

Although I learned quite a bit during this online (hybrid) class, I have to say that I would have learned more and developed better interviewing skills in a classroom environment….The face to face interaction in class proved to be more productive and valuable in my learning experience since there were no technical issues or distracting communication delays such as those seen with Wimba.

In summary, 11 of 18 students identified the combination of synchronous and asynchronous characteristics of hybrid learning as advantageous for the acquisition of interviewing skills. The theme revealed discussion online as being preferred due to the perceived increase in student interaction and higher level of learning. The synchronous opportunity for f2f time to "put faces to names" was desirable, because it provided a "personal touch" and supported a higher level of socialization. A subtheme recommending more on-campus meetings specifically for interviewing skills practice was stated by 4 students. Three students would have preferred to be totally on campus for learning interviewing skills, primarily due to the human-interaction element and nature of the learning objective.

Practicing interviewing skills: web conferencing and f2f. A second theme emerging from the students' post reflections regarding hybrid delivery was the use of web conferencing and f2f practice for learning interviewing skills. Students reported varying perceptions of how the two mediums for practice affected their learning. The value web conferencing (Wimba) offered some students was perceived in three areas: (a) the opportunity for video recording for play back and self-examination, (b) the convenience to practice from home, and (c) the potential for use as a work tool.

Aside from technical glitches…Being able to watch myself, although uncomfortable, was invaluable for purposes of identifying areas of strength and limitations. There is not [no] doubt in my mind that my skills greatly improved.

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I liked Wimba even thought it had its downfalls. I think Wimba gave me some good practice. Working in a group of three was kind of hard but it had its advantages also.

My partners often had too many problems with their computers which stopped me from really getting the full effect of Wimba….I did feel more comfortable practicing online because I got to be at home and where I felt more relaxed.

Learning interviewing skill via Wimba was somewhat successful. I was able to practice my introductory skills….I was also able to catch myself when I started to give advice instead of seeking more information from the client.

Despite my difficulties with the Wimba platform, I do see the merit and usefulness of such a tool….I liked being able to see my image as well as my interview partner's so that I could immediately see what I was doing well and what was unusual or that I needed to correct as that moment.

If the Wimba would have been more familiar to me I think this would be a great way to practice interviewing, as it is important we find ways to interview/talk long distances beside the telephone. We had a training a couple of weeks ago for TRAILS [recordkeeping process for Human Services] and the trainer stated we could put a face to face contact with a client in when we chat with them on SKYPE, which was interesting. It can't be documented as in residence but it is still interesting they are starting to consider the option.

Other students were adversely affected by the "unnaturalness" and technology difficulties, with some preferring f2f practice. Nine of 11 students reporting technical difficulties during training voiced the same experiences and perceptions post reflection. The following explanations were given by students for their negative perceptions regarding the use of Wimba:

I found the online/hybrid interviewing very difficult and often ineffective. I found that the online interviewing seemed to only further my knowledge on technology more than interviewing. The difficulty, confusion and anxiety surrounding using often faulty equipment took away from the general interviewing experience. I found that the in-person interviews were much more realistic and effective.

I didn't enjoy practicing on Wimba because it wasn't very realistic to me. It's really difficult to read body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions and eye contact using this technology. If there will be a time where I have to interview someone using a video interviewing process, then I will see more value in this kind of practice….I enjoyed interviewing live much better.

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The technology issues were the biggest concern though, since there was usually a little delay in between asking a question and receiving the answer.

I liked the practice with Wimba except for the impersonal quality of it….The skills I learned were the most important part of the Wimba process.

I had some trouble with Wimba and was not able to practice as much as I would have liked and I think that would have helped me so that is definitely a good learning tool. I learn by doing most of the time and being interactive in that capacity helps me. With that being said, Wimba was not very user friendly and with the feedback from the system and not being able to communicate very well, it made it harder to really have an effective session.

I felt that Wimba did not help a lot due to the technical problems I had to face on top of remembering how to efficiently interview the client. I really wish that we would have had more in-class interviews. I also would have liked to have practiced on my own or with a partner outside of school.

I find [found] it difficult to really see what facial expressions (my partner) was making and I was unable to see any of her body language. At times it also got a little tricky to conduct the interview because of the delay that Wimba has with our voices. We often began speaking at the same time because we thought the other person was finished speaking. It was sort of frustrating and it seemed like it put a kink in the natural interviewing process….I think that trying to do the interviews via Wimba might be easier if the program its self did not have so many kinks. I also think that it may have been easier using an actual video camera so we could see more of each other's body language and have a better resolution of each other's facial expressions. It was also difficult for me, personally, to find a place to conduct the interviews since I cannot afford the Internet at home.

Wimba would have been effective if my partner had not had computer problems. I would recommend keeping [it] as part of the class if some of the technical stuff can be worked out. I can't think of a more effective way to teach interviewing skills that actually doing it.

My only complaint is that in Wimba, I don't think you get the full effect of body language and the client's way of speaking. However, it's still a useful tool for practice.

Technical issues seemed to be the overriding perceived difficulty for the successful practice of interviewing skills. On the positive side, the feature of recording and archiving, which provided for playback for self-assessment, was perceived as beneficial.

Learning and personal traits as factors in hybrid learning. Three students identified

learning and personal traits as positive and negative factors influencing their perception of the

hybrid learning environment. Their thoughts on hybrid learning are illustrated as follows:

> I am very quiet and shy in large class settings. Online I feel I am able to express my opinions by writing about them….I'm comfortable in an online format. This might have something to do with why I was able to learn interviewing skills online. This was my first Hybrid class and I have to say I really liked it! I liked it better than online classes. I think I was able to learn all the interviewing skills needed to move forward in my career. I'm not sure I would have gained anymore information with a campus class.

> I have mixed feelings on the hybrid class format….I do not enjoy conversation when I am reading it rather than when I am listening to it….I am strongly verbal/audio as far as learning and engaging. When class only meets once per month, it is hard for me to really engage in and enjoy what is going on in the class. I did appreciate being able to meet with my classmates, but I wish it were twice per month….There are some functions of the hybrid class that I really appreciated.

> I believe that because I am technologically illiterate that I enjoy more face to face contact that other [than others] might. However, I do feel as though I have learned a lot throughout the semester. I think that most of the difficulties I experienced were really my own issues…I feel much, much more confident in my ability to interview a client, which is very important for my future career.

Summary

Students reflected a perceived sense of increased confidence and competency for

performing interviewing skills as a result of training in a hybrid environment. Scores from pre to

post confidence and competency supported these perceptions, with 18 students' post confidence

and 16 students' post competency increasing. One student's post confidence and 3 students' post

competency scores fell slightly. Greatest gains were perceived by students to be in the categories

of beginning and closing skills; this is consistent with the quantitative findings of post

confidence and post competency scores.

In post reflection, students described individual preferences for some steps in the teaching-learning system given the value experienced for learning interviewing skills, which coincided with their natural learning human process. Technical difficulties using Wimba for interview practice were experienced by many of the students, although problem-solving activity led to alternative practice methods and/or compensatory solutions. Web conferencing was perceived by many students to be less than desirable compared to f2f as a way for practicing interviewing skills. Despite this concern, the majority of students were favorable to hybrid interviewing skills learning. The combination of the increase in students' interaction for learning in online discussion and the opportunity for social interaction on campus was cited as the primary reasons for the hybrid format being an advantageous learning environment. A small number of students would have preferred to learn interviewing skills on campus, whereas others suggested increasing the number of sessions for practicing interviewing skills f2f to improve the hybrid delivery of skills learning.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the findings of an action research case study in relation to the intentional instructional design developed for undergraduate social work students learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course. Instructional design reflects a theoretical framework constructed from research that encompasses areas of learning theories, online pedagogy, hybrid delivery, and interviewing skills training, including online learning. This chapter reflects the final phase of the cycle, evaluating and analyzing the findings for the purpose of improving the instructional design and learning environment. The researcher/instructor seeks understanding of the students' learning in a hybrid delivery to inform what teaching-learning strategies are to be continued, expanded, revised, and/or discontinued.

First, an overview of the study is provided, including the problem, purpose statement, and research questions, followed by the study's design, methodology, and data analysis procedures. Next, the instructional design for teaching-learning interviewing skills, intentionally constructed from supporting research and the theoretical framework, is described. Findings are analyzed, evaluated, and reflected upon by this action researcher/instructor in relation to the instructional design and research-based literature to inform curriculum decisions and better understand how undergraduate social work students learn interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course. Finally, conclusions are drawn, along with discussion of implications for action and recommendations for research.

Summary of the Study

Overview of the Problem

  Web-based social work course offerings have rapidly increased in the last 10 years. The 2006 CSWE survey reported practice classes constituted the most frequently offered online, social work course (curriculum required), despite fervent debate in the literature and on academic listservs about the suitability for this content to be offered in a web-based format (Moore, 2005a; Siegel et al., 1998; Vernon et al., 2009). The heart of the debate is whether practice skills, especially interviewing and clinical skills, can be successfully learned without f2f interaction. The debate implies the options are either f2f or online. However, given advances in technology, there is a continuum of choice using blends/hybrids of delivery, as was identified in a psychology counseling initiative in Canada (Jerry & Collins, 2005). Research on the use of blended/hybrid delivery to teach interviewing skills is limited (Ayala, 2009; Coe Regan & Youn, 2008).

  There is a paucity of research regarding online learning of interviewing skills. In addition, there is a scarcity of studies addressing undergraduate social work students' learning needs and experiences in a web-based environment (Kulkin et al., 2008). The research consists primarily of comparison studies, generally finding no significant differences between students' practice skill acquisition in web-based and f2f learning environments. However, these two learning environments are unique and provide different mediums and different learner roles. Research exploring relevant theory, concepts, and methods for effective teaching-learning of interviewing skills in a web-based delivery is being called for by social work educators (Coe Regan & Youn, 2008). To comply with the 2008 EPAS accreditation standards, evidence

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demonstrating effective ways to learn interviewing skills online, using multiple measures for evaluating skill competency, is necessary.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore undergraduate social work students' perceptions of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid learning environment, intentionally designed using research-supported learning theories, online pedagogy (as part of hybrid/blended delivery), and skills training. With advancing opportunities for choice in modes of delivery and use of technology online, an understanding of how this group of students perceived the experience provided the impetus for using an action research, case study methodology. To explore and gain such understanding of the experience of undergraduate students learning interviewing skills in a hybrid delivery environment, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the perceptions of students learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course?

2. How do students' pre confidence scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post confidence measure?

3. How do students' pre competency scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post competency measure?

Design of the Study

This study employed an exploratory, mixed methods case study design using action research (teacher inquiry). "Action research is characterized as [a] systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical, and undertaken by the participants of the inquiry" (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990, p. 148). As one form of applied research, its intent is to

investigate and address specific problems within an identified setting, such as a classroom or workplace; it is conducted by practitioners who are interested in practical solutions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). This action research study was conducted by a social work faculty member of Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD).

Participants. The single case study involved 19 undergraduate social work students enrolled in the researcher/instructor's distance hybrid section of Generalist Practice I during spring semester 2011. The hybrid section was open to any MSCD social work student in the major (junior status), but distinctly designed to accommodate those who lived geographically distant (over 100 miles) from campus within the state of Colorado. In this section, 3 of 19 students met the distance criterion.

Methodology--Data Collection

As part of the 15-week practice course, interviewing skills training consisted of a 4-week learning module. One of the course's four hybrid sessions, f2f, was held during the 4 weeks. The three students at a distance participated in the f2f session via teleconferencing. The remaining three sessions of the interviewing skills module occurred asynchronous (online). The data collection period lasted 6 weeks. The mixed methods used in this study allowed triangulation from three sources of data collected concurrently pre, during, and post interviewing skills training, each source of which was analyzed separately. Quantitative data sources included two scales: the Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale (see Appendix F), completed pre and post skills training (student reported), and the Interview Evaluation Rater Scale (see Appendix G), used by independent raters to assess students' pre and post interviewing skills competency via video recordings. Qualitative data were drawn from students' guided reflections and self-assessments

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relating their perceptions of learning interviewing skills in hybrid delivery, collected pre, during, and post training.

Data Analysis Procedures

The qualitative analysis of students' reflections consisted of an inductive, open-coding technique, used to review students' direct thoughts and words, line by line, to construct categories and emergent themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The quantitative analysis of change scores in students' confidence and competency, pre and post training, was descriptive. The analysis consisted of summarizing the pre and post scale scores for each participant, on each item of the confidence scale and the independently rated video recording evaluation. A single cumulative score was calculated for students' overall confidence and competency—pre, post, and change. Analysis was conducted to ascertain skill categories with most or least confidence and competency gains.

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Intentional Instructional Design for Learning Interviewing

Skills in Hybrid Delivery

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This study included an extensive literature review searching for research-informed evidence as to how students would best learn interviewing skills in a hybrid environment. Research-supported learning theories, online pedagogy (including hybrid/blended delivery), and skills training were used to construct an intentional instructional design, based on constructivist and brain-based strategies (Bransford et al., 1999; Caine et al., 2005; Dziuban et al., 2004; Gunn et al., 2007; Jensen, 2005; Kim & Bonk, 2006; Koprowska, 2003; Smilkstein, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Encompassed in the design for meaningful learning were the instructional elements of (a) creating a safe, challenging environment with a sense of community; (b) becoming immersed in

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complex and authentic experiences; and (c) providing metacognitive activities and reflective practices for active processing of experiences to consolidate learning (Bransford et al., 1999; Caine et al., 2005; Carmean & Haefner, 2002; Dewey, 1933; Gunn et al., 2007: Laurillard, 2002; Palloff & Pratt, 2007; Wenger, 2006).

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical model was identified for the instructional design based on the *person-in-environment* social work perspective. The central focus of the person-in-environment perspective is that people are constantly interacting with various systems in their environment to create change, including the learning system (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2009). This framework supports the notion that as the student's unique natural learning process (the person) transacts within a hybrid environment, facilitated with an instructional design of constructivist and brain-based learning principles (the environment), outcomes of confidence and competency gains for performing interviewing skills will occur (Bransford et al., 1999; Caine et al., 2005; Dziuban et al., 2004; Gunn et al., 2007; Jensen, 2005; Koprowska, 2003; Laurillard, 2002; Smilkstein, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978).

Instructional Design Plan

The intentional instructional design relied on a developmental approach, which can be described in three phases: (a) metacognitive activities, including self-assessment experienced prior to training to help students gain self-awareness and understanding of how they best learn; (b) the 4-week training module; and (c) summative evaluations, including the instructor's evaluation and the students' self-assessment in the areas of confidence, competency, and perceptions of learning. The instructional plan is presented to provide a deeper understanding of

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the instructor/researcher's development of the learning environment and implementation pre, during, and post skills training.

Pre training. To prepare the skills learning environment, the instructor/ researcher adhered to the following instructional design elements:

- Promoted a climate of trust, safety, inclusion, and mutual respect to build a sense of community (Caine et al., 2005; Palloff & Pratt, 2007; Rovai, 2002b; Wenger, 2006);

- Encouraged self-awareness and a learner-centered environment using metacognitive activities, including NHLP (see Appendix D) for students to identify their unique natural learning process (Chang et al., 2009; Gunn et al., 2007; Smilkstein, 2003);

- Provided skills training orientation, including (a) the teaching-learning process (Chang et al., 2009); (b) web-conferencing technology (Wimba) and practice model (reality play) for interviewing (Askeland, 2003);

- Collected students' baseline data: (a) pre confidence (ISCS), (b) pre competency, and (c) pre training reflection, including their perceptions of using reality play and video recording, being in the role of interviewer, and self-assessing the strengths and areas for improvement of their beginning skills with goal setting, based on a pre 10- to 15-minute interview in the role of interviewer (see Appendix E).

During training. A teaching-learning system utilized in the practice text, *Developing Helping Skills: A Step-By-Step Approach* by Chang et al. (2009), was chosen, because it best reflected this study's theoretical perspective. It also addressed the instructor/researcher's objective that "students become competent, self-reflective professionals, able to evaluate their

practice and identify strengths and areas of growth related to skill development" (Chang et al., 2009, p. xxii). The six-step teaching-learning system used in this study included

1. *Reading* about concepts and tasks related to interviewing skills and how the knowledge is applied to practice;

2. *Thinking and writing* about ideas related to the concepts and skills presented. Homework exercises provided students the opportunity to reflect on how the concepts relate to their own life experiences and consider how they will actively develop skills;

3. *Watching and discussing* a demonstration of appropriate skills use. In discussion, students evaluated and identified a practitioner's use of skills and considered alternative approaches;

4. *Working with cases* to give students the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills to the complexities of specific situations;

5. *Practicing* the skills in an interview, using reality play;

6. *Evaluating* the use of skills immediately after practicing, based on an evaluation shown to be valid (Pike et al., 2004). Participants of the interview provided immediate feedback in respective roles (Chang et al., 2009).

Using the teaching-learning system weekly with the introduction of skills, the students focused on one skill or group of skills at a time before moving on to the next skill or group of skills. Practice and evaluation modes varied, depending on class delivery. During the 3 weeks of skills training delivered online, interviewing practice occurred in dyads: Students in pairs scheduled a time to meet, using web conferencing to practice, record, and archive (for playback) a reality play interview, taking turns as both client and interviewer. Immediately after practice,

students provided feedback to each other. Students evaluated their skill competencies by reviewing the recorded interview and completed a validated SIE form (Pike et al., 2004; see Appendix E).

In the f2f session, practice evaluation methods were slightly altered. The students formed triads when practicing reality play. The purpose was to allow for a third role in the interview practice process—that of a peer observer (non-participant in the interview) who provided feedback to the student in the social worker's role. Practice and evaluation methods of the teaching-learning system provided opportunities for ongoing formative self-assessment as well as immediate and continuous feedback. The full intent of the reality play was the idea that by "exchanging experiences, feedback and reflections from different positions" (Askeland, 2003, p. 351), students would better understand social work from the perspective of a social worker, a client, and an observer.

Weekly, as the teaching-learning system was implemented, the students were asked to post in discussion, their reflection of the learning experience and any questions or concerns they were having for the 4 weeks. Reflection was open-ended, giving students' autonomy to reflect on the week's experience. Areas for guided consideration included (a) experience using the teaching-learning system; (b) hybrid delivery, technology, and interviewing practice experience; and (c) feelings about the process.

Post training. At the end of the interviewing skills training, the students and/or the instructor/researcher completed the following activities:

1. Students completed a 10- to 15- minute recorded interview in the role of interviewer.

2. The recordings provided the data for the instructor and students (self-evaluation) to complete a summative assessment. The students' self-assessments entailed reviewing the post interview recording to complete (a) a narrative response of skill use; (b) a transcription of the interview, including specific identification of skills used; (c) a SIE form; and (d) a rubric reflecting the assignment (see Appendix H: Final Interviewing Assignment). The instructor reviewed the students' interview recording (together with the students, if desired, online or on campus) to evaluate the final skills assignment and provide a competency score derived from the instructor/researcher's assessment using the IERS.

3. When the final interviewing assignment was finished, the students completed the post confidence scale, identical to the pre confidence scale (ISCS), and the post skills training reflection. The post reflection consisted of guided questions and statements with the intent to provide an overall reflection of their perceptions of the experience of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course. Areas for reflection included the student's (a) comparison of his or her pre and post confidence scales, (b) assessment of whether the identified pre training goals were achieved, (c) perception of how he or she felt about using each of the six steps in the teaching-learning system, and (d) overall perception of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid format (f2f and online components) (see Appendix I).

4. After the students' grades were posted, the pre and post recordings, randomly assigned, were reviewed by independent raters using the Interview Evaluation Rater Scale (IERS) to assess skill competency.

Summary of Findings and Implications for Instructional Design Action

As the last stage of the action research process, the instructor/researcher engaged in reflective practice, evaluating and analyzing the relationships between the theoretical framework and the instructional design as a basis for improving curriculum decisions. In this section, a summary of the findings is linked to the literature. Accordingly, research-informed implications for action to continue, expand, revise, and/or discontinue elements of the instructional design and learning environment are identified. To this end, the study's key findings surrounding the students' perceptions of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid environment and the measurement of students' outcomes of confidence and competency are described and discussed. The three research questions provide the basic organization in terms of applicable findings and implications for action.

Students' Perceptions of Learning Interviewing Skills in a Hybrid Environment

The first research question asked, *What are the perceptions of students learning interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course?* Overall, students perceived a sense of increased confidence and competency for performing interviewing skills as a result of learning in a hybrid environment. Specific findings, including the change scores from pre and post measures, have been provided in connection with the second and third research questions. To gain a deeper understanding of the students' perceptions of how they learned interviewing skills using the intentional instructional design in hybrid delivery, specific findings in the areas of (a) goal setting and self-assessment, (b) the teaching-learning process, and (c) hybrid delivery are reported in relationship to the theoretical framework.

Goal setting and self-assessment. Students, in the role of interviewer, video recorded interviews pre and post training in order to self-assess their beginning skills ability and progress. Students reviewed their pre training interview recording to identify strengths and set at least three goals for skills improvement. After skills training, the students reviewed their post training recording to assess whether goals had been achieved.

Finding 1. Fifteen of 16 students (reported in post reflection regarding goal attainment) identified two or all three goals as being met with noticeable improvement. The greatest numbers of goals attained were in the skill categories of *beginning* and *closing,* which were targeted pre training by 15 of 17 students (reported in pre reflection regarding goal identification) as goals for improvement. In addition, students demonstrated the pattern of identifying a new plan or refining the existing plan for continual goal improvement, referencing the goals that were unmet. Students reported a variety of personal and skill-technique goals that were assessed as not being achieved (e.g., advice giving, identification of client's strengths, and use of reflection); however, there was no one area of least goal attainment.

Use of self-assessment for goal setting and determining goal attainment are self-reflective practices. In the research literature, self-reflection has been described as both a competency and a process for assessing and improving the learner's progress (Berge, 2002; Mozzani-Miller, 2006; Reingold et al., 2008; Yang, 2010; Zimmerman, 1998). Moreover, using an iterative cycle, the learner identifies goals for planning, monitors progress for achievement, and evaluates whether goals are met, with actions of refinement (through adaptation and reflection) to start the cycle again (Ertmer & Newby, 1996; Laurillard, 2002; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998). In this study, students' reflections revealed perceptions of skill acquisition

as a self-regulated, ongoing process, calling for continual self-assessment (reflection) and a plan for improvement.

Utilizing the metacognitive activity of reflection supports career-long learning for the social work practitioner's development of skills (Berge, 2002; CSWE, 2008). In the study's skills training, students were exposed to skills for engagement, assessment, beginning, and closing a meeting—a portion of the skills essential for social work practice. Learning a process for continued skills development and refinement is a competency expectation of the CSWE 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). The specific practice behaviors are EP 2.1.1b: "Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development," and 2.1.1e: "Engage in career-long learning" (CSWE, 2008, p. 3).

Finding 2. Students perceived video recording as a valuable tool for learning, given the opportunity for playback for self-assessment, despite their initial feelings of anxiety and nervousness. In the literature, the use of video recording playback and self-assessment has been reported as "the most effective method for improving oral communication skills" (Cartney, 2006, p. 829). The technique has been used successfully as formative assessment for self-observation, self-assessment, and reflection, as well as a summative measure to evaluate competency outcomes across disciplines, including psychiatry, medicine, nursing, counseling, psychology, social work, and other helping professions (Cartney, 2006; Gask, 1998; Hill & Lent, 2006, Moss et al. 2007; Paul, 2010; Zick, Granieri, & Makoul, 2007). Video recording was used in this study for formative (pre and during training) and summative assessment by the students, instructor, and independent raters. Given the access and availability of technology (e.g., cameras within computers and cell phones), video recording has been made easier as a self-assessment learning

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tool. With the students' perception of this technique as valuable for learning, it can be relied on for career-long learning and refinement of interviewing skills.

Implication for action. Students perceived value using the iterative cycle of goal setting (planning), monitoring progress, and goal attainment, facilitated by the playback feature of video recording. Gaining self-awareness for professional practice, evaluating skill strengths and areas for improvement, and developing ongoing strategies for refinement of use were cited in students' reflections. The use of reflective practice is research supported and congruent with the 2008 EPAS expected competencies and practice behaviors, informing this researcher/instructor's decision to continue its use as part of the instructional design.

Teaching-learning process. Students were asked to reflect on the six-step teaching-learning process used to learn skills (i.e., reading, thinking and writing, watching and discussing, working with cases, practicing, and evaluating) and provide their perceptions of each step's contribution to their learning of interviewing skills. The teaching model of reality play (Askeland, 2003) was used to conduct the pre, practice, and post interviews, with the intent that the interviewer and interviewee participate authentically as themselves using real-life challenges.

Finding 3. Students unanimously perceived the teaching-learning process to be effective for learning interviewing skills. In the words of one student, "The six-step process was effective in helping me develop a better sense of where I am and how to improve as an interviewer."

Finding 4. The extent to which each teaching-learning step was utilized for learning interviewing skills varied. Students identified specific teaching-learning steps that most supported and were relevant to their natural learning style. With deeper analysis, a strong pattern emerged indicating a parallel existed between what the students identified as their natural

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learning process (outcome of metacognitive activity of NHLP) and the teaching-learning steps

reflected as most advantageous for learning interviewing skills. Practicing was unanimously

identified as the necessary step for learning skills.

Finding 5. Of 13 students who shared their experience using reality play during pre

reflection, 6 perceived enhanced learning from using a real-life challenge, and 7 expressed a

theme of "not knowing" how to interview, citing an unfavorable response to this model for

interviewing. A number of students perceived using reality play as feeling like "role playing and

pretending" in the interview experience. Representative of this theme, a student wrote, "I'm not

great at role playing either. Give me a script, and I can act, but I not great at improvising while

'pretending.' I think I do well in normal conversation and interviews with people when it's real."

The teaching-learning process consists of a combination of didactic and experiential

strategies that emphasize a single-skill developmental approach for acquisition of interviewing

skills. Research over a 40-year period concurred that experiential strategies (feedback, role

play/real-life practice, demonstration/modeling, and self-observation via video playback), along

with didactic techniques (lecture, discussion, and reading), offer an effective skills training

paradigm (Baker & Daniels, 1989; Dickson & Bamford, 1995; Hill & Lent, 2006; Mumm, 2006;

Sowers-Hoag & Thyer, 1985; Wodarski et al., 1995).

Research supporting the specific teaching-learning approach used in this study was found

in the dissertations of Baez (2003) and Menen (2004). Choosing the manual-based training

program of Chang and Scott's (1999) *Basic Interviewing Skills: A Workbook for Practitioners,*

these two scholars used the identical teaching-learning system for training. Based on pre and post

measures, externally rated, findings from both studies indicated significant increases in skill

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domains and all core interpersonal categories, supporting the learning value for this specific teaching-learning process (Baez, 2003; Menen, 2004).

Although limited, recent skills training research focused on teaching-learning pedagogy, supported by theoretical approaches and assessment practices. Theoretical perspectives identified as influencing the instructional process and climate for skill learning include Vgotsky's social constructivism, Kolb's experiential and active learning cycle, Schon's concepts of reflection in and on action, and Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bernotavicz, 1994; Koprowska, 2003; Moss et al., 2007). The assumptions drawn from these theoretical frameworks are that learners participate "actively in their own learning, making discoveries, formulating hypotheses, testing these out and learning from experience" (Koprowska, 2003, p. 294). The optimal skill learning environment is perceived to be interactive. Learners assess prior knowledge from their experiences, begin the metacognitive activity of identifying learning goals, including how they will monitor and regulate their own learning, while the instructor facilitates a learner-centered environment with active learning and collaboration to promote interaction (Berge, 2002; Bransford et al., 1999; Conceicao, 2006; Heuer & King, 2004).

This study's teaching-learning process used the didactic method of reading to provide students knowledge about interviewing skills. Metacognitive and experiential strategies included thinking (reflecting) and writing; watching demonstrations and having discussions with peers and the instructor; and video recording real-life practice interviews for evaluation by self, peers, and instructor for feedback. Each student approached training with a unique set of experiences, a natural way of learning, and a sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Smilkstein, 2003,

Vygotsky, 1978). Learning began with what the student already knew and linked new knowledge for deeper understanding (Bransford et al., 1999; Brooks & Brooks, 1999).

Preparation for skill learning involved raising students' self-awareness of how they learn and the individualization of the process. To encourage and maximize internal processing of learning, students were guided by the instructor in metacognitive activities to discover their natural learning process (NHLP) and self-assess their efficacy and beginning abilities for performing interviewing skills (Merriam et al., 2007; Smilkstein, 2003). Establishing a learner-centered environment supported a climate of safety and trust, reducing anxiety and personal preoccupations that can interrupt meaningful skill learning (Caine et al., 2005; Koprowska, 2003; McFadden, 2005; Moss et al., 2007).

Brain-based learning research has provided instructors guidance for developing instructional designs to optimize a student's natural learning process (Bransford et al., 1999; Caine et al, 2005; Gunn et al., 2007, Jensen, 2005; Smilkstein, 2003). Using metacognitive knowledge about how the brain learns and how each student uniquely learns encourages successful learning (Gunn et al., 2007). Key findings in brain research influencing instructional designs relate to neuroplasticity (the brain's ability to continuously change as a result of interaction and experience during one's life), enriched environments (socializing, interaction, mental stimulation, and physical activity), the emotional-cognitive link for learning (emotions and learning cannot be separated), and the interconnectedness, complexity, and uniqueness of the brain (Caine et al., 2005; Diamond & Hopson, 1998, Eriksson et al., 1998; Gunn et al, 2007; Pert, 1997). Constructivist instructional applications (active and experiential learning) are congruent and informed by neuroscience research.

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Caine and colleagues' (2005) *12 Brain/Mind Learning Principles* identified three fundamental interacting elements considered necessary for "great teaching" (p. 4). These essential instructional elements for meaningful learning include (a) creating an environment of *relaxed alertness* to strengthen and take advantage of the biological links necessary to support great learning, (b) providing *immersion in complex experiences* to create an optimal opportunity for learning, and (c) providing *active processing of experiences* to consolidate learning (Caine et al., 2005).

For this study, the intentional instructional design was constructed with these elements in mind. Relaxed alertness refers to the learner's experiencing of low threat and high challenge (Caine et al., 2005). Prior to beginning interviewing skills training, the students identified their natural human learning process and experienced activities to improve self-awareness and understanding of their uniqueness. Each of these represented ways to encourage a learner-centered environment of low threat and strengthen a sense of safety and trust. Participating in activities that were most likely new presented a challenge for students as they learned interviewing skills, promoting a state of relaxed alertness.

The six-step teaching-learning process provided the second element of "great teaching," because the students were immersed in experiences as they proceeded through the didactic and experiential steps of the process. Using multiple layers of learning, the students were stimulated and challenged with opportunities for socialization (interaction) during discussions. Learning occurred through sensing and making connections between what was experienced and what the experience meant to the learner. Use of real-life challenges (reality play) for practice supported the learner's sense making.

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The third element, active processing of experience, refers to the "art of digesting, thinking about, reflecting on, making sense of experience, and of consolidating learning" (Caine et al., 2005, p. 179). The steps of practice and evaluation provided help to the students to move information from short- to long-term memory for transfer of knowledge. These were the steps students cited in describing their natural learning process—when they gained confidence and skillfulness, continuing to refine until learning became second nature. Reflection, self-assessment, and refinement to consolidate learning were utilized for active processing in the evaluation step and were the activities promoting a sense of competency and confidence (Caine et al., 2005; Gunn et al., 2007).

Evidence demonstrating effectiveness in learning and performing interviewing skills constitutes a competency of the CSWE 2008 EPAS. This specific competency (EP 2.1.10 a-b) refers to the ability to engage and assess with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (CSWE, 2008). Multiple measures were used in this study to evaluate outcomes of competency and confidence from using the teaching-learning process. The findings from the students' perceptions are one indication of an overall positive outcome from using this instructional design. Other measures are subsequently presented within the discussion of the findings related to the second and third research questions.

Implications for action. Overall, the students' perceptions of the teaching-learning process were favorable. Students reflected understanding of their own natural way of learning and identified how they used the six-step process to maximize skill development. Continued use of the metacognitive activity of the NHLP and the teaching-learning process is supported by research and appears to provide an intentional instruction design that meets the explicit

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curriculum of the 2008 EPAS competencies of 2.1.10 a-d. Expansion and revision of specific elements of the design have been considered in response to students' perceptions in the areas of instructor feedback (assessment), demonstrations, and use of reality play.

The primary source for student feedback, occurring during skills practice (f2f and using Wimba), is self-assessment and peer feedback. A student reflection indicated that it would be useful for learning to have feedback from an experienced practitioner/ instructor. With the current teaching-learning process, instructor feedback of students' skill use during practice is minimal. In the future, consideration will be given to expanding instructor feedback during the practice step of the teaching-learning process. Procuring more faculty help for the f2f meeting for student feedback during skills practice is one way to provide immediate feedback to students. This may cause more anxiety for some students, a factor that will need to be weighed. The instructor could also review students' archived practice recordings to provide feedback.

A second consideration for refinement is in response to the following student's suggestion: "Something that I think would have helped me would be to be able to watch actual REAL interviews and see how the professionals do it." Increasing the number of authentic skill demonstrations available online would provide added support to those who learn best from watching. Accordingly, this instructor will develop real-life skill demonstrations with another faculty member to increase the demonstration offerings.

An area for investigation and revision relates to the teaching model, reality play. Students reported mixed perceptions of its use, with some favorable, such as, "Use of real problems will help me learn rather than a made up scenario," and others, unfavorable to the

model, referring to it as feeling "unnatural" and like "pretending." The latter perceptions are contrary to the intent of reality play, leaving the instructor/researcher puzzled as to why the students perceived the model as pretending. One explanation is that the students may have misunderstood the intent of reality play for interviewing. The terminology of reality play may have been confusing and misleading with some students, who might have been focusing on "play." Reconsidering how the teaching model concept is introduced and explained would help address the contradiction of the word, play. Nevertheless, focusing on the description of the intent of the model (i.e., an authentic interview using real-life challenges with discussion as to how the students perceive this activity) would be a better approach and avoid the terminology, reality play. This instructor/researcher's assessment may not be accurate, and therefore continued use of students' reflections to gain their perceptions of using real-life challenges for the interviews is necessary.

Hybrid delivery. Students were asked to provide their perceptions of learning interviewing skills in hybrid delivery. They were also asked to reflect on the f2f and online components in relation to learning skills.

Finding 6. Eleven of 14 students reported on the combined characteristics of synchronous (f2f) and asynchronous (online) delivery for learning interviewing skills, perceiving the benefit of online discussion as well as of f2f meetings for increased personalization. An expressed perceived benefit of asynchronous learning was that the delivery was learner centered, putting the students in control and responsible for their learning; "I feel like I am in control of my learning. If I was sitting in class listening to a lecture, I can tune it out. Online, I am responsible for getting all the information and applying it." Another expressed benefit of

asynchronous learning was online discussion, which provided ongoing interaction among students and instructor and time for reflection of content: "I liked the online part because I am able to get different perspectives on other classmates….I also like that I can actively participate throughout the day." Similarly regarding the positive aspects of asynchronous learning, one student explained, "I absorbed and processed the information much better through the online discussion because it really forced me to learn all aspects and be able to articulate them better."

The same 11 students perceived a social/personalization benefit of synchronous delivery, as illustrated by the comment, "I did enjoy getting to put faces to names [and being able to] ask the professor questions in person." These students perceived hybrid delivery as an effective way to learn interviewing skills, as shown by this assessment: "I believe I learned just as effectively in this class as I would have in a 100% on campus classroom setting." Four of 11 students favorable to hybrid learning reflected a desire to have more f2f meetings for practicing skills.

Finding 7. Three students reflected a preference for learning interviewing skills on campus. These students perceived they were able to learn interviewing skills online but may have been more suited to, and would have experienced deeper learning in, a classroom environment. One reported, "Overall, I think that learning interviewing skills online was good but I would have preferred being in the class that met twice a week." Two others reflected, "Face-to-face interaction in class proved to be more productive and valuable in my learning experience," and "I feel that personally I learn best by a strictly online or on campus courses."

Finding 8. Use of web conferencing (Wimba) for practicing skills online presented technical difficulties for 11 of 18 students during training. Despite attempts to remedy and find solutions, in post reflection, 9 students reported technological issues affecting their practice

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experience. Students perceived Wimba benefits in spite of technological difficulties, including

ability for recording and playback for self-assessment, convenience in practicing from home, and

use as a potential work tool. Overall, Wimba was perceived as less desirable than f2f for

practicing skills due to problematic technology facilitation and features.

Hybrid delivery for learning interviewing skills consisted of 3 weeks online and 1 week

meeting f2f, with three distance students joining via teleconferencing. Students (11 of 14

reporting) perceived the asynchronous environment of online delivery as most beneficial

regarding the opportunity for ongoing interaction in discussion (classmates and instructor) and

the sense of locus of control and responsibility experienced by the learner (learner-centered).

It is recognized in the literature that web-based education allows for more time (time on

task) than traditional delivery for interactions and collaboration among students and instructor(s)

(Gilbert & Moore, 1998; Thurmond & Wambach, 2004; Yoon, 2003). Typically, in web-based

delivery, the instructor poses critical thinking questions each week related to the content, and all

students are to respond as well as dialogue with their peers and instructor. Benefits of online

discussion are that all learners participate actively and are given opportunity for thoughtful and

reflective dialoguing to examine other people's experiences (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; King,

2002; Yanes et al., 2006). Because digital interactions may be "stored, retrieved, and

disseminated anytime and anywhere" (Yoon, 2003, p. 21), students can review discussion

postings for recall to deepen their understanding, encouraging the transfer of knowledge from

short- to long-term memory. Web-based discussion supports a constructivist and brain-based

perspective, because it situates learning with the student to make meaning of new knowledge

through reflection, collaboration, and active processing within a rich social and experiential context (Berge, 2002; Caine et al., 2005; Vrasidas, 2000).

In this study, the same students preferring online discussion also reflected the social benefit of f2f meetings for personalization. Using synchronous learning to promote socialization and provide students opportunities to interact verbally and distinguish non-verbal cues was specifically an objective for meeting during the interviewing module to provide the opportunity for f2f practice (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003; Rovai & Jordan, 2004).

Hybrid delivery is the "purposeful integration of traditional (i.e., face-to-face) and online learning in order to provide educational opportunities that maximize the benefits of each platform and thus more effectively facilitate student learning" (Ayala, 2009, p. 277). The instructional design of this study's educational environment was constructed to address the course content and learning objectives, using the strengths of synchronous and asynchronous delivery to support deep and meaningful learning. Feedback from 4 of 11 students favorable to hybrid delivery revealed a preference for more f2f time to practice interviewing skills.

Three students perceived f2f delivery as being preferred for learning interviewing skills. Their perceptions reflected a personal preference for more human interaction, especially when practicing interviewing skills, as evidenced by the statement: "Face to face interaction in class proved to be more productive and valuable…since there were no technical issues or distracting communication delays such as those seen with Wimba." Without additional student information, it is unclear how much technology affected the students' perceptions. Also unknown is how much their natural learning style affected their learning experience in the web-based delivery.

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The web-conferencing instructional tool (Wimba) with audio, video, recording, and archiving capability was utilized to provide the students the ability to practice and evaluate skills online. Critical elements associated with successful use of this tool rely on the instructor's skills and knowledge of the software, planned instructional support, and preparation of the students (Berge, 2002; Park & Bonk, 2007; Vitartis et al., 2008; Yilmaz Ozden, 2010). In keeping with the person-in-environment perspective, what the students bring to web use is also related to successful facilitation. "Personality factors and motivation have been found to impact on the use and adoption of information technology innovations" (Vitartas, Rowe, Ellis, 2007, "Abstract," para.1). Students may lack experience with technology-mediated synchronous instruction as well as understanding of the purpose and benefits contributing to their lack of self-efficacy (Park & Bonk, 2007; Vitartis et al., 2007). Prior experience using some type of video chat or web-conferencing tool was reported by 4 of 19 students, indicating a strong need for orientation, instruction, and practice regarding the use of Wimba to increase students' self-efficacy.

Park and Bonk (2007) recommended several instructional guidelines for preparing students for web-conferencing delivery: (a) clarify technological requirements, (b) explain task purpose, (c) schedule practice sessions, and (d) be flexible. Successful use of web conferencing is reliant on the instructor's confidence, knowledge, and skills using the communication tool (Park & Bonk, 2007; Vitaris et al., 2007). Students' confidence (self-efficacy) is developed through guidance and support of the instructor, so the need for professional development and technical assistance from the institution's technology center is critical (Vitaris et al., 2007).

The instructor/researcher of this study engaged in professional development with personnel from MSCD's Educational Technology Center (ETC) in using Wimba. Instruction and

support using Wimba was provided to help integrate and facilitate use with students. Wimba was piloted the year prior to this study as part of the ongoing action research for this course. Students experienced some technological issues primarily with audio responses and loss of audio. Student satisfaction varied from noting the unnaturalness of the setting to the value for practice and self-assessment. The instructor/researcher reviewed with ETC personnel the students' difficulties in order to inform, improve, and prepare instruction for offering the module in this study. It was noted in the researcher/instructor's reflection that the difficulties experienced in the pilot year were less in frequency and number of students compared to those in this study.

Instruction involved f2f orientation with students to distribute written clarification of technological requirements and instructions for accessing the tool, explaining the purpose and demonstrating step-by-step how to set up and use the web-conferencing software. At this meeting, each student scheduled one-to-one online meetings with the instructor to practice using Wimba, with the purpose of providing assistance, troubleshooting difficulties, and answering questions prior to the commencement of interviewing skills training. In line with the constructivist and brain-based learning perspectives, the instructor used these individual sessions to assess students' confidence and ability to use Wimba, knowing that each learner varied in technological abilities and experience and may need additional practice.

Despite orientation and practice with the instructor, over half of the students experienced an array of technological issues, including "delayed responses," "echoing," "background noise," "freezing screen," "cutting out," "hearing the partner but no video," and "problems archiving." Students demonstrated the use of adaptation and self-regulation when challenged with technological difficulties by describing alternative ways they practiced.

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Implications for action. Students in this study reported hybrid delivery, including the asynchronous activity of discussion and f2f meetings to promote personalization and practice, as an effective way to learn interviewing skills, informing this researcher/ instructor's decision to continue hybrid delivery. Consideration to increase f2f meetings during the interviewing skills module for practice and evaluation of skills is indicated. Another possibility is having asynchronous discussion the week of the f2f meeting to explore content, leaving more time f2f to practice interviewing skills.

To address the perceived difficulty students reported using Wimba, a multi-faceted revision approach is considered. Technological capabilities of students' computers, students' confidence and natural learning styles, as well as the instructor's confidence and technology knowledge, all seem to be related. Ongoing professional development and instructor reflection will continue. Reviewing ways to revise orientation and support will be investigated, including direct ETC student instruction (use of ETC lab and personnel), tutorial availability, and additional technical support. More student choice for how practice and evaluation will occur during online weeks of the module is indicated to address the students' varying levels of self-efficacy and natural learning styles. Reviewing how students adapted and what strategies they used to practice interviewing skills, along with exploration of more user-friendly web-conferencing tools with the capability for recording and archiving, will occur as part of the investigation and revision process.

Measuring Students' Outcomes of Confidence and Competency

Identifying what theoretical perspectives and corresponding strategies (research supported) facilitate effective learning of interviewing skills is only part of what is required when

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determining an intentional instructional design. Considering formative and summative assessment measures, including specific ways of demonstrating students' mastery and ability to perform the skills required to meet the 2008 EPAS core competency related to interviewing, are essential. This competency in regard to interviewing skills has the expectation that students are able to demonstrate "the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation at multiple levels" (CSWE, 2008, p. 6). The interviewing skills targeted in this study relate to a student's ability to facilitate the processes of engagement and assessment at the individual (micro) level of practice.

Social work programs must develop assessment measures to provide evidence of students' learning and ability to perform interviewing skills, according to the 2008 EPAS. Moreover, an effective instructional design for learning interviewing skills must include multiple measures to evaluate their acquisition. This study's theoretical framework indicates the student's transaction with the teaching-learning process in hybrid delivery will result in confidence and competency gains. Accordingly, to assess whether the 2008 EPAS core competency was achieved for each student in this study, multiple measures, consisting of the Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale (pre and post ISCS, student reported), the Interview Evaluation Rating Scale (pre and post interview recordings rated by independent evaluators), and students' self-assessments and reflections (pre, during, and post) were used. Subsequently (next time this course is conducted) if independent raters are not feasible the summative evaluation including self- and instructor assessment of each student's final interview video recording (Appendix H), will be used as evidence for measuring the core competency for interviewing skills. Baseline

data (student's pre confidence and competency) will be collected with instructor rating pre video recording for pre competency scores.

Confidence change. The second research question asked, *How do students' pre confidence scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post confidence measure?* Students completed a confidence scale reflecting their ability to use six skill categories (*communicating involvement*, *observing, beginning the interviewing process*, *active listening, using reflection,* and *questioning*), pre and post training. In addition, they were asked in post reflection to compare their pre and post confidence measures to provide their perception of change. The following findings were identified:

Finding 9. Change scores from pre to post confidence ranged from -2 to 42 of a possible 100. The overall mean change in confidence for the group of students was 24. The student with the lowest pre confidence made the most change, whereas the student with the highest pre confidence reported being less confident, with a post -2 score.

Finding 10. Students reported increased post confidence in all six skill categories. Three categories, *communicating involvement*, *observing*, and *beginning the interviewing process*, posted scores of 81% or higher. These categories were introduced first in the developmental process of learning skills, allowing students increased repetition and use during the 4-week module.

Finding 11. Comparing pre and post confidence scores in post reflection, 17 of 18 students perceived and reported increased confidence in a majority of skill areas. Students reflected the most gained confidence was in the category of *beginning skills.* Similarly, this skill category was most often targeted for skill improvement in the pre confidence reflections.

Finding 12. Some students perceived greater confidence to perform skills, (primarily beginning skills) than those actually executed in the post interview, citing performance anxiety and "forgetting" as contributing factors.

Finding 13. The teaching-learning process was perceived by students as contributing to their confidence gain, with practice reflected as most responsible for increased confidence.

Self-efficacy theory is being examined in the social work discipline as a promising theoretical perspective to guide learning of skills as well as a valid measure for assessing skill competency (Holden et al., 2002; Petrovich, 2004; Rishel & Majewski, 2009). Self-efficacy (sense of confidence) is the belief in one's ability to organize and carry out actions to accomplish a task successfully and produce desired results (Bandura 1977). "Self-efficacy is more than a self-perception of competency. It is an individual's assessment of … their ability [to] execute specific skills in a particular set of circumstances and thereby achieves a successful outcome" (Holden et al., 2002, p. 116).

A central model to self-efficacy theory, *triadic reciprocal causation*, considers personal factors, behaviors, and environmental events as interacting and influencing each other (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 2002; Parker, 2006). The model suggests that the way individuals interpret their performance attainment alters their self-beliefs and their environments, leading to alteration of their subsequent performance (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1996). This process occurs through self-reflection, which Bandura described as the most uniquely human capability, because it allows a person to evaluate and alter her or his thinking and behavior (Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1996).

The teaching-learning process and especially the steps of practice and evaluation provide students with constructive experiences to perform the skills, observe themselves (use of video

recording) and others, gain feedback and encouragement, and self-assess and reflect for self-appraisal of competency and ability. Ongoing reflection and self-assessment of skills to identify one's strengths and areas for improvement alter learners' self-beliefs. As the learner practices, evaluates, and identifies progress and successful use of skills, a sense of confidence in the ability to use the skills is experienced.

In this study, findings from the students' post reflections and post confidence scales indicate their self-beliefs changed using this instructional design and resulted in a sense of increased self-efficacy (confidence) in their abilities to perform interviewing skills. These findings relating self-efficacy beliefs to performance and motivation are supported by extensive empirical research from a variety of academic, professional, and work-related performance and behavior settings (Larson & Daniels, 1998; Multon et al., 1991). Bandura and Locke (2003) evaluated nine large-scale meta-analyses across diverse spheres of functioning that used a wide range of methodological and analytic strategies, finding converging evidence to verify "that perceived self-efficacy and personal goals enhance motivation and performance attainments" (p. 87).

Implications for action. The use of self-efficacy (confidence to perform) as a measure to evaluate students' ability to perform interviewing skills is research supported and addresses the 2008 EPAS competencies (EP 2.1.10 a-d) regarding a student's ability to "engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities" (CSWE, 2008, pp. 6-7). In this study, the specific 2008 EPAS competencies that were addressed and supported relate to EP 2.1.10(a) - engagement and EP 2.1.10(b) – assessment. Students' perceptions revealed in post reflection converge with the post ISCS scores, indicating an

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outcome of increased confidence for performing interviewing skills learned in a hybrid delivery. Self-efficacy was reflected as being a stronger indicator of the learner's sense of ability than the actual post performance in the case of the three students with the slight decrease from pre to post competency scores. One student stated, "I forgot a couple of steps that take place when introducing myself and my role….I am fully confident with seeking introductions."

Given the students' perceptions of the learning value of assessing confidence and its convergence with other measures of this study to evaluate expected competencies and practice behaviors, this researcher/instructor will continue to use the assessment measure as part of the instructional design.

Competency change. The third research question asked, *How do students' pre competency scores using interviewing skills change after training in a hybrid practice course, as indicated by a post competency measure?* Students' pre and post competency interviewing skills were evaluated by independent raters using the IERS scale, with a 1-5 rating scale for each skill category. The five skill categories assessed were *communicating involvement*, *beginning process*, *reflecting* (content and feeling), *questioning* (open and closed), and *closing process*. Students were asked in post reflection to assess goal attainment of the skills they identified for improvement by reviewing their final interview video recording.

Finding 14. Increased competency from pre to post was identified in 16 of 19 students, with a slight decrease in 3. Generally, students with lower pre competency scores (12.0 of 25.0 possible) reflected greater change (competency gain) than students whose pre competency scores were above 13.0 (see Table 10). Two of the 3 students with decreased post ratings were assessed

with pre competency scores of 20.0 and 20.5 of 25 possible with respective score changes of -0.3 and -0.8 (see Table 10).

Finding 15. Students' competencies increased most in the skills related to the categories of *beginning process,* with a mean change of 2.19 (42%), and *closing process*, with a mean gain of 1.60 (32%). These skills were targeted most by students at pre training as goals for improvement.

Despite the ongoing need for outcome measurement procedures to assess student acquisition and competency of interviewing skills, research in this area "has slowed to a virtual standstill" (Hill & Lent, 2006, p. 164). Hill and Lent (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of overall helping skills training programs, concluding with the following recommendations for training and study:

- Use specific training procedures to provide a clearer link between training content and outcomes;
- Provide trainees with a theoretical framework of how helping skills fit into the therapeutic process;
- Use multiple outcome measures (e.g., pre and post performance; pre, during, and post self-efficacy; and transcription) to identify skills use;
- Use real, unscripted problems for volunteer clients;
- Use multiple assessment perspectives (e.g., trainee, peer, instructor, client, and external judges);
- Use a skill maintenance plan;
- Consider structural aspects of training (e.g., time and sequence);

- Use good research methodology.

This study addressed and included a majority of Hill and Lent's (2006) recommendations. In planning and designing multiple measures to address 2008 EPAS performance competencies, specific training procedures, and multiple assessment perspectives were included. Manual-based training with a clear link between the teaching-learning process and skill objectives was chosen, given its theoretical perspective and research support (Baez, 2003; Menen, 2004; Ouellette, 2006). Multiple formative and summative measures, with various assessment perspectives, including student, peers, instructor, and external raters were used.

Research has found that video recordings provide opportunities for multiple assessment perspectives (Cartney, 2006; Moss et al., 2007). The use of video recording provides a quality measure for performance assessment by demonstrating the student's learning of knowledge and skills (Reeves, 2000). In this study, competency was assessed by the students, instructor, and external raters, using students' video recorded interviews. Students identified goals pre training and self-assessed their post video recording to evaluate goal attainment. Subsequently, they reviewed the post interview recordings using the Student Interview Evaluation (SIE) form to assess skill competency. The external raters evaluated students' pre and post video recorded interviews using the IERS.

Implications for action. The use of multiple measures with multiple evaluators (self, peers, instructors, and raters) to assess the competency of learning interviewing skills in hybrid delivery supports and addresses the specific 2008 EPAS competency (EP 2.1.10 a-b) related to a student's ability to engage and assess with individuals in professional practice (CSWE, 2008). To assess whether the 2008 EPAS core competency was achieved per student, multiple measures

were used, including the post reflections (regarding perceptions of goal attainment), the pre and post Interview Evaluation Rating Scale (student recordings evaluated by external raters), and the final interviewing assignment (instructor and self-evaluation of students' post interviews).

Students' perceptions in post reflection regarding goal attainment merge with the post IERS findings related to most increased competency in the categories of *beginning skills* and *closing skills*. These skills were targeted by students' pre reflection as the categories they most wanted to improve. Use of video recordings and the multiple measures to assess skill competency will be continued as part of this instructional design, because these address and meet the requirement of the 2008 EPAS competency expectation and promote learning.

Areas to consider for instructional design expansion (supporting competency) include a skill maintenance plan and the structural aspects of learning interviewing skills in relation to the time frame allotted in Generalist Practice I. The skill maintenance plan involves linking a teaching-learning activity to provide maintenance and progression of learning interviewing skills between the courses Generalist Practice I and Generalist Practice II, which coincide with field internships. The structural issues related to considering a longer time frame for learning interviewing skills, including the presentation of advanced skills not presented in Generalist Practice I, involves curriculum changes, which are being considered in this researcher/instructor's department. A class focused on interviewing is a possibility under consideration.

Triangulation of multiple methods of assessment. Triangulation of the multiple data sources, including pre and post confidence scales, the external competency ratings of the students' interviews using the IERS (pre and post), and the students' post self-assessment of goal

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attainment, merged at pre and post training. At pre training, the categories most targeted for change by the students for improvement were *beginning skills* and *closing skills,* and the two skill categories ranked lowest for pre competency ability were the same. *Beginning skills* pre confidence scores were one of the lowest categories of confidence (*closing skills* was not a category on the confidence scale).

Triangulation of data from multiple data sources converged post measures. *Beginning skills* was the category with most change in confidence and competency. It was also assessed by the students as the area of greatest goal attainment, with *closing skills* being second. Competency scores were consistent, indicating the category of *closing skills* as the second area of most change from pre to post. Triangulation in this study revealed convergence of multiple qualitative and quantitative measures, with multiple assessment perspectives for construct validity (Yin, 2003). Given the consistency of the multiple measures, it is suggested that the current assessment plan of the instructional design be used in the future, along with ongoing action research. A modification as to who will be rating the students' pre and post video recordings for competency will occur. Due to the financial cost of independent raters, the instructor will conduct the pre and post competency evaluations. The instructor will randomly choose a small sample of the recordings for colleague assessment to check for evaluation consistency.

Conclusion

What is learned from this action research has potential to provide benefit to others, including students, instructors, social work programs, and consumers of social work services in the areas of knowledge, practice, and teaching-learning. The findings suggest a number of conclusions regarding the intentional instructional design for teaching-learning interviewing

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skills in hybrid delivery. These conclusions have practical application, because they inform the evolving instructional design used by this instructor to encourage students' learning in hybrid delivery and address the expectations of 2008 EPAS, which govern accreditation for MSCD's social work program. The following is a list of conclusions drawn from the findings of this study, a number of which relate specifically to the intentional instructional design:

- The use of metacognition, to provide students an awareness of their natural learning process (NHLP) and reflection to include self-assessment, supports career-long learning for the social work practitioners' development of skills. It also addresses the 2008 EPAS core competency related to professional identity (2.1.1), specifically the practice behaviors of "practice[ing] personal reflection and self-correction to assure professional development" (2.1.1b) and "engag[ing] in career-long learning" (2.1.1e) (CSWE, 2008, p. 3);

- The theoretical framework reflecting constructivism and brain-based learning principles employed in the study' instructional design developed students' confidence and competency for performing interviewing skills;

- The intentional teaching-learning process (research informed)—a combination of didactic and experiential strategies—paralleled students' natural learning process, encouraging increased confidence and competency for performing interviewing skills;

- Formative and summative assessments, using multiple measures and multiple perspectives to evaluate students' confidence and competency to perform interviewing skills, were utilized in the instructional design. This design aspect addresses the emphasis of the 2008 EPAS on the *outcome performance competencies*

requirements of "sequencing the assessment tasks and developing accurate and useful

instruments" (Petrachhi & Zastrow, 2010, p. 125);

- Research-supported, explicit (instruction) and implicit (learning environment)

  curricula linked to course objectives, specific practice behaviors, and practice

  competency, fulfilling the mandate of the 2008 EPAS (Petrachhi & Zastrow, 2010),

  were demonstrated in the study's intentional design.

Conclusions regarding the learning environment of hybrid delivery for learning

interviewing skills include the following:

- The hybrid delivery optimized (research supported) the benefits of asynchronous

  (learner-centered, reflective dialoguing, active ongoing interaction, and collaboration)

  and synchronous (increased personalization) learning environments for learning

  interviewing skills in this study;

- The use of technology to enhance students' learning, specifically the use of web

  conferencing (Wimba) to practice and evaluate interviewing skills, was problematic

  for nearly half of the students in this study. Facilitating more f2f time, identifying

  alternative ways for practice and evaluation, and giving students choices are indicated

  for future study.

- The study adds to the body of knowledge regarding how social work students

  experience learning interviewing skills in a hybrid delivery, web-based environment.

Recommendations for Research

The conclusions and implications of this study suggest a number of opportunities for

research to deepen the understanding of how students learn interviewing skills in hybrid delivery.

The recommendations apply directly to this researcher/instructor's ongoing action research and may have implications for other educators investigating students' learning and acquisition of interviewing skills using varied delivery formats.

The teaching-learning of interviewing skills in this study was limited to a 4-week learning module for students to acquire interviewing skills necessary for engaging and assessing clients. It is recommended that the measures (related to confidence, competency, and student reflections) be repeated in the next course (Generalist Practice II), which is held concurrently with the students' field experience and begins fall semester. It begins approximately five months after the skills learning module concludes in the Generalist Practice I course. The purpose of this follow-up research would be to assess the transfer of learning of interviewing skills to inform what, if any, additional teaching-learning experiences are needed to adequately prepare students to enter their internship. Assessing the transfer of learning will also inform the instructional design used for this study and provide data for ongoing action research.

The choice to use discussion during training as the place for students' reflections rather than individual journaling was based solely on the amount of student engagement perceived by the instructor in using the teaching-learning process. An area for exploration would be the use of weekly journaling for students' reflections related to experiences of the teaching-learning process in hybrid delivery. This activity could deepen the metacognitive activity for students for learning as well as provide data to better understand how learning is perceived and inform the action research process.

In this study, the use of technology—Wimba in particular—to enhance the facilitation of the instructional design was problematic and did not meet the objective of being a viable

alternative to meeting f2f for interviewing practice and evaluation. Research is needed to investigate feasibility and usage of alternatives for practicing and evaluating interviewing skills using the web.

To explore interrater reliability among independent raters, deeper analyses of the findings from this study are warranted to consider what categories of skills had the greatest range of variability among raters for implications for training revisions. Seeking financially feasible options for employing external raters to rate the pre and post skills training recordings are necessary to continue the research practice.

This action research case study may provide social work educators teaching interviewing skills in a web-based delivery a researched-informed instructional design, including multiple assessment measures for consideration. However, it was not intended to be generalizable beyond the course under investigation (Yin, 2003). The implications for action from this study, including areas for further investigation, revisions, and continuation of the instructional design, will be acted upon. The action research cycle will continue as an integral component of the instructional design. Collaboration with all practice instructors at MSCD is recommended for future action research regarding the learning and mastery of interviewing skills.

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Demographic Data

Your answers to the following questions will help in interpreting the data from this research study. All information is confidential. No individual identifying information will be shared or reported. Please fill in the blank or check the appropriate response.

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: Male_____ Female _____

3. Ethnicity: You may choose more than one
     African American _____ American Indian _____ Asian _____
     Hispanic _____ White (Caucasian) _____ Other _____

4. In what language are you most comfortable speaking/writing?
     English _____ Spanish _____ Other (specify) _____

5. Parenting children: If yes: Ages _____   _____   _____   _____

6. Student enrollment status: Full-time _____ Part-time _____

7. Grade level: Junior _____ Senior _____

8. Current work status: Not employed _____
                 Part-time (1-15 hours/wk)   _____
                 Part-time (16-31 hours/wk) _____
                 Full-time (32+ hours/wk)   _____

9. Do you currently work for a social work or human service agency?
     No _____ Yes _____

10. Previous interviewing experience - Estimate # of hours of experience:
     0-10 _____ 11-20 _____ 21-30 _____ 31+ _____

11. Have you taken online classes prior to this course?
     No _____ Yes _____ How many? _____

12. Have you taken social work online courses prior to this course?
     No _____ Yes _____ How many? _____

13. Do you own a computer or have one personally available to you?
     No _____ (Skip to #17) Yes _____ (Please answer #14, #15, and #16)

14. Does your computer have a web cam (audio/visual) capability?
    No _____ Yes _____

15. Does your computer have at least 1 GB RAM? No _____ Yes _____

16. Do you have Internet access at home?
    No _____ List location/s used for online access _____

    Yes _____ What type of Internet connection do you have?
            Dial up _____ High-speed DSL/Cable/Satellite _____

17. Do you video chat? Skype   No ____ Yes _____
                       Adobe Connect   No ____ Yes _____
                       IChat   No ____ Yes _____
                       Other (please specify) _____

18. In the past 12 months, have you shot/captured video footage in a digital format
    (loaded video on YouTube, emailed video clips, saved video clips on a
    CD/DVD, etc.)?
    No _____ Yes_____

19. Do you have the technical capability to make a 10-minute video on your own?
    No _____ Yes _____ Uncertain _____

20. Do you participate in social networking? No _____ Yes_____
    Select which one/s you participate in:
                                    Facebook   _____
                                    My Space   _____
                                    Twitter   _____
                                    Other/s - specify) _____

Syllabus

Metropolitan State College of Denver
School of Letters, Arts, and Sciences
Social Work Department

SWK 3410 – GENERALIST PRACTICE I - Spring Semester

Class Schedule: Hybrid - dates on campus TBA

Credit: 4 Semester Hours

PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES - SWK 1010, SWK 1020, SWK3050 and must have received written acceptance into the Social Work Program. Students should be enrolled concurrently in SWK 3780 and SWK 3060. This course is for social work majors only.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is an introduction to generalist social work practice with diverse, urban populations at risk. The emphasis is on multiple level interventions, including those with individuals (micro), families/groups (mezzo), organizations and communities (macro). The Generalist Intervention Model will be introduced, with the first two stages of engagement and assessment being studied. These two stages will include instruction regarding initial contact, data collection, identifying issue/s to be addressed, and beginning goal setting. Professional knowledge, values, skills, and roles essential for social work practice will be presented. Interviewing and related skills will be practiced.

REQUIRED READING
Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. (2009). *Understanding generalist practice* (5th ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Chang, V. N., Scott, S. T., & Decker, C. L. (2009). *Developing helping skills: A step-by-step approach.* Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Centage Learning.

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association. (2009). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

These books are used for 2 semesters - will be used in Fall for SWK 4010

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Discuss values, ethics, and principles underlying social work theory and generalist social work practice with oppressed populations, including ethnic minorities and other diverse groups (the aging, developmentally delayed, women/children, and gays/lesbians/bisexuals/transgenders).
2. Relate knowledge gained from courses concerning social welfare services, policies, programs, and issues related to the development and provision of generalist social work practice.
3. Relate knowledge gained from courses concerning qualitative and quantitative research methods, findings, and critical evaluation of possible biases to generalist social work practice, with specific focus on systematic needs assessment.
4. Integrate knowledge gained in Human Behavior and Social Environment and other related liberal arts foundation courses into the development of beginning generalist practice skills in social work.
5. Recognize the importance of the person-in-environment perspective at the micro-, mezzo-,and macro-levels, including factors such as the physical, developmental, sexual identity and orientation, gender, and social/economic injustice, cultural, religious and political.
6. Learn about the skills, activities, and tasks involved in generalist social work practice, utilizing the problem-solving approach.
7. Apply the selected aspects of the problem-solving approach to case examples, such as problem definition, identification of client(s) strengths, gathering initial data, and initial goal setting.
8. Develop skills in engaging professional relationships and interviewing.

Evaluation of Student Performance

Class Participation (discussion)	**75 points**
Assignments and Reflections	
(Weekly 1-10)	**145 points**
Examination #1	**50 points**
Examination #2	**80 points**
Examination #3	**80 points**
Interviewing Final Assignment	**95 points**

Exams are out of class assessments, consisting of case studies and will be submitted at Blackboard.

Grading will be based on both content and writing style. Points will be deducted for grammar and/or punctuation errors. Late Paper Policy will be enforced.

Final Grade:
A = 525-472.5   B = 472-419.5   C = 419-366.5   D = 366-313.5   F = 313& below

ADHERENCE TO SOCIAL WORK CODE OF ETHICS
This course is preparation for professional practice; therefore the student is expected to adhere to the Social Work Code of Ethics.

Social Work Department Policies:

Classroom Code of Conduct

Department of Social Work Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior

The Department of Social Work at the Metropolitan State College of Denver is mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to foster and evaluate professional behavioral development for all students in the social work program. The Department of Social Work also bears a responsibility to the community at large to produce fully trained professional social workers who consciously exhibit the competencies, values, and skills of the profession of social work. The values of the profession are codified in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and the Council on Social Work Education has 10 core educational competencies that social workers must master. Given this context, the Social Work Department has identified behaviors for the social work student to exhibit in the classroom, the online classroom, field placement, in the social work office, through email/phone conversations, and any other interaction in a professional/academic setting. This document does not include the complete NASW Code of Ethics or the CSWE Educational Policies, however it highlights particular ethics and competencies to serve as a framework of professional and ethical behaviors to abide by while a social work student at MSCD. Other aspects of the NASW Code of Ethics or the CSWE Educational Policies are evaluated academically throughout the program's curriculum.

Department of Social Work Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior: Self-Assessment

Social Work Student Handbook:

The *Social Work Student Handbook* contains a comprehensive list of departmental policies and procedures.

Attendance Statement

The Metropolitan State College of Denver's (MSCD) Social Work Department adheres to the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. In abiding by the standards of the national governing body, CSWE, the MSCD Social Work Department provides students and the surrounding communities a measure of confidence regarding competent, well-prepared professional social workers at the undergraduate level. In addition to presentation of course content such as concepts and theories, social work education provides socialization into the profession—the development of an identity as a social work professional. Therefore, classroom sessions (online or f2f) meet several learning objectives

through the use of lecture (text in online learning modules), text review, guest speakers, interactive exercises, and student discussion. In order to ensure optimal development of professional identity, classroom attendance is vital. There is no substitute for transactions in the classroom (online discussion) among peers. Discussion includes the negotiation and consensus of terms (i.e., the language of the profession), values, provision of new insights and interpretations, and enhancement of both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Most importantly, students learn from colleagues; absenteeism creates the void of missing voices.

Whereas there are other opportunities for socialization into the profession (Student Association of Social Workers membership and involvement, participation in the department list serve, and faculty advising), the most consistent occasion resides in the interaction among students in the classroom, with the instructor serving as facilitator.

Consequently, the MSCD Social Work Department developed and adheres to an attendance policy. Attendance is expected at all class meetings. - See Department's Attendance Policy for details.

Social Work Department Late Paper Policy

 Papers/assignments should be turned in at the assignment page in Blackboard by the date due. Late papers will lose one Grade (e.g., an "A" paper can only earn a "B," a "B" paper will earn a "C," etc.). Students are responsible for letting the instructor know if papers will be late. Papers which are more than one week late will not be accepted, unless a revised due date was previously negotiated with the instructor. Documented emergencies are exceptions to this policy. If there is a late paper policy on your syllabus, that policy takes precedence over this statement.

Problem Resolution Procedures

All students are admitted and retained in the Social Work Department on the assumption that they have the potential academic ability and personal suitability for completing the professional Social Work Program. All students admitted to the Social Work Department at the Metropolitan State College of Denver are expected to maintain the standards established by the Social Work Department, the social work profession, and the College. Consequently, the MSCD Social Work Department presents the Problem Resolution Procedures.

During the course of study, a student may not perform at the required level. When problematic situations are identified, the Performance Review Committee will conduct a review to determine whether it is appropriate for the student to continue in the Social Work Department, and if so, under what conditions. Such conditions could include a requirement to complete study skills or writing skills development, completion of psychological counseling or other treatment, or other appropriate activities to resolve academic or personal problems.

The Performance Review Committee shall be responsible for monitoring and reviewing student performance issues for all majors in the Social Work Department. Membership shall include: A social work faculty member who will serve as the chair of the committee, the student's advisor or an advocate selected by the student, a representative from the Dean's office, and others, such as the agency field instructor, as appropriate to the particular situation.

College Policies

Academic Dishonesty:
Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at the College because it diminishes the quality of scholarship and the learning experience for everyone on campus. An act of academic dishonesty may lead to sanctions, including a reduction in grade (up to and including a permanent F for the course), probation, suspension, or expulsion. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, submitting the same paper or work for more than one class, and facilitating academic dishonesty. For definitions and more information, see the Student Handbook, which is available online through Metro-Connect.

COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT POLICY – NC NOTATION:

1. The NC notation shall be available to students in all instances through the 10th week of classes for fall and spring semesters.

2. Students are responsible for logging on to MetroConnect and indicating an NC for the appropriate courses.

3. Under no circumstances can an NC request be processed following the end of the 10th week of a 16-week semester (11:59 p.m. on the Friday of the 10th week of the semester, submitted electronically).

4. Proportional time frames are applied for modular courses, weekend courses, workshops, and summer terms.

Students can still apply for a tuition refund using the Tuition and Fees Appeal Form if the NC was necessary due to extenuating circumstances, such as illness, a death in the family, or employment changes beyond their control.

This new policy is included in the online College Catalog in the Academic Policies and Procedures section: http://catalog.mscd.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=62.

Incomplete Notation:

The Incomplete (I) notation may be assigned when a student, who was achieving satisfactory progress in a course and who had completed 75% of class assignments, is unable to take the final examination and/or did not complete all class assignments due to unusual circumstances such as

hospitalization. Incomplete work denoted by the Incomplete "I" notation must be completed within one calendar year or earlier, at the discretion of the faculty member. If the incomplete work is not completed within one year, the "I" notation will convert to an "F." Students should have completed at least 75% of the course work to qualify for consideration of an Incomplete. The student should be passing the course in order to be granted an Incomplete.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor to discuss their specific needs. Students will need to provide the instructor with a disability verification letter from the Disability Services Office before appropriate accommodations can be made. Failure to notify the instructor in a timely fashion may hinder the college's ability to assist students to successfully complete the course.

The Metropolitan State College of Denver does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment in, its educational programs or activities. Inquiries concerning Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 may be referred to Dr. Percy Morehouse, Director, Equal Opportunity, Metropolitan State College of Denver, 303.556.2939; or to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80204. Discrimination based on disability in admission to, access to, or operation of programs, services, or activities of the college is prohibited by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Religious Holidays:
If the class deadlines interfere with religious holidays, please abide by the college policy.

Students at Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD) who, because of their sincerely held religious beliefs, are unable to attend classes, take examinations, participate in graded activities, or submit graded assignments on particular days shall without penalty be excused from such classes and be given a meaningful opportunity to make up such examinations and graded activities or assignments, provided that advance written notice that the student will be absent for religious reasons is given to the faculty members during the first 2 weeks of the semester.

Nothing in paragraph one of this policy shall require MSCD faculty members to reschedule classes, repeat lectures or other ungraded activities, or provide ungraded individualized instruction solely for the benefit of students who, for religious reasons, are unable to attend regularly scheduled classes or activities. However, presentations, critiques, conferences, and similar activities involving individual students shall be scheduled to avoid conflicts with such students' religious observances or holidays, provided that reasonable advance notice of scheduling conflicts is given to faculty members.

Because classroom attendance and participation is an important aspect of learning, MSCD students should not register for courses if regularly scheduled classes or activities routinely conflict with their religious observances or holidays (e.g., conflicts resulting in weekly absences for an entire semester). Any MSCD student who believes that an MSCD faculty member has violated this policy is entitled to seek relief under Section V of the MSCD Equal Opportunity Grievance Procedure.

OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT (major topics and subtopics)

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I.   Generalist Social Work Practice
   A.  Social Work as a Profession /Historical Influences
   B.  Knowledge Base - Critical Review
          1.  Liberal Arts Perspective
          2.  Human Behavior and the Social Environment
   C. Values/Ethics/Laws
   D. Populations-at-Risk
          1.  Ethnic Minority: African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic, and Native-American
          2.  Diverse Groups:  Aging, Developmentally Delayed, Women and Children,
       Gays/Lesbians/Bisexuals/Transgenders
        Interconnectedness of Social Work Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Practice Models
       F.   Informal and Formal Supports.
II.  Introduction to Generalist Practice
   A.  Six Core Skills
   B.  Micro, Mezzo, Macro Levels of Practice
   C.  Problem-Solving Method
III. Ethnically and Racially Sensitive Social Work Practice
       A.   Diversity in the United States
          1.  Historic Discrimination - Social and Economic Injustices
          2.  Current Discrimination - Social and Economic Injustices
          3.  Barriers to Effective Multicultural Social Work
          4.  Practice Skills and Knowledge
          5.  Developing Effective Cross-Cultural Interventions
IV. Micro Level Practice - Working with Individuals
   A.   Relationships
          1.  Confidentiality
          2.  Helping Relationships
          3.  Qualities of a Helping Person
   A.  Starting the Interview
   B.  Conducting the Interview
          1.  Verbal and Non-Verbal Responses - Attending Behaviors
          2.  Attentive Listening - Reflection of Feeling, Paraphrasing
          3.  Open-Ended and Closed-Ended Questions
          4.  Silences
          5.  Confronting Clients/Hostile Clients
          6.  Involuntary/Voluntary Clients
          7.  Untruths
          8.  Terminating the Interview
   C.  Assessment - Ecological Perspective
          1.  Defining Issues
          2.  Recognizing Client System(s) Strengths and Needs
          3.  Systematic Needs Assessment
          4.  Problem Selection
          5.  Data Collection
          6.  Initial Goal Setting
V.   Mezzo Level - Working with Groups
       A.   Types of Groups
       1.  Task
       2.  Treatment
   A.  Assessment- Ecological Perspective
       1.  Defining Problems and Issues
          2.   Systematic Needs Assessment
       3.  Problem Selection
       4.  Data Collection
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        5.   Initial Goal Setting
    B.  Worker Roles
    C.  Group Development
        1.  Group Development
        2.  Group Culture, Norms, Power
        3.  Size, Composition, Duration
        4.  Group Roles
        5.  Cultural Factors
    D.  Micro Skills in Group
        1. Conflict Resolution
            2.  Modeling and Coaching
            3.  Team Building
            4.  Confrontation
          5.  Consultation
          6.  Coordination
          7.  Using Structure
VI.   Social Work Macro Practice Macro Level - Organizations and Communities/Advocacy and Social
      Action
    A.  NASW Code of Ethics
    B.  Case and Cause Advocacy
            1.  Historical Perspective
            2.  Current Perspective
    C.   Indicators for Advocacy
    D.   Assessment, Planning, and Intervention
    E.   Using Existing Resources
    F.   Understanding Social Welfare Policy, Legislative Advocacy, & Political Action
    G.   Social Work Empowerment Strategies
    H.   Macro Skills
        1.  Rebuilding and Maintaining Organization
        2.  Evaluating Outcomes
        3.  Fund Raising
        4.  Budgeting
        5.  Negotiating
        6.  Mediating
            7.  Influencing Decision-Making
            8.  Needs Assessment
          9.  Planning
        10. Working with Coalitions
    I.  Workers' Roles
        1.  Organizer and Advocate
VII.  Partnerships with Populations-at-Risk
    A.  Problem Identification
    B.  Systematic Needs Assessment
    C.  Program Development Responses
    D.  Legislative Policy Responses
    E.  Resource Development Response
    F.  Evaluating Outcomes
VIII. Gender Sensitive Social Work Practice
    A.   Gender Sensitivity
    B.   A Feminist Perspective
        1.  Micro Level
        2.  Mezzo Level
        3.  Macro Level
    C.  Micro Practice with Women: Common Problems
        1.  Stressful Life Events
            2.  Personal Issues
            3.  Helping Women in Micro Practice
 IX.   Sexual Orientation/Family Issues
    A.  Gay, Lesbian , Bi-Sexual, Transgender Issues
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Class Schedule

The table below provides an "at-a-glance" overview of the course topics, reading, and activities, etc. You might want to print it and use it as a planning tool and checklist to help stay on track throughout the course.

Dates	Module	Activities
1/18-1/21	**Module 1**: Introduction Generalist Practice I	• **Reading:** ○ C, S, & D text - Preface, Chapter 1 • **Assignment 1:** ○ Natural Human Learning Process (10 points)
1/21-1/28	**Module 2**: What Is a Professional Social Worker	• **Reading:** ○ C, S, & D - Chapter 4 ○ "Qualities of a Helping Person" ○ "The Development of Social Work as a Profession" ○ "Criteria of a Profession" • **Assignment 2**: ○ Data Sheet & Personal and Professional Growth Questionnaire (10 points)
1/28-2/4 Hybrid Meeting On campus	**Module 3**: Generalist Social Work Practice - Micro, Mezzo, Macro	• **Reading:** ○ K/A & H text - Chapter 1 ○ C, S, & D text - Chapter 2 ○ "Case Example - Brook" ○ "Utilizing Eco Map" (for assignment) • **Assignment 3**: ○ Eco Map - (15 points)
2/4-2/11	**Module 4**: Values and Ethics of Generalist Social Work Practice	• **Reading:** ○ K/A & H text - Chapter 11 ○ C, S, & D text - Chapter 3 ○ "Principles of Confidentiality" ○ Personal Values versus Professional Values" for use in discussion. • **Assignment 4:** ○ Reflection Week 4 - (10 points)
2/11-2/18	**Module 5**: Culturally	• **Reading:**

	Competent Social Work Practice	○ K/A & H text - Chapter 12 ○ "What Does It Mean to Be a Culturally Competent Professional" ○ "Culturally Competent Practice" • View Video: "A Great Wonder" (The Lost Boys - refugee resettlement) • **Assignment 5:** ○ Cultural Heritage - (15 points) • **Assignment: Exam #1 distributed**
2/18-2/25	**Module 6**: Micro Practice Skills: Working with Individuals Use 6 step teaching-learning process to learn Attending, observing, and listening skills Opening and closing meeting	• **Reading:** ○ K/A & H text - Chapter 2 (Begin reading - complete in Week 7) ○ C, S, & D text - Chapters 5 & 6 ○ "The Caseworker-Client Relationship" (Perlman) • **Assignment 6:** ○ Pre-Training Interview Video, Reflection & Confidence Scale due 2/21 (20 points) • **Assignment 7:** ○ Using C, S, & D text - Chapter 5, complete Exercises 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3 (15 points)
2/25-3/4 Hybrid Meeting On Campus	**Module 7**: Interviewing Skills: Engagement & assessment Expressing & understanding Reflection and paraphrasing skills	• **Reading:** ○ C, S, & D text - Chapter 7 ○ In K/A & H text - complete Chapter 2 and read Chapter 5, read pgs. 146-162 • **Assignment 8:** ○ Using C, S, & D text - Chapters 6 & 7, complete exercises: 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 7.1, & 7.2 (20 points) • **Assignment Exam #1 - due 2/28 (50 points)**
3/4-3/11	**Module 8**: Meeting the Client: Assessing for strengths and needs Use of questions to explore - open and closed-ended	• **Reading:** ○ "How to Interview for Clients Strengths" ○ C, S, & D text - Chapter 8 ○ In K/A & H text - Chapter 5, review pgs. 151-162 ○ "Multidimensional Assessment of the Elderly Client" ○ " Case Example - Jane" (elderly client)

		• **Assignment 9:** o Using C, S, & D text - Chapter 8, complete exercises 8.1 & 8.2 (10 points)

3/11-3/18	**Module 9**: Difficult Aspects of Interviewing and Engagement
	
	Review and practice interviewing - all skills
		• **Reading:**
		   o K/A & H text - Chapter 2, review pgs. 68-80
		   o "My Friend Julius, On the Topic of Resistance" (Cournoyer)
		   o "Difficult Aspects of Interviewing: Silences"
		   o Case example: "Jennifer"
		• **Assignment 10:**
		   o Reflection & Interviewing Confidence Scale – post training (20 points - due upon completion of Interviewing Assignment - 4/1).

3/29-4/1
 	
Hybrid Meeting On Campus
	Module 10: Mezzo: Diversity and Families (Gay and Lesbian Families) & Gender-Sensitive Social Work Practice	• **Reading**
		   o K/A & H text - Chapter 10, pgs. 357-362, & Chapter 13
		   o Heterosexual Questionnaire
		   o Case Study "Marissa"
		• **View video:** "Daddy and Papa"
		
		• **View video:** David Nicholas "Nico" Baker

4/1-4/8	**Module 11**: Mezzo Practice: Working with Groups	• **Reading:**
		
		   o K/A & H text - Chapter 3
		   o "A Comparison of Treatment and Task Groups"
		   o "Pregroup Planning"
		
		• "Culturally Sensitive Group Work"
		
		• **Assignment:** Exam #2 distributed

4/8-4/15	**Module 12:** Mezzo: Group Leadership & Leaders' Roles	**Reading:** o Task and Treatment Group "Leadership Roles

		-Task and Maintenance"
		o Mezzo Practice - Class Exercise" (Planning a group

4/15-4/22
 	
Hybrid Meeting On Campus
	Module 13: Macro Practice: Assessment of Change Potential/Program Development	• **Reading:**
		  o K/A & H text - Chapter 4
		  o "Considering Organizational Change: PREPARE, IMAGINE: A Process for Initiating Organizational Change"
		  o "Program Evaluation and Review Technique: PERT"
		• **Assignment:**
		  o **Exam #2 Due (80 points)**

4/22-4/29	**Module 14**: Macro Practice Skills	• **Reading:**
		  o Case Example -"Is Literacy the Only Issue?"
		  o Case example - "What Should Salli do?"
		• **Assignment: Exam #3 distributed**

4/29-5/6	**Module 15**: Macro Change: Homeless	• **Reading:**
		  o Case Study: "Project Homeless"
		  o "Characteristics: Who Homeless Youth Are"

5/6-5/13	**Finals week**	**Exam #3 due (80 points)**

APPENDIX C

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of Study: UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS: LEARNING
INTERVIEWING SKILLS IN A HYBRID PRACTICE CLASS
Principal Investigator: Carole Makela, Ph.D., Professor of School of Education, College of
Applied Human Sciences, Colorado State University - can be contacted at
makela@cahs.colostate.edu
Co-Principal Investigator: Barbara Barclay, MSW, ABD, CSU Doctoral Candidate, Social
Work Department Faculty, Metropolitan State College of Denver - can be contacted at
barclayb@mscd.edu

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are enrolled in a distance hybrid
section of SWK 3410 at Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD) where this study is being
conducted to better understand how interviewing skills are learned in a hybrid practice course.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

Barbara Barclay, a visiting professor at MSCD and a doctoral candidate at CSU, is conducting
this action research study, supervised by a committee of four Colorado State University
professors.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to gain understanding of how students experience learning
interviewing skills in a hybrid social work practice course at Metropolitan State College of
Denver with the intent of improving the teaching–learning process for students' acquisition of
interviewing skills.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT
LAST?

The study will be conducted in the SWK 3410 distance hybrid section in Spring 2011 and will
last approximately 8 weeks of the semester.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

As requirements for SWK 3410, students are assigned a number of interviewing skills
assignments. These consist of pre and post training interview videos, confidence surveys, and
reflections. Students are not asked to complete any additional work for the study, only asked

permission to allow their videos and assignments to be used for the purpose of this research study.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
➢ There are no risks associated with the procedures of the study. Students may withdraw participation at any time during the study without any consequence.
➢ It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher has taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
The anticipated benefit from the information collected is identifying the teaching and learning strategies that best facilitate students' acquisition of interviewing skills in a hybrid practice course.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
Your participation in this research is strictly voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. As a student, you are assured that your grade will not be adversely affected if you decline to participate, or later stop participating.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?
Privacy and confidentiality will be handled in the following way:
Privacy of all videos and assignments will be protected by the assignment of random numbering, with no students' names to accompany the information. Confidentiality is of extreme importance, and precautions are taken, knowing that a student can be recognized on a video recording. Only the researcher and independent raters (not faculty members) under the researcher's supervision and training will be viewing the videos for assessing the change in interviewing skill use from pre to post training. All videos and assignments (research records) will be stored in a locked cabinet at all times subsequent to their release to the researcher and will be kept separate from your names.
Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. The researcher will write about the combined information that has been gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. The results of this study may be published; however, your name and other identifying information will be kept private.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can

contact the principal investigator, Dr. Carole Makela at makela@cahs.colostate.edu or 970-491-5141 or co-investigator, Barbara Barclay, at barclayb@mscd.edu or 303-556-4672.
If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, CSU Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655 or Professor Jeff Forrest, Chair of the MSCD Human Subjects Committee, at 303-556-4380.
We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

This consent form was approved by the MSCD Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on (1/04/2011) and the CSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on (1/26/2011).

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

_____   _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____   _____
Name of person providing information to participant   Date

_____
Signature of Research Staff

APPENDIX D

Natural Human Learning Process (NHLP)

Human beings are born with brains that learn by natural, innate processes—learners are biologically driven to make sense of their world and are natural learners. Each person is unique and constructs meaning of the environment in her or his own ways from her or his biology and experiences.

The more you understand your own natural way of learning ("figuring out" through logic, seeking patterns, and solving problems), the better you will be able to identify the learning strategies that work best for you and those that are motivating.

What you learn in this class will result from your ability to construct meaning from knowledge, values, and skills that are presented. My role is to facilitate an environment and types of activities that are congruent with the way you learn best. For you to identify your "Natural Human Learning Process," I want you to complete the following activity:

1. To look at how you learn, think of one thing you're good at that you learned to do "outside" school. It could be a sport, a hobby, an art, a people skill, or something around the house; it could be something you did when you were younger but don't do anymore; it could be anything. You are all good at many things, so consider one of these.
2. Think back to before you knew how to do it. Write down (a) how you started learning it and (b) then how you got from knowing how to do it (c) to being good at it. After you have given this some thought, attempt to put your learning process into stages - consider what happened first, then identify the subsequent steps you did to learn it well.
3. Next, write up the learning activity you chose (what were you learning) and the stages (step by step) you experienced.

We will share our learning experience as a class in discussion to see whether there are similarities in how you all got to be good at your different specialties and whether you experienced commonalities in learning how to do something new. The discussion will give us the opportunity to better understand how learning occurs.

APPENDIX E

Pre Interviewing Skills Training Assignment

1. Each student, serving in the role of social worker, will complete a 10- to 15-minute **video recorded interview** with a fellow student of his or her choosing in the role of client. If the student is at a distance, a nonstudent for the client role may be designated, with instructor approval. If a nonstudent serves in an interviewee role, a consent form consistent with the usual practice of client consent will need to be completed and submitted with your assignment (**client consent form - attached here**). The interview is to be authentic, with the client presenting a recent real-life challenge or issue. The interview is to reflect an initial or beginning session with a client. Further discussion of the type of real-life challenges to be presented by the client/interviewee and procedures will occur in class (discussion and/or during hybrid session).

   The purpose of the interview is to gather baseline information. You are encouraged to refrain from engaging in preparation for the interview. There is no grade attached to the interview performance, and the intent of the video is for self-assessing beginning skill level to determine areas of strength and areas for improvement.

2. Complete the **Pre Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale** (attached here**)** to identify how confident you feel to perform the interviewing skills listed at this time, prior to training.

3. Review the video (using the student interviewing evaluation form attached) and the completed confidence scale to respond to the following areas (self-assessment and reflection):

   - Identify and describe areas of strengths and areas that need improvement;

   - Construct at least three goals reflecting areas you have identified for improvement;

   - Reflect on the process and provide your perception by describing the use of "reality play," overall experience of video recording, and feelings associated with the interviewer role.

Consent to Be Video Recorded for Course Assignment and Research Study

TO THE NONSTUDENT PERSON ASKED TO SERVE IN A CLIENT ROLE:

Why am I being invited to take part in this assignment and research?
You are being asked to participate in a 10- to 15-minute interview that will be video recorded with a student to practice interviewing skills. The student is enrolled in a distance hybrid section of SWK 3410 at Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD). The instructor, Barbara Barclay, is doing a research project this semester to better understand how interviewing skills are learned. Students are asked to record an interview before and after skills training to assess how well they use interviewing skills and submit for evaluation by independent raters (not part of the class) to assess students' use of interviewing skills. You do not need to take part in both the before and after training interviews.

Title of Study:
UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS: LEARNING INTERVIEWING SKILLS IN A HYBRID PRACTICE CLASS.
Purpose of the Study:
To better understand how social work students learn interviewing skills in a hybrid social work practice course, with the purpose of improving the teaching-learning process.

What are the possible risks and discomforts?
➢ It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher has taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential but unknown risks.
➢ The 10- to 15-minute interview is client centered, and the content is determined by you in the client role; therefore there is minimal-to-no risk of discomfort for participating. You may stop the interview at any time. No names will be submitted or attached to the video; only this consent form will have your name, and that will be locked in a file separate from the video to maintain all anonymity.

Who will see the video recording in which I participate in the client role?
Privacy and confidentiality will be handled in the following way:
Your identity will be protected by random number assignment, with no names to accompany the information. Confidentiality is of extreme importance, and precautions are taken knowing that you could be recognized on a video recording. Only the researcher, student, and independent raters (not faculty members), under the researcher's supervision and training, will be viewing the videos for assessing interviewing skill use from before and after training.

All videos will be stored in a locked cabinet at all times after being released to the researcher (other than during the rating procedures). Your name will never be requested from the student who interviews you; it is to be completely anonymous. The videos will be destroyed at the end of the required 3-year hold period.

Information from the video evaluation will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. The researcher will write about the combined information that has been gathered. You as client will not be identified in these written materials or when the results of this study are published.

Your signature here acknowledges your consent and permission to allow the student who interviews you, the instructor/researcher, and the independent raters to review and evaluate video recorded practice interviews for the sole purposes of course assignment and this research study.

Client Role Signature _____ Date _____

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the course assignment and study, please ask any questions that might come to mind. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the principal investigator, Dr. Carole Makela, at makela@cahs.colostate.edu or 970-491-5141, or co-investigator, Barbara Barclay at barclayb@mscd.edu or 303-556-4672.

If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this study, contact Janell Barker, CSU Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655 or Dr. Ben Thompson, Chair of the MSCD Human Subjects Review Committee (IRB), at 303-352-4426. Guidelines for protecting the rights of human subjects that are used in this study may be found on MSCD website: http//www.mscd.edu. You will receive a copy of this form.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 2 pages.

_____   ____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the video recorded interview   Date

_____
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the video recorded interview

_____   ____
Name of person providing information to participant   Date

_____
Signature of Researcher

Pre Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale

Use the following rating scale (*not confident at all* = **0** to *very confident* = **5**) to identify how confident you are in your ability to perform each of the identified interviewing skills below.

Circle the interval number that best describes your degree of confidence to perform each interviewing skill item at this time.

INTERVIEWING SKILLS	Not Confident at all				Very Confident	
1.**Communication Involvement**						
a. Use open and accessible posture	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Use congruent facial expression	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Use regular eye contact unless inappropriate	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Use minimal encouragers	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. **Observe physical indicators of client**						
a. Facial expressions, body position, and movement	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Eye contact and movement, gestures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. **Begin the interview process- introduce yourself and your role**						
a. Seek introductions	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Identify the purpose of the meeting	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Explain some things you will do	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Outline the client's role	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Discuss ethical and agency policies	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Seek feedback from the client	0	1	2	3	4	5
4 **"Actively Listen"**						
a. Summarize what the client said	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Describe the client's way of speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. **Perform Reflection**						
a. Content	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Feeling	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Content and feeling for meaning	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. **Use of questioning**						
a. Open-ended	0	1	2	3	4	5

b. Closed- ended	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. One question at a time	0	1	2	3	4	5

Student Interview Evaluation (SIE)   (Self-Assessment)

Name of Interviewer _____

Directions: Under each category (in italics) is a list of behaviors or skills. Give one point for each skill used by the interviewer. Leave blank if not used.

Building Relationships

Attending:

Give one point for each behavior used by the interviewer

1. Open and accessible body posture   ____
2. Congruent facial expression   ____
3. Slightly inclined toward the client   ____
4. Regular eye contact unless inappropriate   ____
5. No distracting behavior   ____
6. Minimal encouragement   ____

Observing:

Give one point for item accurately described by the interviewer

1. Facial expression   ____
2. Eye movement and eye contact   ____
3. Body position and movement   ____
4. Gestures   ____

Active Listening Skills Content and Process:

Give one point for interviewer's use of

1. Summarizing what the client said   ____
2. Describing the client's way of speaking (speaking style, vocal tone and volume, and/or speed of delivery)   ____

Beginning Skills:

Give one point for each topic covered by the interviewer

1. Introduce yourself and your role   ____
2. Seek introductions   ____
3. Identify how long meeting will last   ____
4. Describe the initial purpose of the meeting   ____
5. Explain some of the things you will do   ____
6. Outline the client's role   ____
7. Discuss ethical and agency policies   ____
8. Seek feedback from the client   ____

Closing Skills (for a meeting):
Give one point for each skill used
        1.   Identifies that the meeting(s) is about to end   _____
        2.   Invites a summary of the meeting(s)   _____
        3.   Reviews any tasks that the client agreed to complete   _____
        4.   Discusses plans for future meetings   _____
        5.   Invites client feedback about the work   _____
        6.   Asks client about any final questions   _____

Skills that Express Understanding:
Give one point for each skill used by the interviewer
        1.   Reflecting feelings   _____
        2.   Reflecting content   _____
        3.   Reflecting feeling and content   _____
        4.   Summarizing   _____
        5.   Exploring meanings   _____
        6.   Identifying strengths   _____

Exploring
Questioning Skills:
Give one point for each skill used by the interviewer
        1.   Expressed understanding before asking questions   _____
        2.   Used open-ended questions   _____
        3.   Used question at a time   _____
        4.   Used closed-ended questions   _____
        5.   Asked questions about strengths   _____

Common Mistakes or Inappropriate Responses (minus 1 point for each)
        1.   Giving advice   _____
        2.   Reassuring   _____
        3.   Offering excuses   _____
        4.   Dominating   _____
        5.   Leading questions   _____
        6.   Labeling   _____
        7.   Interrogating   _____

Total Evaluation Score   _____

APPENDIX F

Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale (ISCS) - Used Pre and Post Skills Training

Use the following rating scale (*not confident at all* = 0 to *very confident* = 5) to identify how confident you are in your ability to perform each of the identified interviewing skills below.

Mark the interval number that best describes your degree of confidence to perform each interviewing skill item at this time.

INTERVIEWING SKILLS	Not Confident at all					Very Confident
1. **Communication Involvement**						
a. Use open and accessible posture	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Use congruent facial expression	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Use regular eye contact unless inappropriate	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Use minimal encouragers	0	1	2	3	4	5
2**. Observe physical indicators of client**:						
a. Facial expressions, body position, and movement	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Eye contact and movement, gestures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. **Begin the interview process - introduce yourself and your role:**						
a. Seek introductions	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Identify the purpose of the meeting	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Explain some things you will do	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Outline the client's role	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Discuss ethical and agency policies	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Seek feedback from the client	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. **"Actively Listen:"**						
a. Summarize what the client said	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Describe the client's way of speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. **Perform Reflection :**						
a. Content	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Feeling	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Content and feeling for meaning	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. **Use of questioning:**						
a. Open-ended	0	1	2	3	4	5

b. Closed-ended	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. One question at a time	0	1	2	3	4	5

Interview Evaluation Rater Scale (IERS) with Evaluation Description

Interview Code: _____ Date _____
Independent Rater: _____
<u>Directions:</u> Under each category (in italics) is a list of behaviors or skills. Please check whether or not the interviewer exhibited the specific behavior or skill. On the scales, evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the interviewer's overall use of the skills or behaviors in the category (using the Description of Evaluation Scale).

Basic Interpersonal Skills

Communicating Involvement: Give a point for each behavior used by the practitioner. Leave blank if not present.

1.	Open and accessible body posture	_____
2.	Congruent facial expression	_____
3.	Slightly inclined toward the client	_____
4.	Regular eye contact unless inappropriate	_____
5.	No distracting behavior	_____
6.	Minimal encouragement	_____

Using the scale, evaluate the overall effectiveness of the practitioner's use of the skill, communicating involvement.

    1   2   3   4   5   _____

Ineffective and/or   **Effective and/or**   **Score**
Inappropriate   **Appropriate**

Beginning Process Skills: Give a point for each topic covered by the interviewer. Leave blank if not present.

1.	Introduce yourself and your role	_____
2.	Seek introductions	_____
3.	Identify how long the meeting will last	_____
4.	Describe the initial purpose of the meeting	_____
5.	Explain some of the things you will do	_____
6.	Outline the client's role	_____
7.	Discuss ethical and agency policies	_____
8.	Seek feedback from the client	_____

Using the scale, evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the practitioner's use of skills.

    1   2   3   4   5   _____

Ineffective and/or   **Effective and/or**   **Score**
Inappropriate   **Appropriate**

Reflecting Skills: Give a point for each topic covered by the practitioner. Leave blank if not present.

     1.   Reflecting content   _____

     2.   Reflecting feelings   _____

     3.   Reflecting feelings and content or meaning   _____

Using the scale, evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the practitioner's use of skills.

1	2	3	4	5	_____

Ineffective and/or Inappropriate   **Effective and/or Appropriate**   **Score**

Questioning Skills: Give a point for each topic covered by the practitioner. Leave blank if not present.

     1.   Use of open-ended questions   _____

     2.   Use of one question at a time   _____

     3.   Use of close-ended questions   _____

Using the scale, evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the practitioner's use of skills.

1	2	3	4	5	_____

Ineffective and/or Inappropriate   **Effective and/or Appropriate**   **Score**

Closing Skills – Give a point for each topic covered by the interviewer. Leave blank if not present.

     1.   Identifies that the meeting is about to end   _____

     2.   Invites a summary of the meeting   _____

     3.   Reviews any tasks that the client agreed to complete _____

     4.   Discusses plans for future meetings   _____

     5.   Invites client feedback about the work   _____

     6.   Asks client feedback about the work   _____

Using the scale, evaluate the accuracy of the practitioner's description.

1	2	3	4	5	_____

Ineffective and/or Inappropriate   **Effective and/or Appropriate**   **Score**

Description of Evaluation Scales for Use with Interview Evaluation Rater Form
(Independent Raters)

Communicating Involvement Evaluation Scales

   The interviewer communicates involvement:

   Level 1:   Very little of the time.
   Level 2:   Some of the time
   Level 3:   Most of the time
   Level 4:   Almost all the time
   Level 5:   All of the time

Beginning Process Evaluation Scales

   The interviewer:

   Level 1:   Begins without foundation for the meeting, covering none of the
              necessary elements.
   Level 2:   Begins with minimal foundation for the meeting, covering two of the
              necessary elements.
   Level 3:   Begins with moderate foundation for the meeting, covering three or
              four of the necessary elements.
   Level 4:   Covers five or all the necessary elements of the foundation for the
              meeting, but appears rote.
   Level 5:   Provides a foundation built on clear understanding of such things as
              purpose, roles, and expectations for the meeting and appears focused
              on client.

Reflecting Skills Evaluation Scales

   The interviewer:
   Level 1:   Makes very little attempt to verbalize understanding of feelings,
              content, and/or meanings.
   Level 2:   Verbalizes minimally understanding of feelings, content, and/or
              meanings.
   Level 3:   Verbalizes some understanding of feelings, content, and/or meanings.
   Level 4:   Verbalizes generally understanding of feelings, content, and/or
              meanings.
   Level 5:   Verbalizes consistently understanding of feelings, content, and/or
              meanings.

Questioning Evaluation Scales

The interviewer:
Level 1:   Uses questions ineffectively and/or inappropriately, uses multiple
            questions, or overuses questions.
Level 2:   Uses appropriate questioning minimally, sometimes uses multiple
            questions, and/or occasionally overuses questions.
Level 3:   Usually uses questions appropriately, does not ask multiple questions,
            and usually does not overuse questions.
Level 4:   Use of questions is mostly effectively and appropriate, does not ask
            multiple questions and only occasionally overuses questions.
Level 5:   Consistently uses questions effectively and appropriately.

Closing Skills Evaluation Scales

The interviewer:
Level 1:   Closes the meeting, covering none of the necessary elements.
Level 2:   Closes the meeting, covering two of the necessary elements.
Level 3:   Closes covering three or four of the necessary elements.
Level 4:   Covers five or all of the necessary elements of closing the meeting, but
            appears rote.
Level 5:   Provides five or all of the necessary elements of closing the meeting and
            is focused on the client.

Final Interview Evaluation Assignment (using video recording)

Directions

1. Each student, serving in the role of social worker, will complete approximately a 10 to 15-minute *video recorded interview* with another student from class functioning in the role of client (exceptions will be the distance students using the same procedure at pre training). The interview is to be of a beginning session (first meeting) utilizing the engagement and assessment interviewing skills learned in this course.

2. The final video recording needs to be submitted with the written portion of this assignment. (Submit on a flash drive or CD using Media Player or Quicktime - do not send in a file).

3. When developing interviewing skills goals (Part IV), refer to Chapter 12 in Chang, Scott and Decker text to use the MAPS writing format.

This assignment has multiple parts described below.

Components of the Final Interview Evaluation to be submitted:

I. **A. Written Description – Observing**:
What you **observed** (use descriptive words). Use sub-headings for each aspect you are describing. Describe your client's facial expressions, eye movement and eye contact, body positions and movement, as well as gestures.
B. Written Description – Related to Listening:
- A summary of what your client said
- Your description of the client's way of speaking (speaking style, vocal tone, and volume and/or speed of delivery).

II. **Transcription:** Using the attached form (table) in this assignment (to- remove) construct a **transcription of the interview,** including all statements/questions made by you as the social worker and summaries of the clients' statements/ inquiries or responses. In the column prior to the social work statement and/or question, name the skill, e.g., *reflecting feelings, beginning skill - introducing self and role, etc.* (See attached Student Interview Evaluation to help identify specific skills). A sample transcription is provided as an attachment in the assignment.

III. **Final Evaluation Form**. Attached is an evaluation form for use with this assignment. It will be the same as the evaluation form you have been using in the Chang, Scott,

and Decker (2009) book. Complete as directed and include the following:

- For this assignment, give yourself 1 point for each reflecting statement. You can have up to 10 points for reflecting statements.

IV. **Provide a self-assessment of your work to include:**
- A thorough analysis of your strengths and areas for improvement (limitations)
- Three professional goals (written in MAPS format) related to practice development
- An evaluation of your final interview assignment using the rubric (attached as file at this assignment)

V. **Complete Rubric (self-assessment)**

The Final Assignment is worth a total of 95 points: 70 points - Final Interviewing Evaluation (student portion) and 25 points - Instructor evaluation of student competency regarding engagement and assessment of interviewing skills. To receive 70 points for the student portion, you will need to include all written work presented professionally (use headings), interview video recording, transcription, completed evaluation, and rubric. The instructors will use the Final Evaluation Form (interviewing skills evaluation form covering skills taught in the 4-week interviewing module) to evaluate competency of skills utilized in the interview video recording.

Transcription Table (Part II)

Skill category: (e.g., attending, beginning skills, and questioning skills)	Specific skills used: (e.g., minimal encourager, introduce yourself and role, and use of open-ended question)	Transcription: practitioner/client	Instructor comments

This table is an example to use to develop your transcription.
Abbreviations: You can use abbreviations such as:

Practitioner Role: PR	Client Role: CR
Reflection of Content: ROC	Reflection of Feeling: ROF
Open-Ended Question: OEQ	Closed-Ended-Question: CEQ

Part III. Final Student Evaluation
Final Student Interview Evaluation (Self-Assessment)
Name of Interviewer _____
Directions: Under each category (in italics) is a list of behaviors or skills. Give one point for each skill used by the interviewer. Leave blank if not used.
Building Relationships
Attending:
 Give one point for each behavior used by the interviewer.
    1.   Open and accessible body posture   ____
    2.   Congruent facial expression   ____
    3.   Slightly inclined toward the client   ____
    4.   Regular eye contact unless inappropriate   ____
    5.   No distracting behavior   ____
    6.   Minimal encouragement   ____

Observing:
Give one point for item accurately described by the interviewer (in written portion of evaluation)
    1.   Facial expression   ____
    2.   Eye movement and eye contact   ____
    3.   Body position and movement   ____
    4.   Gestures   ____

Active Listening Skills Content and Process:
Give one point for interviewer's use of
    1.   Summarizing what the client said   _____
    2.   Describing the client's way of speaking (speaking style,
              vocal tone and volume, and/or speed of delivery)   _____

Beginning Skills:
Give one point for each topic covered by the interviewer
    1.   Introduce yourself and your role   _____
    2.   Seek introductions   _____
    3.   Identify how long meeting will last   ____
    4.   Describe the initial purpose of the meeting   ____
    5.   Explain some of the things you will do   ____
    6.   Outline the client's role   _____
    7.   Discuss ethical and agency policies   _____
    8.   Seek feedback from the client   ____

Closing Skills (for a meeting):
Give one point for each skill used
    1.   Identifies that the meeting(s) is about to end _____
    2.   Invites a summary of the meeting(s)   _____

3.	Reviews any tasks that the client agreed to complete	_____
4.	Discusses plans for future meetings	_____
5.	Invites client feedback about the work	_____
6.	Asks client about any final questions	_____

Skills that Express Understanding:
Give one point for each time the skill was used by the interviewer
1.	Reflecting feelings	_____
2.	Reflecting content	_____
3.	Reflecting feeling and content	_____
4.	Summarizing	_____
5.	Exploring meanings	_____
6.	Identifying strengths	_____

Exploring
Questioning Skills:
Give one point for the each skill used by the interviewer.
1.	Expressed understanding before asking questions	_____
2.	Use of open-ended questions	_____
3.	Use of one question at a time	_____
4.	Use of closed-ended questions	_____
5.	Asking questions about strengths	_____

Common mistakes or inappropriate responses (minus 1 point for each used)
8.	Giving Advice	_____
9.	Reassuring	_____
10.	Offering Excuses	_____
11.	Dominating	_____
12.	Leading Questions	_____
13.	Labeling	_____
14.	Interrogating	_____

Total Evaluation score	_____

Part V. Rubric attached below.

Assignment adapted with permission from Valerie N. Chang.

Part V. Rubric for written work related to video

Directions: In each row, place an X in the box that best describes your work related to the trait. Write your points on the item score line.

Trait being evaluated & total points per trait	A	B	C	D	F
Written description related to observing (6 points)	All 7 areas of client described completely	All but 1 area Described Completely	All but 2 areas Described completely	All but 3 areas described completely	Very limited description
Item score:	(6 pts)	(5 pts)	(4pts)	(3 pts)	(2 pts)
Written description related to listening	Complete description of key points related to what client said & complete description of client's way of speaking (style, volume, & speed)	Complete Description of key points related to what client said & Description of 2 aspects of client's way of speaking	Adequate description of key points & description of 1 aspect of client's way of speaking	Some description of key points related to what client said	Very limited description of key points related to what client said
(8 points) *Item score:*	(8 pts.)	(7 pts.)	(5 pts.)	(3 pts.)	(1 pts.)
Quality of transcript & completion of evaluation form	Accurate transcript, with each intervention accurately named. Evaluation form accurately completed	Accurate transcript most interventions accurately named. Evaluation form Accurately Completed	Adequate transcript, interventions not named. Evaluation Form accurately completed	Limited transcript, interventions not named, evaluation form not fully completed	Very limited transcript, interventions not named, evaluation form not fully completed
(18 points) *Item score:*	(18 pts.)	(15 pts)	(12 pts)	(9 pts)	(6 pts)
Quality of the strengths identified in video evaluation of yourself. **(10 points)**	Clear evidence to support identification of 3 specific strengths demonstrated on video.	Clear evidence to Support identification of 2 specific strengths demonstrated on video.	Clear evidence to support identification of 1 specific strength demonstrated	2 strengths identified but not supported with evidence	No identification of specific strengths
Item score:	(10 pts.)	(8 pts.)	(6 pts.)	(4 pts.)	(2 pts)
Limitations or learning needs identified in video evaluation of yourself.	4 specific limitations Identified	3 specific Limitations Identified	2 specific Limitations Identified	1 specific limitation identified .	No limitations identified

(10 pts)					
Item score:	(10 pts.)	(8 pts.)	(6 pts.)	(4 pts.)	(2 pts)
Quality, formatting, and number (3) of goals for professional Development (12 pts.)	At least 3 goals are stated and all meet MAPS criteria.	At least 3 goals are stated and 2 of MAPS criteria.	At least 3 goals are stated and meet1 of MAPS criteria.	At least 2 goals are stated and all meet 1 of MAPS criteria	At least 1 goal is stated that meets 1 of MAPS criteria.
Item score:	(12 pts.)	(10 pts.)	(8 pts.)	(4 pts.)	(2 pts.)
Overall quality of written work (6 pts)	Paper is very well written, almost no errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Well written, few errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Headings and sub-headings are used	Generally, well written, few errors with grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	Paper is not well written, problems with grammar, spelling, & punctuation.	Paper is poorly written.
Item score:	**(6 pts.)**	**(5 pts.)**	**(4 pts.)**	**(3 pts.)**	**(1 pt.)**

Add all item scores to get your total score _____

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APPENDIX I

Post Interviewing Skills Training Confidence Scale and Reflection
(to be completed following the Final Interview Evaluation Assignment)

The Interviewing Skills Training is now at an end, because learning modules Weeks 6-9 are over. To finish the learning process of interviewing skills, students have the following task:

- Recording a post training interview (10-15 minutes) to be used for the final interviewing self-assessment assignment (and the research study, if you are participating).

When the final assignment is submitted, students are asked to:

1. Complete a **Post Interviewing Skills Training Confidence Scale** attached below **and**
2. Write a **Reflection** describing your experience and perception of the following areas:

- Compare your Post Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale with your Pre Interviewing Skills Confidence scale. What changes in skill development do you identify?

- Review the three goals you identified for skill improvement prior to interviewing skills training. Evaluate your improvement.

- The Teaching -Learning Process used to learn interviewing skills included a 6 step process:
  1) Reading
  2) Thinking & writing (assignments and discussion)
  3) Watching & discussing (DVD)
  4) Working with cases
  5) Practicing
  6) Evaluating
  Consider each of the six steps and provide feedback as to how each facilitated or did not support your learning of interviewing skills. What suggestions for improving this process for yourself and/or others do you have?

- Overall what is your perception of learning interviewing skills in a hybrid format? Please reflect on both the f2f and online components of this class related to learning interviewing skills.

Post Interviewing Skills Confidence Scale

Use the following rating scale (*not confident at all* = **0** to *very confident* = **5**) to identify how confident you are in your ability to perform each of the identified interviewing skills below. Circle the interval number that best describes your degree of confidence to perform each interviewing skill item at this time.

INTERVIEWING SKILLS	Not Confident at all					Very Confident
1. **Communication Involvement**						
a. Use open and accessible posture	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Use congruent facial expression	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Use regular eye contact unless inappropriate	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Use minimal encouragers	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. **Observe physical indicators of client**						
c. Facial expressions, body position, and movement	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Eye contact and movement, gestures	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. **Begin the interview process - introduce yourself and your role**						
a. Seek introductions	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Identify the purpose of the meeting	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Explain some things you will do	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. Outline the client's role	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. Discuss ethical and agency policies	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. Seek feedback from the client	0	1	2	3	4	5
4 **"Actively Listen"**						
a. Summarize what the client said	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Describe the client's way of speaking	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. **Perform Reflection**						
a. Content	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Feeling	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. Content and feeling for meaning	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. **Use of questioning**						
a. Open-ended	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. Closed- ended	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. One question at a time	0	1	2	3	4	5

Independent Rating Data
(7 raters - pre and post interviews randomly assigned)

Pre Interviews - (2 ratings - score range 1-5 per skills category), **Post Interviews -** (3 ratings - score range 1-5 per skills category)
Total Score - (5 skills categories, score range 5-25).

Student#	Communication		Beginning Skills		Reflecting		Questioning		Closing		Total
	(raters' scores)	mean(m)	(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(score)
1 Pre	(2.00, 4.00)	3.00	(1.00, 2.00)	1.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	(2.00, 2.00)	2.00	9.00
1 Post	(4.00, 3.00, 4.00)	3.67	(4.00, 5.00, 5.00)	4.67	(4.00, 3.00, 5.00)	4.00	(4.00, 4.00, 5.00)	3.33	(4.00, 3.00, 3.00)	3.33	20.00
2 Pre	(5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	(5.00, 2.00)	3.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	12.00
2 Post	(2.00, 3.00, 5.00)	3.33	(3.00, 4.00, 5.00)	4.00	(2.00, 1.00, 5.00)	2.67	(3.00, 3.00, 5.00)	3.67	(3.00, 5.00, 5.00)	4.33	18.00
3 Pre	(2.00, 5.00)	3.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(3.00, 1.00)	2.00	(2.00, 5.00)	3.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	11.00
3 Post	(5.00, 5.00, 4.00)	4.67	(5.00, 4.00, 4.00)	4.33	(3.00, 5.00, 1.00)	3.00	(2.00, 5.00, 3.00)	3.30	(5.00, 3.00, 3.00)	3.67	19.00
4 Pre	(2.00, 3.00)	2.50	(1.00, 2.00)	1.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(4.00, 2.00)	3.00	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	9.00
4 Post	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(5.00, 3.00, 5.00)	4.33	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(5.00, 3.00, 5.00)	4.33	23.66
5 Pre	(5.00, 4.00)	4.50	(3.00, 2.00)	2.50	(5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(4.00, 2.00)	3.00	20.00
5 Post	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(4.00, 5.00, 4.00)	4.33	(4.00, 2.00, 5.00)	3.67	(4.00, 4.00, 5.00)	4.33	(3.00, 1.00, 4.00)	2.33	19.66

Student#	Communication		Beginning Skills		Reflecting		Questioning		Closing		Total
	(raters' scores) mean (m)		(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(score)
6 Pre	(3.00, 3.00)	3.00	(2.00, 2.00)	2.00	(4.00, 4.00)	4.00	(4.00, 4.00)	4.00	(3.00, 3.00)	3.00	16.66
6 Post	(4.00, 5.00, 5.00)	4.67	(5.00, 4.00, 4.00)	4.33	(5.00, 4.00, 5.00)	4.67	(5.00, 5.00, 4.00)	4.67	(3.00, 4.00, 4.00)	3.67	22.00
7 Pre	(5.00, 2.00)	3.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(5.00, 1.00)	3.00	(3.00, 3.00)	4.00	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	13.00
7 Post	(4.00, 5.00, 4.00)	4.33	(3.00, 4.00, 4.00)	3.67	(1.00, 5.00, 1.00)	2.33	(2.00, 5.00, 2.00)	3.00	(2.00, 3.00, 3.00)	2.67	16.00
8 Pre	(3.00, 4.00)	3.50	(2.00, 2.00)	2.00	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	(3.00, 4.00)	3.50	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	12.00
8 Post	(5.00, 4.00, 3.00)	4.00	(4.00, 4.00, 4.00)	4.00	(5.00, 2.00, 1.00)	2.67	(5.00, 4.00, 3.00)	4.00	(4.00, 3.00, 3.00)	3.33	18.00
9 Pre	(2.00, 4.00)	3.00	(3.00, 3.00)	3.00	(1.00, 4.00)	2.50	(3.00, 1.0)	2.00	(2.00, 3.00)	2.50	13.00
9 Post	(2.00, 2.00, 2.00)	2.00	(4.00, 3.00, 4.00)	3.67	(1.00, 1.00, 100)	1.00	(2.00, 2.00, 2.00)	2.00	(1.00, 2.00, 2.00)	1.67	10.00
10 Pre	(2.00, 2.00)	2.00	(1.00, 3.00)	2.00	(3.00, 1.00)	2.00	(3.00, 2.00)	2.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	9.50
10 Post	(4.00, 5.00, 4.00)	4.33	(3.00, 4.00, 5.00)	4.00	(3.00, 2.00, 5.00)	3.33	(4.00, 5.00, 5.00)	4.67	(2.00, 3.00, 2.00)	2.33	18.66
11 Pre	(2.00, 4.00)	3.00	(2.00, 2.00)	2.00	(3.00, 5.00)	4.00	(2.00, 5.00)	3.50	(2.00, 2.00)	2.00	14.50
11 Post	(4.00, 3.00, 1.00)	2.67	(4.00, 5.00, 5.00)	4.67	(4.00, 3.00, 5.00)	4.00	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	21.33
12 Pre	(5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(4.00, 3.00)	3.50	(4.00, 5.00)	4.50	(5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(2.0, 3.00)	2.50	20.50
12 Post	(5.00, 4.00, 3.00)	4.00	(4.00, 4.00, 3.00)	3.67	(4.00, 4.00, 4.00)	4.00	(5.00, 3.00, 2.00)	3.33	(5.00, 4.00, 5.00)	4.67	19.67

Student#	Communication		Beginning Skills		Reflecting		Questioning		Closing		Total
	(raters' scores) mean (m)		(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(scores)	/m	(score)
13 Pre	(4.00, 3.00)	3.50	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	(3.00, 1.00)	2.00	(3.00, 4.00)	3.50	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	12.00
13 Post	(5.00, 4.00, 4.00)	4.33	(4.00, 1.00, 3.00)	2.67	(2.00, 2.00, 5.00)	3.00	(4.00, 3.00, 3.00)	3.33	(1.00, 4.00, 5.00)	3.33	16.67
14 Pre	(5.00, 3.00)	4.00	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(4.00, 1.00)	2.50	(5.00, 2.00)	3.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	11.50
14 Post	(5.00, 5.00, 4.00)	4.67	(5.00, 5.00, 4.00)	4.67	(5.00, 3.00, 2.00)	3.33	(4.00, 5.00, 2.00)	3.67	(4.00, 5.00, 3.00)	4.00	20.33
15 Pre	(5.00, 4.00)	4.50	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	(2.00, 2.00)	2.00	(5.00, 2.00)	3.50	(3.00, 2.00)	2.50	14.00
15 Post	(5.00, 5.00, 3.00)	4.33	(4.00, 4.00, 3.00)	3.67	(2.00, 5.00, 3.00)	3.33	(2.00, 5.00, 4.00)	3.67	(3.00, 2.00, 2.00)	2.33	17.33
16 Pre	(4.00, 4.00)	4.00	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(3.00, 3.00)	3.00	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	10.00
16 Post	(5.00, 5.00, 3.00)	4.33	(5.00, 3.00, 3.00)	3.66	(1.00, 2.00, 3.00)	2.00	(5.00, 4.00, 2.00)	3.67	(3.00, 3.00, 3.00)	3.00	16.67
17 Pre	(3.00, 5.00)	4.00	(1.00, 2.00)	1.50	(1.00, 3.00)	2.00	(3.00, 5.00)	4.00	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	12.50
17 Post	(5.00, 4.00, 3.00)	4.00	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(3.00, 4.00, 4.00)	3.67	(4.00, 4.00, 5.00)	4.33	(3.00, 3.00, 3.00)	3.00	20.00
18 Pre	(1.00, 2.00)	1.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	(2.00, 1.00)	1.50	(2.00, 3.00)	2.50	(1.00, 1.00)	1.00	7.00
18 Post	(1.00, 2.00, 2.00)	1.67	(1.00, 2.00, 1.00)	1.33	(3.00, 1.00, 3.00)	2.33	(4.00, 4.00, 4.00)	4.00	(2.00, 3.00, 2.00)	2.33	11.67
19 Pre	(5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(4.00, 4.00)	4.00	(5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(3.00, 5.00)	4.00	23.00
19 Post	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(5.00, 4.00, 5.00)	4.67	(5.00, 5.00, 4.00)	4.67	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	(5.00, 5.00, 5.00)	5.00	24.33