



Building onto the Conceptual Understanding of the Implicit Curriculum

SWEAP Team's Presentation  
10/21 at the 2017 CSWE APM  
Dallas, Texas

[www.sweapinstruments.org](http://www.sweapinstruments.org)

### WHAT IS SWEAP?

- SWEAP is committed to providing the highest quality assessment instruments
  - Designed to aid undergraduate and graduate social work programs in evaluation necessary for program development and improvement.
- SWEAP instruments are specifically designed to be responsive to the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
  - Related to both initial accreditation and reaffirmation.
- However, each social work program is individually responsible for appropriately reporting and interpreting data provided through SWEAP instruments to CSWE.

### What is SWEAP?

- Non-Profit (501c3)
- Volunteer Run
- Service to Profession
- Based out of Metropolitan State University of Denver

RESULT:

- 6 (copyrighted) instruments in support of program assessment and curriculum development.

### SWEAP INSTRUMENTS

- Entrance
- Exit (relevant to this workshop)
- Alumni/Graduate
- Employer
- Curriculum Instrument (FCAI)
- Field Instrument (FPAI)

### THE SWEAP TEAM

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### Objectives of Presentation

- Awareness of how various conceptual frameworks can guide the understanding of the implicit curriculum
- Understand how these frameworks (& evidence) can inform the implementation of the implicit curriculum
- Describe methods for assessing multiple elements of the implicit curriculum

### Getting to know the audience: By a show of hands...

- Who is at a BSW only program?
- Who is at a MSW only program?
- Who is at a BSW/MSW program?
- Primarily Campus Based Program?
- Online Only Program?
- Somewhere in-between?
- Who is going up for accreditation or reaffirmation under EPAS 2015.
  - In the next 6 months?
  - In the next 12 months?

### CSWE EPAS 2015- Highlighted Changes

- Move to 9 Social Work Competencies
  - No "Practice Behaviors"
- Multi-dimensional Assessment
  - Knowledge
  - Values
  - Skills
  - Cognitive and Affective Processes (critical thinking?)
- Assessment of Implicit Curriculum**

### What is the Implicit Curriculum

- "The implicit curriculum refers to the learning environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented." (CSWE, EPAS, 2015)



**Objective I: Conceptual Framework Understanding the Implicit Curriculum**

**Professional Socialization**

three interrelated stages

- **Presocialization**
  - Involves the socialization of the individual into the profession
- **Formal Socialization**
  - program that facilitates the curriculum
- **Process of Change**
  - Is contingent on relationships, and choices on whether or how to accept socializing messages received through content and structure

(Miller, 2013)

**Human Interchange**

- Professional socialization is contingent on the quantity and quality of human interchanges within a program
- Educators should model adaptive interventions when addressing negative interactions in the classroom, or effective communication/behavior when serving on committees

(Bogo & Wayne, 2013)

**Empowerment Framework**

- **Empowerment**
  - take actions to improve their life situations
- **Important components include:**
  - Self-perceptions of control, feelings of efficacy, or competence to act
- **Empowerment through the implicit curriculum can inform:**
  1. Identity as a social worker
  2. Confidence in professional competence, and
  3. Confidence in potential impact as a social worker

(Peterson et al. 2014b)

**Integrated Structural Functionalism and Symbolic Interactionism**

- Structural functionalism can explain a program's structure or components of content.
- Symbolic interactionism can explain the culture, relationships, and ultimately self-development that occurs within a program

(Miller, 2013)

**Influence of Diversity and Difference**

- on multiple characters including age, race, program type, etc. (Delong-Hamilton et al., 2017)
- **Barriers to transgender affirmative social work education including**
  - (1) transphobic microaggressions within classroom and field settings,
  - (2) the absence of transgender specific education and expertise, and
  - (3) the general lack of visibility of transgender issues.

(Austin et al., 2016; Craig et al., 2017)

**Summary of Conceptual Frameworks used to Explain the Implicit Curriculum**

- Implicit curriculum is shaped by:
  - Professional Socialization
  - Meaning/importance of interactions
  - Professional expectations
  - Structural components of the program, university, etc.
  - Perspective on empowerment
  - Diversity of student body

**Objective II: Using Theory to Inform Implementation**

**Building a Shared Implicit Curriculum**

- Factors that contribute to building a shared implicit curriculum
  - **Knowledge**
    - (information) is relevant and accessible
  - **Guidelines**
    - for the disseminating and accessing information
  - **Technology**
    - used to disseminate of information
  - **Information**
    - must be curriculum driven – used to enhance the learning culture and ultimately the curriculum
  - **Student Voice**
    - as primary consumers of the implicit curriculum, should frame the implicit curriculum

(Holsako et al., 2010)

**Building a Shared Implicit Curriculum (cont.)**

- **Examples:**
  - [Shared Catalog of Terms for BSW Curriculum](#)
  - [BSW Approval FAQs](#)
  - [Field Problems and Resources FAQs](#)

**Experientially-Oriented Diversity Event**

- Organized by a diversity committee (faculty, students, and community partners)
- Organize an event agenda that consists of panel discussions, films, lectures, stations, and small group discussion
- Students appreciated learning from their peers in a safe setting
- Students learned to be self-reflective and respectful of differences through cultural immersion

Ando, 2016

**Objective II: Using Empirical Evidence to Inform Implementation**



**The Implicit Curriculum and Student Sexual Orientation**

- N = 1,018 nested within 136 institutions
  - 76% MSW students
  - 24% BSW Students
- **Findings:**
  - **Students who were exposed to LGBTQ+ content**
  - **Students who were exposed to LGBTQ+ content**
  - **Students who were exposed to LGBTQ+ content**

(Craig et al., 2017)

**Implicit Curriculum and Transgendered Students**

- N = 97 students who identified as being a gender or sexual minority
  - Transgendered Students perceived high levels of transphobic/transconflict from schools, faculty, and in their field placements
    - Many reported transphobic microaggressions, although some indicated affirming trans experiences
  - Lack of content on issues impacting transgender community in curriculum
  - Most felt faculty was supportive on issues impacting transgendered students and larger community

(Austin et al., 2016)

**The Implicit Curriculum and Content on Diversity and Social Justice**

- N = 19, 13 instructors & 6 Graduate Students
  - Parameters for having dialogue, small class caps, and more time available are suggested
  - Teaching styles of instructors are crucial, and therefore they need to be screened and mentored
  - Increase diversity among students and faculty
  - Content needs to be infused throughout curriculum
  - Offer a variety of service and learning opportunities
  - Develop an advanced course in social justice

(Deepak et al., 2015)

**Professional Socialization**

- N = 489 MSW alumni
- Strongest predictors for **having a commitment to social work** are a desire to promote social change, and associating social work with lower amounts of prestige
- Strongest predictors for **having a social work attitude in consonance with the profession's mission, history and values** are a desire to promote social change and having an anticipatory expectation of social work as a rewarding profession
- Strongest predictor for **identifying with social justice** is a desire to promote social change

(Miller, 2013)

**Implicit Curriculum Assessment and Student Characteristics**

- Relationship of student characteristics to implicit curriculum assessment
  - N = 1484 students, nested within 50 social work programs, 90% were undergraduate
  - Race
    - Black students reported higher satisfaction with policy development and student organizations
    - White students reported higher satisfaction with a program providing opportunities for professional advancement
  - Gender
    - Those that chose not to identify as female or male reported assessed the implicit curriculum less favorably

(DeLong-Hamilton et al., 2017) SWEAP PAPER

**Implicit Curriculum Assessment and Student / Program Characteristics (cont.)**

- Age/Academic Level
  - BSW students assessed the implicit curriculum more favorably
  - Older students reported higher satisfaction with policy development and student organizations
- Employment Status/Financial Aid
  - Students receiving financial aid assessed the implicit curriculum more favorably
  - BSW Students who worked reported higher satisfaction with policy development and student organizations
- Type of Program
  - Students in on-line or hybrid programs rated implicit curriculum more favorably compared to those in program that were solely campus-based

(DeLong-Hamilton et al., 2017)

**Objective III: Describe Methods for Assessing the Implicit Curriculum**

**Has anyone assessed the Implicit Curriculum?**

- Under 2008?
- Under 2015?
- What did you do? use?

**Methodology for Holosko et al. (2010)**

- **Mixed-method approach: 5 step process**
  - Professional socialization
- **Quantitative**
  - web-based counter
  - total the number of hits to three steps (student glossary, Advising FAQs, Field problems and resources FAQs)
- **Qualitative**
  - Student focus groups: use of the implicit curriculum, as well as the key values/assumptions in which it is framed

**Potential Assessment Plan (Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010)**

- 2008 EPAS series:
  - Advising Survey
  - Course Evaluations
  - Student Assessment of Field Experience
  - Field Instructor Assessment of Field Experience
  - Graduating Student Exit Survey

**Implicit Factors Survey (Grady et al., 2011)**

- 2008 EPAS: pilot study
- Six Factor Assessment Tool – each factor is operationalized by approximately 5 to 10 items – data is quantitative and qualitative
  - ◊ Field
  - ◊ Academics
  - ◊ Community
  - ◊ Diversity
  - ◊ Faculty Advising
  - ◊ Support Services

**SWEAP EXIT INSTRUMENT (NOT JUST ABOUT IMPLICIT CURRICULUM)**

- Completed by students just prior to graduation.
  - Often administered in field seminar or capstone seminar.
- Collects demographic information to compare with the entrance profile.
- Professional Activities
  - Use of research techniques to evaluate client progress
- Use of program evaluation methodology
- Current & anticipated Social Work Employment
  - Primary function & major roles
- Post Graduate Educational Plans

**SWEAP EXIT INSTRUMENT (NOT JUST ABOUT IMPLICIT CURRICULUM)**

- Educational Experience
  - How well program prepared them to perform Social Work Competencies (related behaviors)
  - **Including implicit curriculum assessment**

**SWEAP Exit Instrument**

- Implicit curriculum assessed in section F of the instrument
- Student assessment of the quality of the program's:
  - Commitment to diversity
    - Admissions policies and procedures
    - Advisement,
    - Policies
    - Student participation in governance,
    - Role of faculty
    - Administrative structure and function
    - Resources, and
    - Field education program

**SWEAP Exit**

**Commitment to Diversity**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Statement
<input type="radio"/>	The social work program was committed to diversity among its students.				
<input type="radio"/>	The social work program modeled diversity among its faculty and staff.				
<input type="radio"/>	Faculty and staff of the social work program modeled respect for differences.				
<input type="radio"/>	The social work program provided an environment where students learned about differences.				
<input type="radio"/>	The social work program provided a learning environment where students valued and respected diversity.				



Any Questions?

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