Developing Leaders Through Social Work Education

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Developing Leaders Through Social Work Education

by

Toni Jensen

A Banded Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

University of Saint Thomas
School of Social Work

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Abstract

This banded dissertation is an exploration into the role of social work education in leadership development. While the social work profession has a long history of strong leaders, fewer students are selecting leadership as an area of specialization in their graduate studies (Peters, 2018). Guided by Constructive Developmental Theory (Kegan, 1994), social work educators can implement strategies to develop students to higher levels of cognitive capacity, resulting in a workforce that is better prepared for roles as positional leaders, as well as the broader work of the profession.

The first product of this banded dissertation is a research study, exploring the presence of leadership content within the 2015 Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (CSWE EPAS). A qualitative textual content analysis method, using an a priori codebook, was employed to review the CSWE EPAS and Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy was used to analyze content for cognitive level. Findings indicate the presence of leadership content throughout the CSWE EPAS, and of the terms analyzed, most were found to be at a moderate to high cognitive level.

The second product, a conceptual paper, presents an argument for implementing leadership development into the implicit curriculum in social work education. This paper utilizes Constructive Developmental Theory (Kegan, 1994) and Vertical Leadership Development (Petrie, 2014; 2015) to present a model that transforms the role of the academic advisor to one of leadership developer.

The third product is a workshop presentation given at the Network for Social Work Managers 2019 Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois. This workshop introduced participants to the
second banded dissertation product and provided an opportunity to apply the theoretical models to their own workplace experiences. Leadership concepts were found throughout the 2015 CSWE EPAS, including within the competencies that define the baseline for effective practitioners. Inclusion in this area specifically lends to the argument that leadership is a generalist skill and should be included in social work courses and learning related to leadership should be assessed. Findings encourage social work educators to consider ways in which to include this content outside of the traditional classroom setting, in order to allow for development to occur. Further research is needed on ways in which implicit and explicit educational strategies can foster this development, and how that development can be measured and assessed.
Dedication/Acknowledgements

Many thanks are owed to those who helped support me along this journey. Thank you to family, friends and colleagues who provided me the space and time to study and write. Andrya, Allison, and Kristin, thank you for helping me to persist. Martin, I never would have taken this leap without your encouragement and support; your patience with me is unmatched. Dennison and Emmett, I am not sure you will remember much from the last three years, but I hope my accomplishments will demonstrate to you what can be done with determination and the support of those we love. Traci thank you for the space to transition from parent and spouse to student and back, your love and commitment to my success has meant the world to me, Sláinte. Finally, for my father, this one is for you.
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Developing Leaders Through Social Work Education

The focus of this banded dissertation is leadership development through social work education. Several scholars have noted that the human services profession is currently facing a leadership crisis. These scholars have attributed the crisis to a variety of causes including the potential retirements of those in the baby boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964), staff shortages, lack of specialization and training, lack of succession planning and a decreased interest in leadership and management as an area of social work practice (Choi, Urbanski, Fortune, & Rogers, 2015; Holosko, 2009; Hopkins, Meyer, Shera, & Peters, 2014; Leslie, 2015; Peters, 2018; Sullivan, 2016; Tollesen Knee & Folsom, 2012; Wilson & Lau, 2011). Trained and competent leaders help improve staff outcomes and impact an individual’s overall sustainability in practice (Elpers & Westhuis, 2008; Sullivan, 2016). Without trained and competent leaders, the social work profession may be unable to have the maximum impact and influence needed to fully achieve its mission to “enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people” (NASW, 2017, p.1).

While this crisis is specific to positional leadership, it can be argued that the traits and skills of a good leader are necessary in any area of social work practice. These traits and skills include acting with integrity, communicating effectively, engaging appropriately, demonstrating empowerment, showing emotional competence, being collaborative, solving problems, creating positive change, taking risks, acting with vision, practicing empowerment, acting with integrity, being self-awareness and accepting feedback (Cullen, 2013; Holosko, 2009; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Peters, 2018). Haeseler (2013) found that social workers will modify their leadership styles and approaches dependent upon the needs of the client, the method of service delivery, and organizational location and culture. This finding is also supported by Cullen (2013) who found.
that social workers in direct practice settings exemplified leadership traits and skills, thus illustrating how leadership can be exhibited and fostered outside of supervisory or administrative positions. As a result, leadership is a tool of practice, that all social workers may choose to access in order to ensure the achievement of clients’ goals.

Whether defined by position of authority or traits, the gate-keepers of social work education are uniquely placed to have a great influence on addressing this crisis. Currently, some graduate schools of social work have tried to address the leadership crisis by increasing competence, through specializations or concentrations in the areas of administration and management (Peters, 2018). However recent surveys completed by CSWE show that only approximately four percent of students pursue this specialization (Peters, 2018). The majority of social work students select direct practice specializations and concentrations for their MSW coursework. The question then becomes, how can social work educators prepare students for positional leadership roles when the primary interest of most students is direct practice specializations, which may not include content specific to leadership.

Over the past decade, several scholars have argued for social work education to prepare social workers for roles in leadership by including leadership content in the competencies presented by Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) through their Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (Choi, et al., 2015; Holosko, 2009; Hopkins, et al., 2014; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Peters, 2018; Sullivan, 2016; Wilson & Lau, 2011). Inclusion of leadership content in these competencies would require it to be addressed both at the generalist and specialized levels, reaching both undergraduate and graduate social work students. This would result in a drastic increase of social workers with advanced skills to embrace a variety of leadership opportunities. The purpose of this banded dissertation is to explore what leadership
content is currently included in the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (CSWE EPAS) and to develop a conceptual model that explains how to approach the intentional development of leaders across the social work curriculum.

The first scholarly contribution is a qualitative textual content analysis of the CSWE EPAS, in which I explored the leadership content thereof, following which I analyzed a portion of the content for cognitive developmental level based on Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, first developed in 1956 and revised in 2001. Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy is used by educators to determine the level of learning intended and achieved through a hierarchy of cognitive processes, where remembering is at the lower end of the hierarchy and creating is at the highest level (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Each level of the Cognitive Processes Domain builds on the previous level with increasing complexity (Bloom, 1956). Content from the Competencies section of the CSWE EPAS was analyzed for cognitive developmental level through an application of the Taxonomy Table (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). This study found that of the 86 unduplicated leadership terms in the a priori codebook there were 131 occurrences of these terms in the 2015 CSWE EPAS, 30 of which were unduplicated. Further, the terms analyzed were mostly mapped at the application level or above of Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy, indicating that a higher level of cognitive development is required for these standards to be met.

The second scholarly contribution is a manuscript depicting a conceptual model for developing leaders through the implicit curriculum in social work education. First, I conducted a review of the literature regarding the crisis of leadership facing the social services industry and the importance of developing leaders to help address this crisis. Second, I applied Kegan’s (1994) Constructive Developmental Theory and Petrie’s (2014) Vertical Leadership...
Development framework to social work education, finally concluding that leadership development can be implemented through the relationship between the student and the advisor. The third scholarly contribution is a professional presentation of the conceptual model to social work leaders from across the country at the Network for Social Work Managers Annual Conference.

**Conceptual Framework**

Constructive Developmental Theory (CDT; Kegan, 1994) serves as the conceptual framework for this banded dissertation. In his theory, Kegan (1994) argues for the need to encourage individuals to higher developmental stages in order for them to effectively demonstrate the skills and traits associated with strong leaders. CDT explains cognitive development throughout the lifespan, including development in adulthood. CDT assumes that adults must continue to develop cognitively in order to increase their capacities for critical thinking and complex problem solving; these are key competencies for leaders in any field (Helsing, Howell, Kegan, & Lahey, 2008). This development is not something that can be simply taught, but must be fostered and encouraged over time (Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2015).

According to CDT the adult stages of development include interpersonal balance, institutional balance, and inter-individual balance. Interpersonal balance follows after adolescence as the first stage in adulthood and is characterized by improved abstract thought. Individuals in this stage experience difficulty with conflicting ideas and values and see authority as something that is provided externally and struggle with unpredictability (Helsing & Howell, 2014; Kegan, 1994). Through a process of challenge, exploration and growth individuals are able to move onto the next stage of adulthood, institutional balance. CDT assumes this stage of development is one that best fits most leaders, particularly positional leaders serving as middle
managers. In this stage individuals become more comfortable with uncertainty and their authority comes from internal sources resulting in a decreased reliance on external validation. Further, individuals in this stage of development experience improved critical thinking and problem solving and have an improved ability to empathize with others without feeling tied to others’ emotions (Helsing & Howell, 2014; Kegan, 1994). The third stage of adulthood, according to CDT, is inter-individual balance where individuals are better able to consider multiple perspectives when determining the best course of action. Additionally, they experience increased comfort with not knowing, where they recognize the unknown as a source of growth. Kegan (1994) and Petrie (2014) indicated this level of development best fit those at the highest levels of organizations, where visioning and a willingness to take risks are common requirements of the position.

CDT’s focus on cognitive development as it relates to leadership capacity provided a unique perspective when exploring how a crisis of leadership could be addressed. The theory’s focus on development shifted the conversation to consider the experiences and time necessary to truly achieve developmental growth. As a result, when exploring the content that guides all social work education, specific attention was paid to cognitive development through the application of Bloom’s taxonomy. Additionally, the exploration of how to create better social work leaders considered options outside of the traditional classroom setting. Finally, the conceptual framework was influenced by Petrie’s (2014; 2015) application of this theory in his Vertical Leadership Development Model. Vertical Leadership Development includes increasing the challenge or stressor presented to the developing individual, providing new perspectives to consider when approaching the challenge or stressor, and having an external guide to assist in fostering the developmental process (Petrie, 2015). This model provided a framework that went
beyond why or what of leadership development into how to develop leaders through existing social work educational structures.

**Summary of Banded Dissertation Products**

This banded dissertation is comprised of three products. The first is a qualitative textual content analysis of the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. The second product is a conceptual paper arguing for the intentional inclusion of a leadership development model in the implicit curriculum of social work education. The third product was a presentation of the conceptual paper and model at the Network for Social Work Managers Annual Conference. It is important to note that the products were not completed in this order. Chronologically, the conceptual paper was drafted first, followed by the presentation and then the research paper. The products have been reordered in this format in order to best present the synthesized findings of the full banded dissertation.

Product One’s purpose is to explore how leadership content is included in social work education. The 2015 CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) provide foundational guidelines for any accredited social work program, so this document was identified as a foundational document on which to focus initial exploration and analysis. A qualitative textual content analysis method was employed through the use of an a priori codebook. As noted by Drisko and Maschi (2016) content analysis is a common technique used to explore a text in order to draw conclusions regarding its meaning. A codebook was used to help improve the replicability and credibility of the chosen method, as suggested by Drisko and Maschi (2016). The terms identified in the codebook were derived from scholars’ writings on leadership in social work (Holosko, 2009; Peters, 2018) as well as Petrie’s (2014) Vertical Leadership Development Model. Specific frequencies of terms and locations of terms in the document were noted for
analysis purposes. A second coder was employed to ensure consistent application of the codebook and improve the reliability of data collected. Coding was completed individually, and consensus was achieved in the identification of terms. Further, terms specifically identified in the Competencies section of the document (the section that guides specific classroom content) were analyzed using Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy of Educational Objectives for developmental level. Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy was chosen as an analytical tool in order to identify levels of cognitive development and differentiate knowledge gained from skills developed, in line with the Constructive Developmental Theory presented by Kegan (1994). Findings of this study indicate that leadership content is present in the EPAS, and often at the application level of Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy.

The second product of this banded dissertation is a conceptual paper that presents a model for leadership development in graduate social work education. This piece uses Kegan’s (1994) Constructive Developmental Theory and Petrie’s (2014; 2015) Vertical Leadership Development Model to argue for the establishment of intentional leadership development in the implicit curriculum of a graduate social work program. A model is presented whereby the academic advisor guides this development through a group process, where students experience challenges and new perspectives on how to address these challenges.

Product Three is a workshop presentation at the Network for Social Work Managers 2019 Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois in May of 2019. In this workshop, I began with an overview of Vertical Leadership Development and the importance of continuing adult development in order to achieve better leadership results. I followed this introduction with an application of the key concepts to a model within the implicit curriculum in social work
education, and facilitated an exercise where participants could begin to identify the developmental capacities of those they supervise.

Discussion

Implications for Social Work Education

Social work education has an opportunity to intentionally address the needs of social service organizations across the country and work to address the leadership crisis. While leadership is not a clear priority stated in the EPAS, the characteristics and behaviors leaders need to be successful are provided for in the 2015 standards. The presence of this content in the standards conflicts with claims made by Choi et al. (2015), Knee and Folsom (2012) and Sullivan (2016) who all indicated the content was not addressed in the standards. Further, inclusion of this content in this document provides support for the argument that leadership is a generalist skill and should be taught across all social work education offerings (Choi et al., 2015; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Sullivan, 2016). Social work education can choose to do this in a variety of ways including a modification of assignments and in-class examples to include the perspective of those serving in leadership roles, as argued by Knee and Folsom (2012). Another option is to provide opportunities for leadership skills and abilities to be developed through the implicit curriculum and the field placement.

Modifications to current social work curriculum may require a common understanding of leadership outside of position alone and inclusive of the various practice settings available to social workers. Additionally, social work educators may need to explore how to teach as well as how to develop students to higher capacities. A focus on development will require faculty to explore learning and growth outside of a time-limited classroom setting, as true cognitive development takes time to achieve (Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2015). Faculty will need to reexamine
the relationships they build with students through the role of the academic advisor where their focus is on individual growth and development and less on planning for the future (Hessenauer & D’Amico Guthrie, 2018; Gutiérrez, 2012). Reprioritizing the importance of the implicit curriculum to coincide more equally with the explicit curriculum will help to create the space and time necessary for this development to occur. A potential result could be students with heightened cognitive capacities that are better able to grasp complex concepts and skills required of advanced practitioners.

Critical to the inclusion of this content will be the assessment of learning and development. Faculty will need to include application of content to leadership concepts within their regular assessment, which may include the creation of specific learning objectives and assignments that can be assess across the curriculum. Additionally, the assessment of the implicit curriculum can be enhanced to include specific development outcome measures. This sort of evaluation will require attention to relationships with students and an increased engagement in order to track changes throughout a student’s progression in the program. Resulting in elevating the assessment of the implicit curriculum from the more simplified satisfaction survey (Grady, Swick, & Powers, 2018; Grady, Powers, Despard, & Naylor, 2011; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010), to one that is outcome based. Outcome information could also be assessed post-graduation to determine how an improved focus on development impacts the field at large.

**Implications for Future Research**

This banded dissertation began the exploration of leadership content included in social work education. While findings revealed leadership concepts within the CSWE EPAS, these results do not speak to what is taught in the classroom, nor what is seen in the field. Future
research is needed to explore what leadership content is being taught by faculty and what learning outcomes are achieved in relationship to this content. Additional research into what leadership skills and characteristics are needed by practicing social workers can assist in further defining specific classroom content. When exploring development, there is a need to identify specific strategies that promote development. Petrie (2015) presents a model, so it is recommended this model be tested to determine how best to achieve increased developmental capacities. Moreover, there is no standardized methods to measure individual development, so more work must be done to define more reliable and valid assessment tools for this purpose.

While many have supported Kegan’s (1994) theory, more study is necessary to fully evaluate its application to today’s adult population. Specific research that can incorporate impacts of technological advances, as well as the changing classroom environment and student population must be considered. Additionally, research into Kegan’s theory should include an exploration of its applicability to diverse populations, as well as those whose cognitive development may have been impacted by trauma or other such issues. Knowing the generalizability of this theoretical approach will then inform modifications that can be made to better meet the needs of those walking through a developmental process.
Comprehensive Reference List


Teaching Leadership in Social Work Education: Analysis of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

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Abstract

The field of human services does not currently have enough leaders to meet the growing need. Social work education is in a unique position to help address this through educating and preparing future social workers for roles in leadership. The purpose of this textual content analysis of the 2015 Council on Social Work Education Educational Policies and Standards (EPAS) is to explore what leadership content is included in the standards that guide social work education, and to examine what cognitive dimensions are present according to Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The findings of this study suggest that key leadership content currently exists in the standards guiding social work education, specifically in the areas of teamwork, conflict, trust, acceptance of diversity, and creating positive change. Furthermore, most of the terms analyzed were found to be at or above the application level of Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy. Implications of these findings suggest the need for continued exploration of how to use the content of the existing standards to further teach and develop social work practitioners to be leaders.

Keywords: leadership, competencies, CSWE, Bloom’s Taxonomy, social work education
Teaching Leadership in Social Work Education: Analysis of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

Many social services organizations are experiencing a crisis of leadership where the current supply of leaders who have a strong foundation in social work does not meet the demand (Sullivan, 2016; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Wilson and Lau, 2011). Previous researchers indicate that the leaders and managers of an organization have a direct impact on job satisfaction and retention, so one must consider the impact diverging views and values have on the longevity and burnout of social workers in the field (Elpers & Westhius, 2008; Sullivan, 2016). Potential causes for the current leadership crisis include the aging boomer generation and pending retirements, poor succession planning, and overall staff shortages (Hopkins, Meyer, Shera, & Peters, 2014; Leslie, 2015). Additionally, the lack of specialization and training and an overall disinterest in administration and leadership for those seeking a Master of Social Work degree are also cited as causes for the current crisis (Choi, Urbanski, Fortune, & Rogers, 2015; Holosko, 2009; Peters, 2018; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Wilson & Lau, 2011). In this study, leadership was defined as something that goes beyond positions of power or authority, and is alternatively defined based on the characteristics and behaviors leaders exhibit. As a result, leadership is something that can be demonstrated by any social worker at any level of the organization and with any specialization. While it is the role of social work education to prepare social workers for competent practice, including the characteristics attributed to leaders, this preparation does not appear to be meeting the existing need.

The purpose of this study is to begin to explore what leadership content is included in social work education through a textual content analysis of the 2015 Council on Social Work Education Educational Policies and Standards (EPAS). An a priori code book was used to
explore the EPAS for terms that signify specific leadership characteristics or behaviors discussed in the literature. The EPAS was chosen to be the subject of this study as this document is foundational and guides all accredited social work programs on curricular and programmatic content for both undergraduate and graduate social work programs. While the EPAS provide for much flexibility in determining specific course content and programmatic specializations they also are intended to set a baseline of skills for all practicing social workers (CSWE, 2015).

Robert Kegan’s Constructive Developmental Theory guides this research and serves as the conceptual framework for this study. Constructive Developmental Theory argues that individuals must continue to develop cognitively throughout adulthood to increase one’s “capacities of mind” (Kegan, 1994, p. 5) and develop an individual’s “threshold of consciousness” (Kegan, 1994, p. 164). In his application of Kegan’s theory to leadership, Petrie (2014) discusses how increased developmental levels must be achieved in order to demonstrate key traits and characteristics required by effective leaders. Both Kegan (1994) and Petrie (2014) argue that leadership is not something that is taught, but rather something that is developed. This development requires exposure to new ways of thinking and experiences that challenge individuals to achieve increased cognitive capacities. This study is intended to explore how leadership development is guided by the EPAS, in an effort to determine how the profession, and more specifically social work education, can address the current leadership crisis.

**Literature Review**

Leadership can be understood as a method of practice that can be used in a variety of fields, whether that be micro, mezzo, or macro social work practice. Cullen (2013) found that social workers in direct practice settings exemplified leadership characteristics, illustrating how leadership is not solely based on position, but on action and behavior, similar to discussions
presented by Holosko (2009) and Peters (2018). When leadership is viewed in this way, it no longer becomes a specialization, but a tool of practice, one that all social workers use in a variety of ways to meet the needs of clients (Haeseler, 2013).

**Impact of Leadership on Social Work Practice**

The world today is more interconnected and interdependent than ever before, which requires a leader ready to address the increasingly complex problems facing society (Petrie, 2014). Specifically, human services are seeing an increase in need, combined with a decrease in resources, which has led to the necessity to be more creative and adaptive in solving complex problems (Hopkins, Meyer, Shera, & Peters, 2014). This responsibility is not solely that of the administrators and managers, but as Hopkins et al (2014) points out, in order to address complex challenges, leadership qualities are needed and must be developed in staff at every level of the agency. However, developing leadership qualities in all employees, including those who serve in positions of authority, does not appear to be commonplace. Many managers and administrators in human services organizations have been placed in those positions without adequate education and training needed to fulfill the duties of the position (Hopkins, et al., 2014; Knee & Folsom, 2012). Hopkins et al., (2014) noted while organizations are taking on the responsibility of training new leaders, education’s role in providing this skill development is not keeping pace. Further, while job related training programs are working to address the current need, many lack the rigor and comprehensive content truly needed to develop the skills and characteristics discussed above (Hopkins et al., 2014).

Leaders in roles of authority have been identified to have an impact on everything from overall employee satisfaction, to longevity, burnout, and productivity. In a study completed by Tatham, Hyvönen, & Westerberg (2014), improved role clarity and commitment were identified
as a direct result of effective leadership. For social work leaders outside management and administration, effective leadership has been found to positively impact client outcomes (Haeseler, 2013). Petrie (2014) attributes this enhanced effectiveness to what he calls “Vertical Development.” A leader who is vertically developed is more collaborative, more self-directed, and can think longer-term than a counterpart who is less developed. This level of development assists leaders to be more effective in addressing the complex problems facing organizations today (Petrie, 2014). As a result, the impact of leadership goes beyond the employees and the clients to the overall organization and its ability to survive and thrive in today’s world.

**Characteristics of Leadership in Social Work Practice**

The profession of social work looked to other disciplines to guide its exploration of leadership. Much of what is found in the social work literature on this topic is borrowed from the business literature, and does not always fit with the core values and ethics of the social work profession (Holosko, 2009; Peters, 2018). Scholars have previously tried to identify what is unique to the practice of leadership in the social work profession, and through this work identified behaviors that characterize a social work leader. These behaviors or characteristics include creating positive change, problem-solving capacity, collaboration, visioning, empowerment, emotional competence, integrity, strong communicator, self-awareness and an openness to feedback (Holosko, 2009; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Peters, 2018).

Another common area of discussion related to leadership in social work is around the concept of style, specifically identifying a style of leadership that best fits the profession. Scholars have explored such leadership styles as visionary, charismatic, servant, transformational, client-centered and collaborative (Haeseler, 2013; Iachini, Cross and Freedman, 2015; Peters, 2018; Sullivan, 2016; Tfavelin, Hyvönen, & Westerberg, 2014).
each case, arguments were made as to why certain styles fit and others did not, with no real consensus as to style. Haeseler (2013) determined through her research that the models and styles of leadership employed by social workers are often dependent on the needs of the client, the method of service delivery, the location of the organization, and the overarching organizational culture, so no one style fits every situation. This further supports the identification of characteristics or behaviors that are common among the various styles identified.

**Teaching Leadership in Social Work Education**

Social work education uses a competency-based approach, where curriculum is focused on student learning outcomes (CSWE, 2015). Competency-based education has grown out of a concern about education’s ability to adequately prepare students for the workforce. For CSWE the conversion to competency-based educational accreditation began in 2008 and was refined in the 2015 standards (Drisko, 2014). Today, social work programs must ensure their curriculum addresses all nine competencies at both the generalist and specialized levels. The generalist competencies are defined by the Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and programs are allowed to determine the specific knowledge, values, skills and cognitive/affective processes needed for the identified specialized area of practice (CSWE, 2015). To be accredited, all social work programs must demonstrate how their curriculum addresses these competencies, as well as assess students’ ability to meet each competency (CSWE, 2015; Drisko, 2014).

Several scholars have noted the need for social work education to include competencies specifically related to leadership in these standards (Choi, et al., 2015; Holosko, 2009; Hopkins, et al., 2014; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Peters, 2018; Sullivan, 2016; Wilson & Lau, 2011).
However, while leadership has been identified as a needed area of development both for the profession and within social work education, an adequate focus on this skill set does not seem to be present. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) reported in the 2017 Annual Survey of Social Work Programs that approximately 12% of graduate programs listed administration or nonprofit administration as a specialization. This survey further noted the majority of students (specific data not available) seeking a graduate degree in social work elect to specialize in clinical practice or other practice areas rather than administration or management (CSWE, 2018). This seems to be a consistent trend, as Peters (2018) noted similar statistics from a review of similar survey data from 2013, specifically noting only four percent of graduate social work students were pursuing an administrative or management concentration.

Other scholars argue for the inclusion of this content in generalist social work education, as this curriculum is intended to assist students in building specific skills that can be applied in a variety of settings with a variety of client groups (Choi et al., 2015; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Sullivan, 2016). Knee and Folsom (2012) argue for the inclusion of leadership or management content in generalist practice coursework through requiring students to apply concepts, such as active listening, to collegial or supervisory relationships, rather than solely focusing this practice in a client/social worker frame. Iachini, Cross, and Freedman (2015) discussed how the inclusion of leadership content for all students in a graduate social work program had a positive impact on both students and stakeholders. Inclusion of leadership content was specifically found to increase ethical competence, improve effectiveness in non-managerial positions, and also lead practicing social workers to consider taking on future leadership roles (Wilson & Lau, 2011). Additionally, Knee and Folsom (2012) argued not including specific leadership content in graduate social work education may result in the MSW losing its value as a degree “suitable for
human services management [positions]” (p. 391), resulting in a potential limitation of scope for social work practitioners.

While the inclusion of leadership content in generalist social work education has been identified as a need, there appears to be no known research that analyzes to what extent this content exists currently in the 2015 CSWE EPAS. To address this gap in the research, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What leadership content is included in the 2015 CSWE EPAS?
2. Of the leadership content included, where would it fall within the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)?

The second question sought to explore to what extent the education of leadership content focused on applying the concepts, not simply knowing them.

**Methods**

A qualitative textual content analysis, using an a priori code book, was the method used to identify terms in the document. Terms identified in the code book represented key traits and characteristics for effective leadership practices. Qualitative textual content analysis is a common technique used when “making systematic, credible, or valid and replicable inferences from texts and other forms of communication” (Drisko & Maschi, 2016, p. 7). Drisko and Maschi (2016) further identify this approach as a means of exploring a text in order to better define or describe it. As the author is interested in exploring what content related to leadership is included in the document, content analysis was identified as a good fit. Additionally, the use of an a priori codebook was specifically identified to improve the replicability and credibility of the data (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). Guided by the scholarly literature describing and detailing this method, the codebook was created through research completed by the author prior to any data
collection, and was tested on the document as recommended in the literature (Borèus & Bergström, 2017; Drisko & Maschi, 2016).

The codebook was created using core terms representative of key traits and characteristics demonstrated by leaders found in Holosko (2009), Petrie (2014), and Peters (2018). Holosko completed a content analysis of social work literature related to leadership in order to identify five attributes of a leader. Peters (2018) completed a systematic literature review on leadership in the social work profession and through that identified a definition of social work leadership and related principles. As stated, Petrie (2014) translated Robert Kegan’s Constructive Developmental Theory into identified competencies for leaders. While Petrie’s (2014) work is not directly related to social work practice, it was included in order to provide a perspective from outside the profession. An initial list was created of the core terms from the identified authors, and was then expanded to include synonyms for these terms. Table 1 is a listing of the core terms used and the related authors. The final codebook included all of the initially identified core terms and all of the related synonyms for each, totaling 86 terms that were identified and searched. The author complied with all ethical research standards and methods in the completion of this study.

Sample

This research explored the 2015 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) and related glossary. These standards were approved by the CSWE board in March 2015 and by the Council on Accreditation in June 2015 (CSWE, 2015). A PDF of the EPAS was located on the CSWE website and downloaded on May 20, 2019. While this singular document limits the scope and context of the study, this document was analyzed because it determines the foundational elements included in all accredited social
work programs. The document includes specific requirements related to four areas: program mission and goals, explicit curriculum, implicit curriculum, and program assessment (CSWE, 2015). Specific competencies are defined and example behaviors delineated in the explicit curriculum section of the document. These competencies describe the specific knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes required for all programs to include in their generalist curriculum (CSWE, 2015). Specific competencies related to curricular specializations identified by individual programs was outside of the scope of this current study.

**Data Collection**

Using the codebook created, the author completed a preliminary search of the document, as recommended by Boréus and Bergström (2017) and determined that no initial modifications would be necessary. Once the codebook was initially finalized, the author met with a second coder in the study, to train her on the method being used, the search approach, and the codebook. A second coder was utilized in order to improve the reliability of the data collected (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). Training provided for the second coder included instructions on how to note terms that were identified as relevant to the research question, but were not contained in the original codebook. Written instructions were also provided to improve fidelity in the application of the codebook. Coding completed by the author and the second coder was done individually, in separate locations and at separate times in order to reduce bias between the coders.

All terms were searched in the document by using the search function (control F) and then typing in the term. Each instance of the term was recorded along with the page number where the term was found and the verb that correlated to the term. In instances where terms were repeated between the three identified authors, the search for those terms was not repeated. Once both the author and the second coder completed their data collection, they met and
reviewed the data in order to compile the data into one master list. Any discrepancies between
the author and the second coder were discussed and resolved through consensus. Both
individuals kept a field notebook, recording terms identified that were not included in the
original codebook. These terms were discussed following the completion of the coding and
added to the codebook in order to be included in the study, which aligns with the recommended
approach for this methodology (Boréus & Bergström, 2017; Drisko & Maschi, 2016).

Data Analysis

Terms identified were initially counted for frequency, because as Boréus and Bergström
(2017) note, frequencies “are indications of something outside of the texts” (p. 24). The author
wanted to explore what leadership content existed, and used frequencies to explore the
importance or priority given to this content and to specific core terms. Term frequencies were
also noted in specific areas of the document, to identify importance or priority related to the four
primary content areas included in the EPAS.

Bloom’s revised taxonomy. The revised version of Bloom’s Taxonomy (Anderson &
Krathwohl, 2001) was used to explore the levels of cognition present in the leadership content
identified. Benjamin Bloom published the original Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in 1956
which defined a continuum of cognitive learning objectives to be used to design curriculum and
assess specific learning achieved (Bloom, 1956). In 2001, Krathwohl, one of the individuals
who worked with Bloom early on, worked to revise the cognitive taxonomy to incorporate more
recent understanding of cognitive development (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The latest
revision to the taxonomy was used for data analysis in this study as the revision includes a
“Taxonomy Table” which is used to categorize learning objectives into the specific areas of the
taxonomy. The table lists the different categories included in the Cognitive Processes Dimension.
(remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create) along the top row. Categories that comprise the Knowledge Dimension (factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and meta-cognitive knowledge) are listed along the side, as shown in Table 2 (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 28). Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) guide those using the table to first consider the term in relationship to the Cognitive Processes Dimension based on the verb used, and then to consider the noun combination surrounding the verb, in order to determine the Knowledge Dimension. This process helps to translate affective terms into ones that would fall within the Cognitive Processes Dimension and was used by Haring, Warmelink, Valente, and Roth (2018) in a similar study analyzing computer games used as psychotherapeutic interventions.

**Analysis using Bloom’s revised taxonomy.** To analyze each term identified in this study, the verb context was first analyzed for the Cognitive Processes Dimension. As stated, both Kegan (1994) and Petrie (2014) felt that leadership was developed, not something that can be taught; therefore, analysis focused on achievement of the application level of Bloom’s taxonomy, to demonstrate a development of skill beyond simple knowledge attained. Analysis included comparing each verb context to a list of cognitive categories and related synonyms as identified by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). As noted by both Bloom (1956) and Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), there is overlap between the categories listed in the Cognitive Processes Dimension, requiring the author to make a final judgement on assignment to a specific category. To address this, the author used a systematic process for assigning terms identified to the cognitive categories. If a verb context did not directly correlate to one of the identified terms, the definition of the verb was used to determine its placement. Further, if the definition for the verb was not easily categorized in the Cognitive Processes Dimension, the term was then
compared using the Knowledge Dimension, in order to assign a specific cognitive category. Frequencies were again used to identify how often specific cognitive categories were found related to identified terms. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) caution the use of the revised taxonomy to analyze educational objectives outside of those at the individual course or curriculum level. This was found to be true during the initial data analysis phase of this study. It was determined that while terms were identified throughout the document, specific analysis using Bloom’s revised taxonomy would best fit terms found within the competencies discussed on pages seven through nine of the document.

Results

Regarding the identified words in the codebook, 86 unduplicated terms were searched during the data collection phase. Terms searched were located 131 times in the document, and of those, 30 were unduplicated. Terms were located 26 times in the introductory sections of the document and 27 times in the section dedicated to the description of competencies. One term was identified in the Program Mission and Goals section, 12 in the Explicit Curriculum section, and 42 in the Implicit Curriculum section. Last, 11 terms were found in the Assessment section and 12 in the glossary.

Leadership Content in the 2015 CSWE EPAS

At least one synonym for each of the core terms was identified in the document. Identified synonyms for the core term conflict were found on 28 occasions. Other core terms’ frequencies included trust/validation with 17 occurrences, followed by acceptance of diversity (13), creating positive change (12), leading across boundaries (10) and vision (10). When considering frequencies of individual synonyms for core terms, learning was found the most with 24 occurrences, followed by support (15), diversity (13), and leadership (10). Learning fell
under the core term conflict, and support, diversity and leadership fell under trust/validation, acceptance of diversity, and leading across boundaries respectively. Teamwork/collaboration and creating positive change were the core terms found most often in the Competencies section and the core term conflict was identified most often in the Explicit Curriculum section. Leading across boundaries and conflict were the core terms located most often in the Implicit Curriculum, which accounted for 15 of the 42 terms identified in this section. Finally, vision was the core term identified most often (four times) in the assessment section of the document. Table 3 provides a breakdown of core terms and the frequency of occurrences both throughout the document and specifically within the competencies.

**Categorization Using Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy**

Of the 131 terms identified, 27 were found in the Competencies section of the document and thus were specifically evaluated based on Bloom’s revised taxonomy. These 27 terms correlated to the following core terms: influencing others to act (1), teamwork/collaboration (5), creating positive change (4), strategic thinking (2), conflict (4), emotional competence (4), communication (2), acceptance of diversity (3), and self-care (2). As stated, the application of Bloom’s taxonomy was limited to the section of the document where the competencies were defined (pages seven through nine). In this section, the context surrounding the identified terms fit best within the intended application of Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy because they were curricular level educational objectives. Three of the terms were categorized at the lowest level of the taxonomy (remember), nine were at understand, 14, the most in any one category, were at application and one term was categorized at evaluate. On four occasions the taxonomy table was used to categorize terms as the context for those terms was more affective in nature. Three were found to include procedural knowledge, so were categorized as application based on the
 developing social work leaders

while the remaining term’s context was more conceptual in nature, and thus was categorized as understand, again as guided by the taxonomy table. Table 3 provides a list of the core terms and a summary of the related cognitive categories assigned.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how leadership development is guided by the EPAS. Guided by the Kegan’s Constructive Developmental Theory, the exploration focused first on identifying common traits and behaviors of leaders within leadership content included in the Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Then these terms were analyzed to explore the level of cognitive domain present, as determined by the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. This analysis was intended to help determine the level of cognitive development required around these concepts (knowledge versus application). A qualitative textual content analysis was used to explore the EPAS and identify leadership content included through the use of an a priori codebook, and the author used the Taxonomy Table (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) to categorize and analyze the content.

Presence of Leadership Content

Thirty unduplicated leadership terms from the a priori codebook were found within the 2015 CSWE EPAS. This accounted for 35% of the original 86 terms that were searched. In total, these 30 terms were identified 131 times in the document. While only 35% of the searched terms were identified, this frequency (131 occurrences) suggests not only the presence of leadership content in the document, but a regular presence of this content. Additionally, the presence of terms in all sections of the document suggests that content related to leadership behaviors or characteristics are not limited to only the explicit or implicit curriculum, but in all
aspects of the standards guiding social work education. While it is difficult to determine how this inclusion of content and the frequencies identified translate specifically to the priority given to this content, the simple inclusion of leadership content, no matter the frequency, across all sections of the document suggests its presence in the guiding documents for social work education. This mere presence appears to conflict with the contentions of scholars who have argued for the inclusion of this content in the EPAS (Choi et al., 2015; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Sullivan, 2016), as this study suggests that the content exists currently. Further, this study suggests the EPAS, specifically the competencies defined in the EPAS, contain leadership content, as there were 131 terms located in the entire document and 27 in the Competencies section alone. Social work education is guided in all aspects by a document, which includes content related to conflict, trust, acceptance of diversity, and creating positive change, among others, all of which were identified by scholars within and outside of the social work profession as key characteristics or behaviors of leadership (Holosko, 2009; Peters, 2018; Petrie, 2014).

**Bloom’s Taxonomy Level: Application**

Of those terms identified in the competencies section of the document (the area that defines specific knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective components required of social work practitioners) the leadership content identified was most often (56%) found to be at the application level or above on Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy. This suggests that the generalist competencies include content and more specifically skills that are related to leadership behaviors and characteristics. What is not clear is how these competencies are taught through specific curriculum designed at the program level. The ability to specifically include this content is present in the flexibility of the EPAS, however if it is not taught through a leadership lens, as suggested by Knee and Folsom (2012), the recognition and application of these skills to
leadership roles or behaviors may not be achieved. As a result, the current leadership crisis may then be a consequence of the curricular focus determined by individual programs, not that of the documents and standards that guide social work education.

**Strengths and Limitations**

This study explored social work education with a new lens not found in the recent literature reviewed. The method chosen, textual content analysis with an a priori codebook and the tool of analysis (the Taxonomy Table) are strengths of the study as they provide a clear approach to data collection and analysis that can be duplicated by future researchers. Additionally, the use of a second coder helped to address specific concerns related to the reliability of the data collected. This study was limited in its analysis of the data, as frequencies were used as an indication of priority given to specific content, and while frequencies may indicate priority, this cannot be clearly determined by number alone (Boréus & Bergström, 2017). For example, the frequency of leadership related terms in the Implicit Curriculum section of the document was more likely related to the section’s focus on faculty qualifications, and less likely related to the priority of this content or its application outside of the academy. The additional analysis on the competencies helped to focus the study’s findings on potential content taught through social work education, however this presented an additional limitation in the reduction of data included in the analysis using Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy from 131 occurrences to 27. Finally, the current study was limited in its ability to look beyond the EPAS to how the competencies are translated to classroom application and beyond to student learning and incorporation in the field.

**Implications for Social Work Research, Education and Practice**
It is suggested that future studies explore how leadership content is taught at the generalist and specialized levels and incorporated in practice through field education, in order to fully explore how social work education is preparing students for roles in leadership, as argued by Hopkins et al. (2014). Course syllabi and programmatic learning goals could be reviewed, for content included and analyzed for cognitive domain. Additionally, an exploration of learning competencies achieved through field would help to close the loop in better understanding not only what is taught, but what is learned. Previous researchers have suggested that leadership content exists currently in specialized graduate social work education (Choi, Urbanski, Fortune, & Rogers, 2015; Holosko, 2009; Peters, 2018; Knee & Folsom, 2012; Wilson & Lau, 2011), however studies have not explored how generalist education prepares students for roles in leadership. Research studies that go beyond specialized content to include generalist content would be critical to fully explore this issue.

Continued research on leadership skills and competencies as identified by the field could help to inform and guide future incorporation of leadership content in social work classrooms. It is recommended that this content be infused across the curriculum rather than being the focus of an individual course. This infusion will better represent the generalist nature of the content, as well as provide for the ability to see how leadership can be reflected in all aspects of social work practice. Faculty could explore ways to modify assignments to include application of content to leadership scenarios. For example, conflict resolution strategies and de-escalation could be applied to both interactions with clients and with those supervised. Concepts and skills such as cultural humility and empathy could be explored through demonstrating these capacities for colleagues and peers, as well as clients. In addition to modifying classroom learning, field experiences could provide opportunities to continue to practice and incorporate these skills at a
generalist level. Requiring students to observe the interactions of formal leaders with staff, as well as reflect on where leadership was observed during the course of their practicum experience could provide this exposure. Leadership content could also be included in the implicit curriculum. This could be accomplished through providing students with the opportunity to lead a team in planning an event or carrying out a project for the campus community, or including students in the creation of program policies and procedures. Finally, programs could include leadership as a component of assessment and evaluation, both in the explicit and implicit curriculum, to explore not only what is being taught, but also what is being learned. Programs could collaborate with external leaders in the community to help to refine and evaluate content to ensure its relevance for future practitioners. Becoming more intentional in how leadership content is delivered through social work education could potentially result in an ability to address the current leadership crisis through producing more competent and skilled professionals. This would not only improve the skills of leaders in positions of authority, but also the skills of all social work practitioners in their provision of services to clients across all practice areas.
References


Table 1

*Core Terms Searched*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision*</td>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
<td>Positive Change*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing Others to Act</td>
<td>Leading Change*</td>
<td>Emotional Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork/Collaboration</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Trust/Validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Solving Capacity</td>
<td>Leading Across Boundaries</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Positive Change*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance of Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vision*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open to Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Terms notated with * indicate those terms that were duplicated between the three scholars and were only searched for once.
Table 2

The Taxonomy Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Dimension</th>
<th>Cognitive Process Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Factual Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Conceptual Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Procedural Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Meta-Cognitive Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001)*
Table 3

*Leadership Content and Taxonomy Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Term Searched</th>
<th># of Occurrences</th>
<th>Levels of Blooms Taxonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>In Competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing Others to Act</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork/Collaboration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Capacity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Positive Change (incl. Leading Change and Positive Change)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Leading Across Boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust/Validation</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Care</td>
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</table>
Developing Leaders Through Social Work Education: Advancing the Implicit Curriculum

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Abstract

A review of the literature indicates the social work profession is facing a leadership crisis. There are not enough trained social workers interested in and/or competent to lead organizations. To address this, social work education must explore ways to develop leaders using strategies that go beyond purely teaching leadership concepts to promoting a new and different way of understanding these concepts resulting in advanced thinking and problem-solving. In this conceptual paper, the author argues for the implementation of Nick Petrie’s Vertical Leadership Development framework into graduate social work education’s implicit curriculum. Petrie’s model will address the leadership crisis facing the profession and ensure a higher level of efficiency and effective practice currently demanded by practice settings.

Keywords: cognitive development, vertical development, implicit curriculum, leadership
Leadership Development in Social Work Education: Advancing the Implicit Curriculum

Across the country helping professions are experiencing a leadership crisis. Social service organizations need strong, informed, and skilled leaders but are often unable to locate social workers who possess advanced training and education in leadership and administration. Potential causes for this leadership crisis include the aging boomer generation and potential retirement, staff shortages, lack of specialization and training, lack of succession planning and an overall disinterest on behalf of social work students to specialize in the area of social work administration (Choi, Urbanski, Fortune, & Rogers, 2015; Holosko, 2009; Hopkins, Meyer, Shera, & Peters, 2014; Leslie, 2015; Peters, 2018; Sullivan, 2016; Tollesen Knee & Folsom, 2012; Wilson & Lau, 2011). In lieu of trained social workers to serve as managers and leaders, many social service organizations have hired individuals from disciplines outside of social work to lead the work being done (Sullivan, 2016; Wilson & Lau, 2011) or have promoted skilled social work practitioners to roles in leadership, the requirements of which surpass their current capacities and competencies (Helsing & Howell, 2014; Tollesen Knee & Folsom, 2012). In order to better understand the consequences of this, consider the following scenario:

Sara was recently promoted to a supervisory position over a child welfare team. Her promotion was primarily because of her skill as a case worker. She successfully managed a high caseload, while maintaining excellent relationships with her clients and other key stakeholders. Sara prided herself in the fact that her clients liked her, and she regularly received positive reinforcement about her skills from her supervisor and from her clients. Sara responded well to re-direction from her supervisors and did not question or challenge new policies and procedures that were implemented. She was seen a good team member who rarely rocked the boat. In her new role, Sara experiences challenges
with the day-to-day tasks. Her staff does not seem to trust her as they continue to go to their old supervisor for help, and Sara second guesses every decision she makes, resulting in miscommunication, misunderstandings and ineffective leadership.

While this is not a true story, for many it is very familiar. The typical approach would be to provide Sara with training to help her with her new role, but that likely will not create the necessary change. Sarah would likely be sent to a training for new supervisors where she would learn skills in time and conflict management, and possibly information on how to complete performance appraisals or management other specific tasks. Then when Sara returns to work the training manual will go on the bookshelf in her office and the training content forgotten. Sara’s issue here is not about skills and training, but is more about the cognitive capacities Sara relies on to do the work (Kegan, 1994). While training can help her build skills, training alone is limited in its abilities to expand her cognitive capacities (Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2014). Training is focused on knowledge acquisition and basic skill development, what Petrie (2014) calls horizontal development. While training can help to provide new approaches to solving problems, it may not help Sara to easily and efficiently recognize when to use the new tools she has acquired. This requires continued cognitive development, or what Petrie (2014) calls vertical development. In other words, horizontal development provides Sara with a variety of tools to use in her new role, but without vertical development the tools get jumbled together and are hard to locate when needed. Vertical development helps Sara access a bigger, more organized tool box. This better organized tool box helps Sara to more efficiently determine which tools are needed for each complex issue she faces and provides her easy access to retrieve and employ those tools in her problem-solving process. For many social work practitioners who find themselves in a role of leadership the cognitive capacities that once served them well no longer
fit the new demands required of leaders and administrators (Helsing & Howell, 2014; Kegan, 1994). While the focus here is on positional leaders, it is important to note that demonstrating effective leadership capacities is not limited to formal positional leadership roles. These capacities can improve a social worker’s ability to advocate for a client, facilitate a family meeting, and coordinate an awareness campaign.

The traditional approach used to prepare social work students for roles in leadership and administration was through a specialized track in graduate social work education (Peters, 2018). However, most graduate social work students are not selecting this track for their educational experience, the vast majority preferring to focus on clinical tracks (Peters, 2018). If a specialized track is the identified method for preparing social workers for roles in leadership, and most are not self-selecting into this track, the profession at large will continue to experience a leadership crisis. The purpose of this conceptual paper is to present a method of leadership development for graduate social work students that resides outside of the explicit curriculum but rather is implemented through the implicit curriculum. This paper will provide specific examples of how this model can be implemented, as well as how leadership development can be evaluated to ensure the desired impact is achieved. The result of implementing this model will be more social workers who are vertically developed with advanced capacities preparing them for the complex needs of the profession.

**Constructive Developmental Theory**

A review of current leadership literature revealed the common use of constructive-developmental theory when exploring concepts related to leadership development. This theory is the basis of the Vertical Leadership Development model created by Petrie (2014). As constructive developmental theory has a strong foundation in the work of Piaget (McCauley,
Drath, Palus, O’Connor & Baker, 2006), a common theory taught in social work education, it was found to be a good fit for the exploration of leadership development in social work education. As explained by McCauley et al. (2006), constructive developmental theory focuses on how meaning is created (constructivist) and how this meaning becomes “more complex over time” (p. 635) (developmental). Robert Kegan is among several constructive-developmental theorists and his theory of subject-object relations has been applied by several authors to the concept of leadership development (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Helsing & Howell, 2014; Hunter, Lewis, & Ritter-Gooder, 2011; Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2014). Kegan’s theory spans childhood throughout adulthood, however the three stages that fall in adulthood (interpersonal balance, institutional balance and inter-individual balance) will be the focus of this paper as adulthood is when leadership capacities are required by social institutions (Kegan, 1994).

**Stage Three: Interpersonal Balance**

The premise of Kegan’s work is adults continue to develop cognitively, but often need experiences and/or coaches to assist them in achieving higher stages of development. The first of the three stages of cognitive development in adulthood is interpersonal balance (Eriksen, 2006). Individuals in the interpersonal balance stage, also known as socialization (Helsing & Howell, 2014), have become more abstract in their thinking and can consider how their behaviors impact others around them. Their identity is based on group membership, and they are challenged by conflicts related to their values. As leaders, authority is provided from external sources, and as a result, they place responsibility for their success and failure on these external sources. Alternatively, they may internalize failures and take on full blame for them, as they are unable to see the challenge from a more objective reality (Helsing & Howell, 2014). Furthermore, Helsing and Howell (2014) found leaders in this stage are challenged by
unpredictable situations, and find difficulty in addressing conflicting claims from various stakeholders, both of which are regularly experienced by those in positions of leadership. This stage of development correlates to the life stage of the traditional college student, who is working towards independence post-graduation. As such, social work educators working with this age group can focus on key portions of development in order to ensure continuous growth in these areas.

**Stages Four and Five: Institutional Balance and Inter-Individual Balance**

Leaders in the institutional balance stage, what Kegan also calls self-authoring, are more able to operate effectively in the uncertain areas of their role. They are able to rely on their own abilities of critical thinking and analysis to determine an optimal course of action. In this stage, individuals attain authority and validation from internal sources and are more likely to embrace conflict as a source of development (Helsing & Howell, 2014; Kegan, 1994). Furthermore, individuals in this stage exhibit improved critical thinking, analysis and synthesis skills, and according to Helsing and Howell (2014), they are better able to demonstrate empathy without becoming “captive of the emotions of others” (p. 189). In the context of social work education, this developmental stage correlates with the graduate school experience, where individuals have developed fully into the interpersonal balance stage and are ready to continue their growth into institutional balance. Social work educators focused on graduate students have an opportunity to focus on this level of development and improvement for their students. The final stage in Kegan’s theory is inter-individual balance or self-transforming. Most do not reach this stage of development, and if they do, it is likely after the age of 40 (Kegan, 1994). Those that reach the interindividual balance stage are able to balance multiple perspectives and better tolerate ambiguity, which leads to a desire to learn and a recognition that not knowing can lead to further
growth through exploration (Eriksen, 2006). Table 1 provides a comparison view of the three adult stages Kegan’s theory.

Helping social workers to advance to higher levels of development will improve their problem-solving capacity, critical thinking, and self-regulation. These are key skills defined by the Council on Social Work Education as core competencies for social work practice (CSWE, 2015). As a result, social work educators have a vested interest in ensuring the continuous development of students, so that more efficient and effective practice can be achieved.

**Applying Kegan’s Theory to Practice: Vertical Leadership Development**

In addition to Kegan’s work, the Vertical Leadership Development framework will guide the argument discussed in this paper. According to Petrie (2014) leaders who are not vertically developed are ineffective in their role. Petrie uses Kegan’s work to support his model and the need to encourage and advance individuals to higher developmental stages in order to promote stronger leaders. Petrie (2014) uses the terms dependent-conformer, independent-achiever, and interdependent collaborator to represent the final three stages of Kegan’s theory as discussed above. As one advances from the dependent-conformer to the independent-achieve, and onto the interdepended collaborator stages, vertical development is achieved. Table 2 provides a comparison view of the Vertical Leadership Development stages (Petrie, 2014).

According to Petrie (2015), Vertical Leadership Development consists of three primary components, and the first is the “heat experience” (p. 3) where individuals face challenges to their ways of thinking and become aware of a need to find a “new and better way to make sense” of things (Petrie, 2015, p. 3). The second component, which Petrie (2015) refers to as “colliding perspectives” (p. 3) is a process whereby the individual is exposed to diverse perspectives and ways of thinking. This exposure will help the individual to see new ways of approaching the
challenges they are facing. The final component, “elevated sensemaking” (Petrie, 2015, p. 3) requires someone to facilitate the integration of the experience and the new perspectives and translate that into a “more advanced worldview” (p. 3) resulting in a greater vertical development. According to Petrie (2015), combining all three components result in a vertically developed leader, or someone with an enhanced ability to see and solve complex problems. This paper argues for the implementation of this model in the implicit curriculum of social work education in order to improve social work students’ developmental capacities, resulting in improved competence and readiness for leadership related practice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

**Literature Review**

**Leadership**

Leadership definitions vary across the literature both within the social work profession and beyond. Peters (2018) explored leadership styles within business and military models to determine that leadership in social work is different and distinct. He proposed a definition for social work leadership focused on the role of leaders in creating change “through emotional competence and the full acceptance, validation, and trust of all individuals as capable human beings” (Peters, 2018, p. 40). This definition highlights key social work values such as the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, and also illustrates the profession’s commitment to strengths.

Another common area of discussion related to leadership in social work is related to identifying a style of leadership that best fits social work. Scholars have explored such leadership styles as visionary, charismatic, servant, transformational, client-centered and collaborative (Haeseler, 2013; Iachini, Cross & Freedman, 2015; Peters, 2018; Sullivan, 2016).
Arguments were made by the authors as to why certain styles fit and others did not. Haeseler (2013) determined through her research the models and styles of leadership employed by social workers are often dependent on the needs of the client, the method of service delivery, the location of the organization, and the overarching organizational culture, so no one style fits every situation. Further, Kegan (1994) argues styles simply indicate preferred methods for approaching problems, not the capacities drawn upon to solve those problems. As a result, the style or model of leadership is not key in defining social work leadership, but rather the focus should be on individual capacities or development.

Leadership can be seen as a method of practice used across all client populations and specializations, from case management, to group therapy, to community organizing. When leadership is viewed in this way, it becomes a tool, one all social workers use in a variety of ways to meet the needs of clients (Haeseler, 2013). Cullen (2013) found social workers in direct practice settings exemplified leadership characteristics and McCauley, et al. (2006) argued increased developmental capacity improves an individual’s ability to relate to a variety of clients. Others have noted individuals in various practice settings will use advanced leadership development capacities not only in positions of power, but to effectively lead a client through a change process (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Helsing & Howell, 2014; Hopkins, Meyer, Shera, & Peters, 2014; McCauley et al., 2006).

Sullivan (2016) and Elpers and Westhuis (2008) noted the impact a leader may have on employee job satisfaction. Both studies indicate a need for improved leadership capacities in social work supervisors and managers, which will likely result in improved employee outcomes and overall staff retention. Elpers and Westhuis (2008) specifically tied the expectations staff had of leaders to satisfaction, indicating a need for education and clarification on the roles of a
supervisors and leaders in social service organizations. Improved clarity for staff on the roles of leaders and managers helps to set their expectations in a realistic frame, and likely improves the ability to experience empathy for those leaders and managers. Sullivan (2016) further argues for social work education to provide more learning opportunities focused on leadership in order to establish a unique social work leadership identity. While more knowledge and education is argued for by these scholars, it is not clear if this will be enough to meet the needs of the profession.

Achieving Leadership Development

For many leaders, the requirements of their positions and of their organizations demand a leader to function at the self-authoring stage (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2004; Kegan, 1994), yet most in positions of power have not reached this developmental level, resulting in what Kegan (1994) calls being “in over your head” (p. 100). In some cases, support from others and guidance from mentors can mitigate the mismatch, although as Helsing and Howell (2014) found, organizations should consider developmental stage for applicants seeking leadership positions to ensure a better fit between capacity and positional requirements.

Support and exposure to new ways of thinking and the ability to develop gradually are key to one’s ability to develop and grow cognitively (Helsing & Howell, 2014; Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2014). One method of achieving developmental growth is through the therapeutic environment (Eriksen, 2006; Kegan, 1994), where the therapist challenges the client to consider new ways of thinking and meaning making. Eriksen (2006) notes the use of Kegan’s model as a professional counselor to compliment theories of lifespan development during assessment and also in intervention, as she uses her knowledge of the model to foster cognitive development in her clients (Eriksen, 2006). While therapeutic interventions can promote development, this
approach is limited in its ability to have far reaching impact, as it is not likely all those wishing to improve their developmental levels will seek out this style of intervention.

Another method of development naturally occurs in higher education, where schools and faculty have a responsibility not simply to teach or train students, but rather to develop them in order to achieve higher levels of insight (Kegan, 1996). Additionally, Kegan (1994) found that adult students are more likely to experience the transition to the self-authoring stage due to the stressors they experience in coming back to school, requiring them to balance home, work, and school life and the natural environment of the classroom where they are presented with new ways of knowing and meaning making. Helsing, Howell, Kegan, and Lahey (2008) found an environment that is welcoming and supportive of an individual’s current developmental level, as well as provide challenging experiences encourages individuals to enhanced levels of complex thinking. These authors further found that self-reflective practices are essential in facilitating the meaning making process (Helsing et al., 2008).

**The Need for Vertical Development in Professional Social Work**

The standards set by the Council on Social Work education call for social workers to be self-regulating and self-reflective critical thinkers, which are achieved in the self-authoring stage of development (Kegan, 1994). Additionally, achieving this stage of development will improve the social worker’s career sustainability through addressing issues that contribute to burnout. Kegan (1994) indicated those in the self-authoring stage are better able to maintain boundaries and practice with more efficiency, which are key to self-care and avoiding burnout. In their study, Helsing and Howell (2014) found that developing the capacity to set boundaries was one of the most useful outcomes of the developmental process. The authors indicated that boundary setting promoted positive mental health practices which could result in higher levels of
commitment and overall sustainability (Helsing & Howell, 2014). Burnout, the impact of vicarious trauma, and sustainability of the workforce are all critical issues facing the profession today, and developing social workers’ capacities to cope with these complex issues will have lasting positive effects on the profession at large. Furthermore, ensuring this level of development is achieved by those serving in positions of leadership will result in management that are better able to support and care for staff experiencing these complex struggles.

**Role of Social Work Education in Leadership Development**

Social Work Education has worked to address the leadership needs of the profession as evidenced by graduate schools of social work offering coursework in leadership and administration. Wilson and Lau (2011) found that study participants who completed coursework in social work administration felt their interest in leadership roles and skills were gained as a direct result of the course. While the course described by Wilson and Lau (2011) was required by all graduate social work students, administration and leadership specific educational offerings have historically been provided through specializations and concentrations (Peters, 2018). Approximately 11.2% of graduate social work programs offer this specialization and, according to recent surveys completed by CSWE, only about four percent of students have elected to specialize their coursework in this way (Peters, 2018). Peters (2018) found the vast majority of social work students select direct practice specializations and concentrations for their Master’s in Social Work (MSW) coursework.

The offering of a specialized track to provide leadership education opportunities demonstrates a narrow view of leadership development, focused horizontally rather than vertically (Petrie, 2014). Professional socialization and development generally occur in the implicit curriculum of social work programs (Miller, 2013). Implicit curriculum consists of the
environment that surrounds the explicit curriculum in social work education and includes such components as the program’s commitment to diversity, advising and retention procedures, as well as faculty qualifications and administrative governance (CSWE, 2015). Additionally, it spans the entirety of the students’ experience of the program. According to CSWE (2015) the advising relationship focuses on professional development, and this is accomplished through the “culture of human interchange” (p. 14). Bogo and Wayne (2013) call for more intentionality in the implicit curriculum to ensure its full impact, specifically as it relates to the role of social work educators in modeling professional development and socialization. This level of intentionality could be accomplished through placing leadership development in the implicit curriculum, additionally, this placement would ensure all social workers are developed to better meet the competencies set forth by the Council on Social Work Education and to better meet the leadership needs of the profession.

Hessenauer and D’Amico Guthrie (2018) identified educational advisors who take a developmental approach and who provide support were preferred by social work students. They further found regular contact between advisors and advisees contributed to a more satisfactory relationship, and when a social work faculty member with previous practice experience filled this role they positively influenced student career paths. Finally, they argued specific training was required for faculty advisors in order to fully maximize the positive impact of this relationship, however this sort of training is not always present (Hessenauer & D’Amico Guthrie, 2018). Requiring the faculty advisor to serve as the guide for a student’s development may require specific training and development to ensure they are ready to serve in this capacity, beyond that suggested by these authors.

**Evaluation Limitations**
Assessment of leadership development and the implicit curriculum have posed challenged for researchers. Through their research Peterson, Farmer, Donnelly and Forenza (2014) found that assessing the implicit curriculum and using those findings to enhance the implicit curriculum can positively impact students’ professional empowerment. However, in most cases, the method used to evaluate the implicit curriculum consists of a student satisfaction survey focused on all aspects of the implicit curriculum (Grady, Swick, & Powers, 2018; Grady, Powers, Despard, & Naylor, 2011; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010). Grady et al. (2011) created the Implicit Factors Survey to measure the implicit curriculum as defined by the 2008 Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. Following the implementation of revised standards in 2015, Grady, Swick and Powers (2018) worked to revise the survey renaming it the Implicit Curriculum Survey. This survey and its earlier iteration explore satisfaction with the components of the implicit curriculum, one of which is advising. While this survey provides some promising indications for assessing student satisfaction, it does not measure the specific outcomes of the implicit curriculum related to professional development.

Measurements of leadership development also present challenges. Solansky (2010) explored the use of 360-degree evaluations such as the Leadership Practices Inventory created by Kouzes and Posner to measure leadership skills. Findings indicate the tool as an effective measure in evaluating leadership qualities, however the findings are limited in their application to measuring changes in cognitive development. Kegan (1994) created the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) to assess cognitive developmental changes. The SOI includes instructions on how to hold interviews, as well as a list of questions to include the interview. The SOI is a 60-90-minute interview and must be completed by a trained interviewer. The interviewer
transcribes the interview and qualitatively reviews and codes the transcript in order to determine developmental levels attained. This appears to be the methodology most used by those studying Kegan’s work (Helsing & Howell, 2014; Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005). Other constructive-developmental theories are measured using a variety of methods. Torbert’s model is measured using a sentence completion test known as the Leadership Development Profile and Kohlberg’s theory is measured by scoring a series of hypothetical moral dilemmas through the Defining Issues Test (McCauley et al., 2006). Specific application of these evaluation methods appears to require either specialized training or knowledge and thus presents specific limitations for social work educators in their implementation of leadership development through the implicit curriculum. While these limitations present a challenge to social work educators, they also provide an opportunity to create new methods of evaluation and assessment for leadership development. The potential gains of improving the developmental capacities of social work leaders far outweigh the challenges posed by evaluation and assessment of these capacities.

**Implementing Vertical Leadership Development in the Implicit Curriculum**

**Creating the Heat Experience**

As movement from the interpersonal balance to institutional balance or self-authoring stage most likely occurs in adulthood (Kegan, 1994), vertical leadership development is best suited for implementation in graduate social work education. This student population is most likely to be adult students who are balancing several demands on their time and attention, providing for an environment rich in heat experiences (Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2015). Petrie (2015) notes experiences qualify as heat experiences when they are experienced for the first time, when others may see you fail or succeed, and when the experience itself is uncomfortable. For many the experience of graduate school including the requirement to balance previous life
commitments with new expectations put forth by social work faculty could create a ‘heat’ experience. Additionally, the challenges of course content that push students to explore new ideas and concepts and work to incorporate that into their already established identity can intensify this heat experience. If additional heat is needed, students could work with their peers and their faculty advisor to practice goal setting. For this to have the maximum impact, goals must be such that they stretch the student’s current capacities and encourage growth.

Providing Colliding Perspectives

Once students have felt the ‘heat’ of their experiences, they realize that they need new ways of approaching their challenges, and are more likely to be open to the perspectives of others (Petrie, 2015). Petrie (2015) notes that it is at this point that the student would need to ‘collide’ with others’ perspectives. The term collide is intentional in that it implies a need for the student to be exposed to perspectives that fall outside of their normal circle of comfort. The experience of colliding perspectives will not occur within one’s usual network. Intentional composition of peer groups is one way to provide for this collision. Students placed in open groups of three to five individuals where students are from differing stages of the program is one way to provide for varied perspectives. Diversification based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or other protected classes must be considered carefully. Students at varying stages of racial/ethnic/cultural identity development may benefit from being in groupings with students who identify in a similar manner or have similar experiences of oppression (Tatum, 2018). While Petrie’s (2015) model calls for exposure to diverse perspectives and worldviews, it is important to consider the total composition of the program’s student population, so as not to isolate and separate out individuals who may benefit from the presence of others whose experiences are representative of their own. The use of a strengths, personality, or temperament
assessment may be a way to provide for some diversity of perspective in an otherwise homogenous student population. Looking for a diversity of practice experiences may be another option as many come to graduate social work education with practice-based experiences in social work or other fields. Finally, varying age among student groups is an additional way to provide for differing worldviews and perspectives (Miller, 2013). Program directors and faculty can work together to intentionally assign students to various groups. This will require an initial collection of information to assist in determining diversity of perspectives, as well as detailed review of all information to work for an optimum mixture of students, as well as fit with the faculty advisor. This will likely take significant time initially, but will improve the likelihood of development for each student.

**Elevated Sensemaking**

Faculty advisors will serve as the facilitators of the group interaction, and also of this greater integration of knowledge and overall development. As development takes time, the relationship between the faculty advisor and the student, including regular contact, would be key to foster optimal development (Hessenauer & D’Amico Guthrie, 2018). As further pointed out by Hessenauer and D’Amico Guthrie (2018) consistency in faculty advisors will also be important to provide an optimal environment for development to occur. In addition to the intentionality with which membership is determined, the assignment of faculty to development groups must also be considered for fit and optimum growth opportunities. Once the faculty member is assigned, a combination of group meetings and individual meetings throughout a traditional semester will provide faculty advisors and students an opportunity to discuss their experiences, process new ways of making meaning, and gain further insights. While faculty are established to lead the groups and provide perspective, peers can also provide mentoring and
feedback to further the sensemaking process. This sort of peer interaction is a strategy that has been shown to improve students’ overall educational experiences (Anastas, 2010; Gutiérrez, 2012; Hessenauer & D’Amico Guthrie, 2018). In order to be effective in this new role, faculty advisors will need to not only be trained in Petrie’s (2015) model (Grady, et al. 2011; Hessenauer & Guthrie, 2018) they would also need to be at a higher level of development than their students. This may require similar process with faculty in order to encourage further development and increased capacities. Finally, faculty load and total student population would be a necessary consideration in this model, as this level of individualized attention may not fit all programs.

**Development Achieved**

The hoped result of this combination of heat, perspectives, and sensemaking will be a more vertically developed social worker who has the increased cognitive capacities that result in the traits and characteristics needed for effective leadership. Additionally, the vertically developed social worker, who has achieved the institutional balance (Kegan, 2004) or independent achiever (Petrie, 2014) stages will feel more comfortable setting a unique course for the work, where their success is internally driven. This would provide them the space needed to supervise without micromanaging staff and rather work to develop staff to higher capacities without feeling threatened about being outdone. Their increased capacities for self-reflection will result in improved self-regulation and an overall ability to manage the many stressors that face social work leaders today, while improving their ability to solve complex problems with equally complex solutions.

**Assessing Achieved Change**

As a qualitative method of assessment is the most common form used to measure development, it is recommended that be the approach used in this model. Subject-Object
Interviews (SOI) created by Kegan and his colleagues may be one option, where each student participates in an interview initially in the program and upon graduation and the comparison of the two interviews suggests the change achieved. Another possible option is to use a method similar to that employed by Iachini, Cross, and Freedman (2015) where a textual content analysis approach was used to review final reflection papers written by students. In this way, a physical artifact could be maintained, documenting the developmental stage. A similar comparison could be made by the faculty advisor or other faculty member where they review an initial reflection paper or application essay and the final reflection paper in order to determine the amount of development achieved. This final reflection would focus on how students made meaning from their experiences, which is an approach similar to that used in the SOI created by Kegan.

**Implications for Social Work Practice, Research, and Education**

Developing improved leadership capacities in social workers will result in more prepared and qualified individuals to take on leadership roles in organizations. This sort of development will provide the opportunity for current leaders to carry out effective succession planning, as the development would be presented through an implicit curriculum and thus available to all social workers. For example, those with improved capacities would be evident to current leaders through their enhanced ability to balance the demands of various stakeholders and creatively address the problems facing not only clients, but the agency at large. In the case of Sara, her supervisors could have been able to identify if she had the capacities to be successful. If this sort of development was included in her social work educational experience, she likely would not have struggled in the ways she had. She would have demonstrated improved critical thinking when working with staff to problem solve. She likely would encourage growth and development in staff to come to their own unique decisions, and would be more effective at addressing
conflicts as they occur (Petrie, 2014). Finally, developing leaders has the capability of moving the profession forward in new directions that could provide renewed confidence in the social worker’s capacity to lead in any area of social work practice, specifically in organizational management and executive leadership. Additionally, it has the capacity to improve overall service to clients, as well as practitioner longevity and sustainability across the profession (Kegan, 1994; Helsing & Howell, 2014).

It is recommended this model be initially tested among a smaller program, to provide for the initial capacity to match faculty advisors with students as well as complete the necessary qualitative evaluations discussed above. This will also require the creation of a reliable and valid assessment tool and related process. Specific evaluation would have to reflect on the faculty load in implementation and in assessment in order to inform feasibility of application in larger programs. Finally, longitudinal evaluation of developmental capacity beyond the educational environment will be important in order to assess the full impact of the model on the profession at large and the leadership crisis currently facing the profession.

**Conclusion**

Through implementing Vertical Leadership Development in the existing educational environment, social work programs will be able to focus simultaneously on the horizontal and vertical development of students, increasing students’ ability to meet the required competencies set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Further, implementation in the educational setting will prepare students for the complex professional world and the stressors and strains present there, improving the likelihood of student resilience and professional sustainability. Finally, implementing leadership development in the implicit curriculum will
provide this opportunity to all students in a social work program, thus magnifying its impact on future clients, future staff and organizations across the profession.
References


Table 1

*Constructive Developmental Theory Adult Stages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpersonal Balance (socialization)</th>
<th>Institutional Balance (self-authoring)</th>
<th>Inter-Individual Balance (self-transforming)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract thinkers</td>
<td>Better able to tolerate uncertainty</td>
<td>Likely after age 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider impact on others</td>
<td>Improved critical thinking</td>
<td>Balance multiple perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group membership identity</td>
<td>Self as source of identity</td>
<td>Better able to tolerate ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority provided from external</td>
<td>Authority from internal sources</td>
<td>Desire to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalize failures</td>
<td>Improved demonstration of empathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in addressing</td>
<td>See conflict as a source of development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflicting claims</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Kegan (1994)
Table 2

*Vertical Leadership Stages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Dependent-Conformer</th>
<th>Independent-Achiever</th>
<th>Interdependent-Collaborator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Thinking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term view</td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium-term view</td>
<td>Long-term view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sees parts of the system</td>
<td>Sees many shades of gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and white</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sees some patterns and connections</td>
<td>Sees many patterns and connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either/or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High need for certainty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leading Change</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expects change to come from above</td>
<td>Has own views about best change</td>
<td>Change is a collaborative process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs and trusts authority to give direction</td>
<td>Sees the mechanics of change needed</td>
<td>Comfortable with ambiguity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High need for certainty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Success is achievement of individuals and teams</td>
<td>Success means realization of a shared vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be avoided</td>
<td></td>
<td>Worked out behind closed doors</td>
<td>Healthy ways to gather more views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority is in change</td>
<td></td>
<td>Produces winners and losers</td>
<td>Something to be encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels torn by conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increases learning performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leading Across Boundaries</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust allies and people you know</td>
<td>Able to think from others’ perspectives</td>
<td>Sees the world through others’ perspectives to understand more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Them versus us</td>
<td></td>
<td>Horse trades for favors</td>
<td>Share knowledge across boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrust of outsider</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focused on success of own silo</td>
<td>Works in partnership with other functions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Petrie (2014, p. 11)
Developing Social Work Leaders for an Increasingly Complex World

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Author Note

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Abstract

The social work profession is facing a leadership crisis, where there are not enough leaders trained in social work values, ethics and competencies who are interested in and/or competent to lead organizations (Sullivan, 2016; Tollesen Knee & Folsom, 2012; Wilson and Lau, 2011). The profession needs to explore ways to develop leadership skills in practitioners. According to Petrie (2014), both horizontal and vertical development is needed. Social workers need to fill their tool boxes with horizontally developed skills such as conflict management, assertive communication and coaching strategies. Additionally, they need to increase the size of their tool box, described in this presentation as vertical growth, in order to improve their capacity to employ the tools they have to solve complex issues. Traditional strategies towards leadership development have been focused on horizontal developmental through trainings and workshops presented in a traditional classroom style. Vertical development requires experiences that enhance overall cognitive development and generally occurs outside of a fixed classroom setting (Petrie, 2014). This workshop presents a model, based on the work of Petrie (2014; 2015), to develop leaders for higher level capacities that can be implemented in a variety of social work settings.

Keywords: leadership, development, social work, vertical development
Developing Leaders for an Increasingly Complex World

This workshop was presented at the Network for Social Work Managers Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois. The workshop was one of many breakout sessions offered the morning of May 30, 2019 and it is estimated that approximately 30 individuals attended this session. The content of the presentation was focused on the conceptual model created in Product 2 that describes a method for implementing leadership development within the implicit curriculum of social work education. For the purposes of this presentation this model was modified slightly to include implementation options outside of academia. The workshop’s learning objectives included:

2. Identify ways to develop leaders through Vertical Leadership Development (Petrie, 2014).
3. Apply qualitative strategies to evaluate leadership development.
DEVELOPING SOCIAL WORK LEADERS... FOR AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WORLD

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe Vertical Leadership Development (Petrie, 2014).
- Identify ways to develop leaders through Vertical Leadership Development (Petrie, 2014).
- Apply qualitative strategies to evaluate leadership development.
HAVE YOU EVER...

- Seen someone who was great as a case manager, but not so great when promoted to a staff manager?
- Have you ever heard the phrase “Administration wants us to do this, so we have to…”?
- Worked with supervisor who saw conflicts from an us versus them perspective and/or tried to avoid conflicts?
- Sent someone to training to help them be a better supervisor and then do not see any implementation of what was learned?

THE VUCA WORLD

- V - Volatile
- U - Uncertain
- C - Complex
- A - Ambiguous

(Petrie, 2014)
DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

- Constructive Developmental Theory – Robert Kegan
  - Interpersonal Balance
  - Institutional Balance
  - Inter-Individual Balance
- Vertical Leadership Developmental Stages - Nick Petrie
  - Dependent-Conformer
  - Independent Achiever
  - Interdependent Collaborator

(Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2014)

VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT STAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent-Conformer</th>
<th>Independent-Achiever</th>
<th>Interdependent-Collaborator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Player</td>
<td>Independent thinker</td>
<td>Interdependent thinker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful follower</td>
<td>Self-directed</td>
<td>Sees systems, patterns, connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliant on authority</td>
<td>Drives an agenda</td>
<td>Longer-term thinker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks direction</td>
<td>Takes a stand</td>
<td>Holds multifram perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligns with others</td>
<td>Internally guided</td>
<td>Holds contradictions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Petrie, 2014, p.6)
LESSONS LEARNED FROM LITERATURE

- Leadership
- Training vs Development
- Need in Social Work Profession
- Role of Social Work Education
- Evaluating Change

THE PROCESS OF VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT

(Petrie, 2014)
HEAT EXPERIENCE

ITS TIME TO...
TURN UP THE HEAT!

(Cutri, 2014)

COLLIDING PERSPECTIVES

(Cutri, 2014)
ELEVATED SENSEMAKING

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Create development groups
  - Self-identified or supervisor identified
  - Create a network
- Turn up the heat
  - Push projects – connect to their work
- Assign “Sensemakers”
  - Must be individuals with more development
- Allow time for development to occur
- Balance horizontal and vertical

(Petric, 2014, 2015)
SAMPLE IMPLEMENTATION: SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

- Student groups
- Matched with Advisor - "Sensemaker"
- Experiences of MSW and balancing life demands create heat

DISTINGUISHING DEVELOPMENT

- Kegan – Subject-Object Interview (SOI)
- Its not what they think it is HOW they think about it and how meaning was made
  - Not easy to assess
- Look at deliverables and efficiencies
  - Reflections and journals
DISTINGUISHING DEVELOPMENT - PRACTICE

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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### Vertical Stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Dependent-Conformer</th>
<th>Independent-Achiever</th>
<th>Interdependent-Collaborator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Thinking</strong></td>
<td>• Short term view&lt;br&gt;• Tactical tasks&lt;br&gt;• Black and white&lt;br&gt;• Either/or&lt;br&gt;• High need for certainty</td>
<td>• Medium-term view&lt;br&gt;• Sees parts of the system&lt;br&gt;• Sees some patterns and connections</td>
<td>• Long-term view&lt;br&gt;• Sees many shades of gray&lt;br&gt;• Sees many patterns and connections&lt;br&gt;• Accepts uncertainty as the norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leading Change</strong></td>
<td>• Expects change to come from above&lt;br&gt;• Needs and trusts authority to give direction&lt;br&gt;• High need for certainty</td>
<td>• Has own views about best change&lt;br&gt;• Sees the mechanics of change needed&lt;br&gt;• Success is achievement of individuals and teams</td>
<td>• Change is a collaborative process&lt;br&gt;• Comfortable with ambiguity&lt;br&gt;• Success means realization of a shared vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td>• To be avoided&lt;br&gt;• Authority is in change&lt;br&gt;• Feels torn by conflict</td>
<td>• Worked out behind closed doors&lt;br&gt;• Produces winners and losers</td>
<td>• Healthy ways to gather more views&lt;br&gt;• Something to be encouraged&lt;br&gt;• Increases learning performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leading Across Boundaries</strong></td>
<td>• Trust allies and people you know&lt;br&gt;• Them versus us&lt;br&gt;• Distrust of outsider</td>
<td>• Able to think from others’ perspectives&lt;br&gt;• Horse trades for favors&lt;br&gt;• Focused on success of own silo</td>
<td>• Sees the world through others’ perspectives to understand more&lt;br&gt;• Share knowledge across boundaries&lt;br&gt;• Works in partnership with other functions</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(Petrie, 2014, p. 11)