

115
608
THS



RETURNING MATERIALS:
Place in book drop to
remove this checkout from
your record. FINES will
be charged if book is
returned after the date
stamped below.

--	--	--



A RESEARCH PROJECT

THE EFFECTS OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-AWARENESS

prepared by

Jarold Lengua, Chairman
Loretta Hilty
Mary L. Lewis
Margaret Sheafor

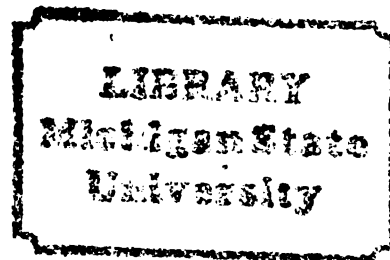
submitted to

Dr. Gwen Andrew

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

June, 1965

1952



INTRODUCTION

From the time a student arrives at a school of social work until the time he leaves, it seems as if he is continually confronted with the term "self-awareness". It is felt that a comprehensive knowledge of casework skills and techniques is not enough, but that professional training in social work also involves the full use of one's self as a person. It appears that along with professional training, awareness of self and disciplined control of personal needs and reactions are basic qualities of professional help and are some of the elements that differentiate professional help from that given on a personal or informal basis.

The professional worker must "build" into himself the qualifications for the function he is to undertake. Particularly in social work, where the behavioral sciences must be understood in relation to the client, it is said the worker cannot have a real understanding of defense mechanisms and the role they play in other people until he has gained some understanding of his own use of them in the normal adaptive processes of living. Students are exhorted to attain this state of self-awareness and warned that it is an integral element of their developing into professional workers.

Self-awareness may be defined as a "person's ability to recognize with a reasonable degree of accuracy, how he reacts to the outside world and how the outside world reacts to him."* This is something that is not congenital, nor can you with any degree of ease develop it without some type of professional help. We are period-

ically judged on the degree of self-awareness we have developed throughout our professional training, yet we could find no specific area or course in the curriculum the goal of which was the development of self-awareness.

Although self-awareness is identified as an essential part of the social work curriculum, self-awareness as such is seldom the goal. It is more a by-product that accrues from learning the essential subject matter and working with the professional tools. It is the purpose of this study to show that professional education in the field of social work does have an effect on self-awareness.

METHOD

STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The review of the literature and common experiences within the graduate social work education curriculum led to a series of hypotheses relating to the development of self-awareness.

- I. There is a difference in self-awareness between graduate social work students in their second year and undergraduate social work majors in their senior year.
- II. It is predicted that there is an increase in self-awareness with professional social work education.
- III. This increase in self-awareness is not the result of graduate training per se, but is the result of the graduate social work curriculum. Therefore, graduate students in social work would have a greater degree of self-awareness than graduate students in another field, ie., sociology,

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Self-awareness in increasing degrees, is indispensable to the practice of social work.

In this study, self-awareness is defined as one's conception of his motivations, feelings and behavior in relation to himself, other persons, and the social order. Measurement of the above is obtained by a modified version of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, hereafter referred to as MMPI. After consideration of some two hundred subscales of the MMPI, four subscales were chosen from the MMPI which were particularly pertinent. The Altruism and attitude Toward Others scales were composed of statements that could give some measure of a person's conception of himself in relation to other persons. The Attitude Toward Self scale contributed information regarding an individual's self-concept. One's attitude toward society could be ascertained through the Social Responsibility scale. For the purposes of this study, a summation of these four scales was defined as a measure of a person's self-awareness.

Social work professional education is defined in this study as a two year graduate program culminating in a Master's in Social Work degree. The curriculum as planned by the Council of Social Work Education includes basic courses in Human Growth and Development, Casework and supervised field work placement. "Class assignments, recordings, and supervisory conferences are important means of developing self-awareness because they encourage the student to communicate in language."

SAMPLE

Three groups were used in this study. Group one included the entire population of second year graduate students in social work, numbering 33. The comparison group, group two, was comprised of 12 undergraduate social work majors in their fourth year. This group was chosen because of its accessibility through the senior seminar class. It was intended that an equal number of undergraduates be sampled, however cooperation in the study was limited.

In order that any found difference might be attributed to the curriculum as opposed to additional years training, a control group of graduate sociology majors was utilized. This group is referred to as group three. Sociology majors were decided upon because though they are in a discipline putatively related to social work, there is not the stress placed on use of self and self-awareness found in the social work curriculum. The 12 students in this group were those having attained at least 25 hours graduate credit at the beginning of their second year. Groups one and three were approximately academic equivalents. Again, the original intention was to match the size of the groups. This was found to be impossible, however, for students meeting the credit requirement numbered fewer than 33. In addition, a small number of those eligible refused to participate. All participants in each group were Michigan State University students.

INSTRUMENT

The instrument used was a modified version of the MMPI. The

four scales utilized for purposes of analysis included Altruism, Attitude Toward Others, Attitude Toward Self and Social Responsibility. These were chosen on the basis of their scores being positive correlates as well as meeting the given definition of self-awareness.

This instrument was chosen in consultation with Dr. Gwendolyn Norrell of the Michigan State University Counseling Center. This modified instrument consisted of 70 statements to be answered true or false by the subjects, and was intended to yield a measure of self-awareness as defined in this study.

STATISTICAL TEST

Chi square was the statistical test used in this study. It is a non-parametric statistic which gives a measurement of the significant discrepancy between independent groups within a population.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Our statistical analysis was based on the test scores received on four variables by three criterion groups. These four variables of Altruism, Attitude Toward Others, Attitude Toward Self, and Social Responsibility combined, yielded a measurement of self-awareness. Each of the four variables was scored individually; Table I illustrates the frequency distribution of the three groups. The scores of the four variables were combined to give the total score. Table II illustrates the frequency distribution of the total scores.

TABLE I.

A. Distribution of Scores on Altruism

Scores	SW Grads	GROUPS Sociologists	SW Undergrads	Total
0 - 1		1		1
2 - 3		2		2
4 - 5	6	4	3	13
6 - 7	12	5	7	24
8 - 9	15		2	17

Total Frequencies = 57

B. Distribution of Scores on Attitude Toward Others

Scores	SW Grads	GROUPS Sociologists	SW Undergrads	Total
0 - 2				
3 - 5				
6 - 8		1		1
9 - 11	2	1	1	4
12 - 14	7	6	4	17
15 - 17	18	1	6	25
18 - 20	6	3	1	10

Total Frequencies = 57

C. Distribution of Scores on Attitude Toward Self

Scores	GROUPS			Total
	SW Grads	Sociologists	SW Undergrads	
0 - 2				
3 - 5				
6 - 8			2	2
9 - 11	1	4		5
12 - 14	12		5	17
15 - 17	14	5	5	24
18 - 20	6	3		9

Total Frequencies = 57

D. Distribution of Scores on Social Responsibility

Scores	GROUPS			Total
	SW Grads	Sociologists	SW Undergrads	
0 - 2				
3 - 5				
6 - 8				
9 - 11	8	1		9
12 - 14	11	3	5	19
15 - 17	12	5	6	23
18 - 20	2	3	1	5

Total Frequencies = 57

TABLE II.

Distribution of Total Scores on Four Variables Combined

Scores	SW Grads	GROUPS		Total
		Sociologists	SW Undergrads	
62 - 64	2			2
59 - 61	3			3
56 - 58	9	3		12
53 - 55	4	1	4	9
50 - 52	7	3	4	14
47 - 49	4	1	2	7
44 - 46	3	2		5
41 - 43	1	1	1	3
38 - 40			1	1
35 - 37		1		1

Total Frequencies = 57

First a chi square was computed for the total scores. The median was computed based on the frequency interval scales above. The range of scores was from 37 to 62. The computed median was 51. Therefore, all socres above 51 were considered as high scores and

and all below, low scores. Therefore, chi square was computed to show the discrepancy between the total scores of the three groups. The computed chi square equaled 1.9 with a probability of .50. The application of this statistical test to the combined scores revealed no significant difference in the degree of self-awareness among the three groups.

A comparison was then made on the individual scales. In order to compute chi square for the individual scales, a mid-point was arbitrarily chosen on the frequency interval scales above. This midpoint varied for each variable. All scores below the mid-point were considered as low scores and all above high scores. Therefore, chi squares were computed to show the discrepancy between the low and high scores received on each of the four variables. Comparisons were made by pairs, i. e., the undergrad social work students and the sociology students. This method was used rather than a comparison of all three groups in one test to isolate readily the extent to which differences were between social work graduate students and each of the other groups independently.

As shown in Table II, there were no significant differences between graduate social work students and undergraduate social work students on any of the four test scales. There were significant differences, however, between the graduate social work students and the graduate sociology students on two of the scales, namely, Altruism and Attitude Toward Others. ($P = .001$, $P = .02$).

TABLE II
COMPARISON OF PAIRS OF CRITERION GROUPS ON FOUR VARIABLES

Variables	χ^2	P
Altruism		
Graduate SW & Sociologists	10.2	.001
Grad SW and Undergrad SW	1.5	.30
Attitude Toward Others		
Graduate SW & Sociologists	5.8	.02
Grad SW & Undergrad SW	1.1	.30
Attitudes Toward Self		
Graduate SW & Sociologists	.1	.70
Grad SW & Undergrad SW	1.3	.30
Social Responsibility		
Graduate SW & Sociologists	.2	.60
Grad SW & Undergrad SW	.8	.40

The total population of 57 included 27 males and 30 females. Of the 33 Graduate social work students there were 17 female and 16 males. Only one male and 11 females composed the undergraduate social work group. The graduate sociology group consisted of 10 males and 2 females.

The age range of the total population was from 21 through 52 with the undergraduates dominating the youngest set (average age 21); the sociologists following with a median age of 24 and the graduate social workers with an average of 31.

Less than 1 per cent of the undergraduate social workers were married while 25 per cent of the sociologists were married and 60 per cent

of the graduate social worker were married.

In order to assess the previous job experiences of the participants the scale was divided arbitrarily with the skilled and semi-skilled under the heading of white collar workers and the unskilled under the heading of blue collar workers. Professional previous job experiences were also indicated. Some of the jobs listed were; waitresses, sales-clerks, secretary, lab technicians, statisticians, camp counselors, teachers, and various areas of the helping profession.

TABLE III
PREVIOUS JOB EXPERIENCE

Type of Job	SW Grads		Sociologists		Undergrad SW	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Professional	12	64	4	53	1	8
White Collar	6	18	3	25	2	17
Blue Collar	1	3	2	17	6	50
No Experience	5	15	3	25	3	25

The social work and sociology graduate students have more job experience and of a higher quality than the undergraduates. This is probably due to the age and education factors. Undergraduate majors are perhaps another factor to be considered.

TABLE IV
UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS

Majors	SW Graduates		Sociology Graduates	
	#	%	#	%
Arts and Letters	5	15	3	25
Applied Science	2	6	2	17
Physical Science	2	6	1	8
Social Science	24	73	6	50

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In examining the proposed hypotheses in light of the results obtained, certain conclusions can be drawn.

Hypothesis I. stated: "There is a difference in self-awareness between graduate social work students in their second year and undergraduate social work majors in their senior year." Raw data obtained in this study would seem to indicate that there is at least a slight trend in this direction. The test of significance did not confirm this, however.

Hypothesis II. predicted "that there is an increase in self-awareness with professional social work education." Again there was a trend toward higher raw scores among those having professional social work education but as the test of significance did not support the first hypothesis, Hypothesis II could not be confirmed.

Hypothesis III. stated that "this increase in self-awareness is

not the result of graduate training per se, but is the result of the graduate social work curriculum. Therefore, graduate students in social work would have a greater degree of self-awareness than graduate students in another field, i.e., sociology." Raw data suggested that graduate social work students had a higher percentage of high scores (above the median 51) than did graduate sociology students. On the individual scales of Altruism and Attitude Toward Others there was a significant difference between the two groups. The test of significance confirms that there is a difference between the two groups, and the raw data would imply that the social work graduates have a greater degree of self-awareness than the sociology graduates. Therefore it can be assumed that graduate training as such does not necessarily lead to self-awareness. It appears that the graduate social work curriculum makes a substantial contribution in this direction.

It is interesting to speculate on the possible implications of the differences between the social work graduates and the sociology graduates on the Altruism and Attitude Toward Others scales. Social workers tended to respond to statements on these scales that portrayed a more trustful, less punitive attitude toward other people. They appeared less manipulative and more sympathetic than did the sociologists. This may be due to the social workers' more direct relationship with people in their work. Sociologists are noted for their more scientific, intellectual approach. In other words, social work is seen more as a helping profession than an academic discipline. One wonders whether social workers choose their vocation because of their altruistic tenden-

cies, and vice versa with sociologists, or if this is developed while on the job. As this study deals with students rather than practitioners, one can speculate that the attitude determines the choice of vocation rather than the vocation determining the attitude. However, based on observations, it would appear that the professions reinforce the attitude.

LIMITATIONS

It should be recognized that there are certain limitations inherent in this study. Primarily, the instrument utilized was an adaptation of a test that was originally intended for other purposes. As such, the appropriateness of assuming that the essence of self-awareness can be tapped by this device is highly questionable. It may be that rather than measuring differences in self-awareness, what was differentiated was personality types that would be likely to be found in different disciplines. This is exemplified in the findings related to altruism wherein the significant difference was found between disciplines, rather than between intra-disciplinary groups having a two year difference in educational training.

Corresponding with the limitations of the instrument would be the vagueness of the concept of self-awareness. There seems to be no consensus regarding the referent of this concept. As a result, the literature is replete with discussion pertaining to the inferior nature of the instruments that have been utilized in the past.

Thus what seems to be required for a completely adequate study of

this type is an appropriate instrument based on a clear definition of self-awareness. It was only after careful scrutinization of the MMPI and other tests that the scales which best suited the definition of the concept were selected. Perhaps the authors' bias concerning social work has impinged upon the choice of subtests.

Further limitations to be considered involve the population utilized in this study. The population tapped was not as large as desired. Ideally, the tests should have been administered by a member of the research team to insure immediate and complete returns.

There were no attempts to match the population according to age, sex, work experience, cultural background, etc., although there was an attempt to analyze this information. It was evident that some of the students were test-wise and could have easily distorted the test results.

Conditions were not consistent for administering the test to the three groups. Some tests were taken during a class period and returned immediately, some took the tests at home and many from the undergraduate students were not returned. Ideally, it should have been possible to maintain strict controlled conditions during the testing situation.

IMPLICATIONS

Implications for theory have been mentioned previously regarding the lack of a clearly defined concept of self-awareness. Without this, accurate investigation of self-awareness is drastically limited. It might be possible that through further research a more concrete

definition could be formulated. Possibly an appropriate study might utilize a personality inventory in conjunction with a professional evaluation of each individual. A panel study could be undertaken to assess any change in self-awareness that might accrue over time, with education, and with experience.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brunck, Max, Ph.D., "The Relationships Between Student Anxiety, Self-Awareness, and Self-Concept and Student Competence in Casework," Social Casework, March 1963.
- Berengarten, Sidney. "Identifying Learning Patterns of Individual Students: An Exploratory Study," Social Service Review, XXXI, (December 1957), 407-417.
- * Hamilton, Gordon. "Self-Awareness in Professional Education," Social Casework, XXXV, (November 1954), 371-379.
- Perlman, Helan Harris. Social Casework: A Problem-Solving Process, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1957, 81-83.
- Hamilton, Gordon. Theory and Practice of Social Casework, Columbia University Press, New York, 1951, 39-43.
- Hollis, Florence. Casework: A Psychosocial Therapy, Random House, New York, 1964, 270-276.
- Nagel, Ernest. The Structure of Science, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961, 447-501.
- Guilford, J. P., Fundamental Statistics in Psychology and Education, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1956
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, University of Minnesota, 1956.
- Polansky, Norman H. Social Work Research, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1956.
- Colby, Kenneth M., M.D. A Primer for Psychotherapists, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1951.
- Bizstak, Felix P. The Casework Relationship, Loyola University Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1957.

1944, 1945
1946, 1947
1948, 1949

1950, 1951
1952, 1953
1954, 1955

1956, 1957
1958, 1959
1960, 1961

1962, 1963
1964, 1965
1966, 1967

1968, 1969
1970, 1971
1972, 1973

1974, 1975
1976, 1977
1978, 1979

1980, 1981
1982, 1983
1984, 1985

1986, 1987
1988, 1989
1990, 1991

1992, 1993
1994, 1995
1996, 1997

1998, 1999
2000, 2001
2002, 2003

2004, 2005
2006, 2007
2008, 2009

2010, 2011
2012, 2013
2014, 2015

2016, 2017
2018, 2019
2020, 2021

2022, 2023
2024, 2025
2026, 2027

2028, 2029
2030, 2031
2032, 2033

2034, 2035
2036, 2037
2038, 2039

2040, 2041
2042, 2043
2044, 2045

2046, 2047
2048, 2049
2050, 2051

2052, 2053
2054, 2055
2056, 2057

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 03196 5845

