

Social Work Educators' Perceived Barriers to Teaching with Technology: the Impact on Preparing Students to Work with Younger Clients

Citation:

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- The authors assert that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is exponentially progressing to unprecedented integration, proving to influence 90% of jobs, requiring digital citizenship (i.e., digital competence) and the development of lifelong learners in the era of infinite access to positive or negative knowledge.
- The authors maintain that the 2000 statement from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) of the necessity to integrate practical, efficient, and relevant technological advances to increase the effectiveness and depth of inter-professional education (IPE) communities.
- The authors attest that ICT is potentially an interface that limits barriers that affect marginalized communities (i.e., gender, sexuality, disabled, etc.) by connecting participants (i.e., students, clients, etc.) regardless of geographical barriers.
- The authors affirm that social media's influence on individuals' perception of social hierarchies, societal norms (i.e., gender, sexuality, SES, etc.), and conflict resolution indicates that programs of study must incorporate a model for future professionals (i.e., educator, social worker, practitioner, and researcher) that integrates eLearning strategies (i.e., access to online communication, resources, and assessments).
- The authors maintain that institutions increase flexibility and access for students through the development of hybrid (physical and virtual learning environments) or virtual learning experiences; 21st-century preparation programs (i.e., education or social work) must prepare students with the necessary tools to create accessibility for all students.
- The authors substantiate that six barriers limit effective, efficient, and relevant eLearning implementation, which are: (1) organization's ineffective support; (2) futile technology support; (3) rapid technological advances; (4) over-abundance of technologies; (5) inability to conceptualize, design, and deliver online courses; and (6) interaction/monitoring students through the virtual interface is time-consuming.
- The authors believe that educators' implicit biases towards ICT are due to the apprehension of the shift to autonomous learning through student-centered education; educators assist participants (i.e., students) through various stages of the learning process, increasing confidence, digital competence, and motivation.

- The authors hold that exposure to ICT through coursework creates digital fluency that allows future professionals to become increasingly adaptable and flexible and embrace the benefits of eLearning; it is professional preparation program (PPP) instructors' responsibility to allow future professionals the ability to observe effective and ethical modeling of ICTs.
- The authors affirm that PPP instructors must recognize that ICT will continue to have a role and effect on the future of instructor-student interaction and the field's (i.e., education, social work, research, etc.) future.
- The authors maintain that consistent there are four skills PPP courses support when effectively implementing ICTs in eLearning interfaces, which are:
 1. Increased confidence in utilizing technology in the field
 2. Adaptability to develop an understanding and compassion
 3. Ability to connect with iGeneration students
 4. Communicate better with students and bridge the multi-generational gap
- The authors corroborate that a study of the effectiveness of virtual services for iGeneration (Net Generation) participants proved to be successful; the results of the study support the productiveness with the ability to engage with at-risk youth by offering flexible hours, easy access, low-cost, and the ability to contact anonymously.