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**CTE Flipped Grant Final Report (2015-2016)**  
**SOWK 732: Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities**

Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities is a required course for all master of social work students. As a multi-section course taught on three campuses – Columbia, Upstate, and Charleston – primarily by adjunct instructors, variability in student experience was a growing concern. As a service-learning course that requires significant student attention to out-of-classroom activities and significant in-class attention from the instructor, creating a space where students could maximize their achievement of professional competencies was an ongoing challenge. These two pressing issues highlighted the need to adjust the instructional technique to meet the changing demands and realities of this course. The CTE Flipped Grant allowed us to focus on three areas: (1) standardizing student experience across sections; (2) increasing integration and application of social work practice competencies; and (3) building teaching capacity among a pool of adjunct instructors.

Standardizing Student Experience

Students in prior years expressed concern over the stark differences between sections of SOWK 732, primarily related to content delivery. This led to a larger conversation about how we could create a more uniform experience considering the number of sections and the geographic distribution of those sections across the state. The CTE Flipped Grant allowed me, as the Lead Instructor, to standardize the lectures across all sections in an effort to provide greater consistency in the student experience. Not only did we focus on lectures, but we also created a delimited pool of in-class activities designed to reinforce and practice what students previously heard in lectures and covered in required readings. Using the flipped method reduced some uncertainty in what was being covered in the classroom and the mechanisms used to deliver that content. Social work education is competency based and the Flipped Grant allowed me to consider more carefully how competencies were being taught. Thanks to the grant support, we were successful in standardizing the student experience.

Application and Integration

A significant challenge in this course was balancing content delivery with integration. The prior model left little time for in-class exercises or activities that reinforced the practice skills discussed in the lectures and readings. Activities were often truncated or rushed due to time constraints created by other requirements, namely work on service-learning projects and the lectures. Further, it was difficult to discern on an ongoing basis if students were acquiring the required competencies and practice skills. By moving the lectures outside of the classroom, we created additional space to consider ways to incorporate formative assessments into the weekly structure. The skill-building and integrative activities served as formative assessments to give students immediate feedback on their development while signaling to the instructors areas that might need additional attention through classroom discussion or mini lecture. The resources of the CTE Flipped Grant, particularly access to mentors, were instrumental in shaping this aspect of the course redevelopment.

Building Instructor Capacity

Redeveloping this course using the flipped model was a team effort. The CTE grant support allowed me to incentivize three experienced and well-respected adjunct instructors to assist in the work. We met as a team to review content for each module, to develop in-class activities, and to offer feedback on lectures each prepared. This strategy allowed instructors to develop course modules in their practice areas, building upon their own experience to enrich the student experience. The grant-supported

redevelopment challenged each of us to sharpen our skills at facilitating classroom activities and at delivering targeted, impactful online lectures. The team learned new skills and considered new ways of managing the learning process. For those instructors not part of the core team, they were invited to add to the library of in-class activities. They reported having more time to focus on the student experience and to support innovative student learning because they were no longer responsible for lecture preparation. Time normally spent preparing a lecture was used to devise ways to assist the integration process. Instructors saw themselves, for the first time, as coaches in the learning process rather than individuals whose responsibility was to impart information. This certainly changed the classroom dynamic for both instructor and student.

### Moving Forward

The Spring 2017 semester will be the second iteration of the flipped model for SOWK 732. We learned important lessons along the way. First, the weekly quiz format designed to be a formative assessment and to guide the JIT (just-in-time) teaching was not an effective pedagogical method. Beyond negative reactions from students at weekly quizzes, they did not serve as a learning tool. Students found ways around the quizzes and they became a weekly distraction. Second, we learned the importance of short lectures. Students reported the most engaging and effective lectures were 10 minutes or less; when longer lectures were required, students lost interest and came to class less prepared for discussion and activities. Third, our students benefit from intentional space to link course material to their field education experiences. We cannot assume these conversations are happening elsewhere and learned that integration happens when students can apply the material to their current practice experiences. We aim to be more intentional about crafting activities that incorporate field education. And fourth, we learned that redeveloping a course using flipped pedagogy is an ongoing iterative process. The challenge for me was to manage the scope of redevelopment and to consider change in stages.

I look forward to the ongoing development of SOWK 732, made possible through the support of the Center for Teaching Excellence via the Flipped Grant, the supportive cohort of fellow grantees, and our mentors. This is an important course and for many MSW students it is the only place they will encounter community and organizational practice theory and skill development while in their graduate program. I and my team of adjunct instructors will continue to build upon the work we have done, looking for ways to innovate and enhance the development of student competencies. Our success will be measured by the competency of our graduates as they enter the workforce.