



INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE

The **Social Work Student Research Community (SWSRC)** at Wayne State University (WSU) faces challenges with engaging social work (SW) students in research. SWSRC has investigated **barriers to engagement** through a **literature review** & on-going participant **evaluation**, focusing on SW students' **hesitancies and confidence** with research, in order to improve engagement.

Literature suggests that SW students are **anxious** to engage in research (Blakemore & Howard, 2015; Maschi, Probst, & Bradley, 2009). Studies show that students are hesitant or fear engaging because they are not confident with **applying the research process** to SW practice (Maschi, Probst, & Rompf, 2009; Morgenshtern, Freymond, Agyapong, & Greeson, 2011).

METHODS & TASKS

SWSRC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Logic model
- Evaluation plan
- Workshop planning, promotion, & administration

SWSRC EVALUATION PLANNING

Developed by: Kendra Wells

Primary questions: Why are SW students participating (or not) in research? How can we increase engagement?

Targets: Confidence, Attitudes, Barriers, & Hesitancies toward research

Monthly evaluations at workshops

Respondents: SWSRC participants in attendance

Administration: In-person (Sept. 2017-April 2018)

Measured: Attendance, Confidence, & Knowledge of research

Tool: Open- and close-ended survey questions

Year-end evaluations of Social Work students

Respondents: Social Work students

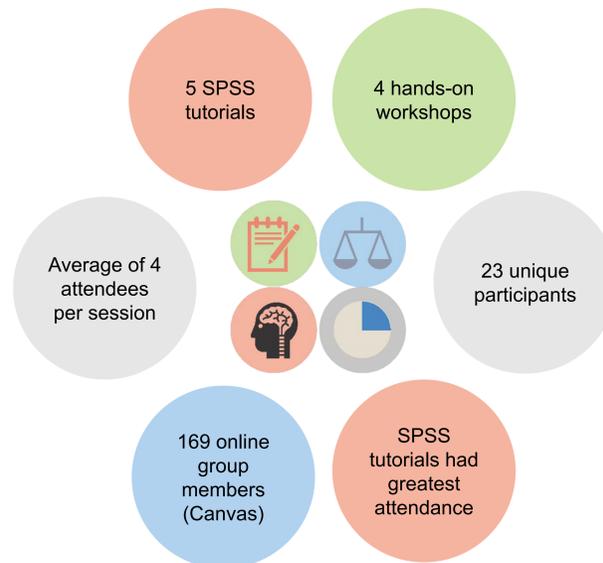
Administration: Online; Snowball distribution; Targeted distribution to SWSRC online group (2013, 2014, 2018); BSW, MSW, PhD, & non-degree students

Measured: Attendance, Confidence, Barriers, Hesitancies, Experience, & Importance to practice

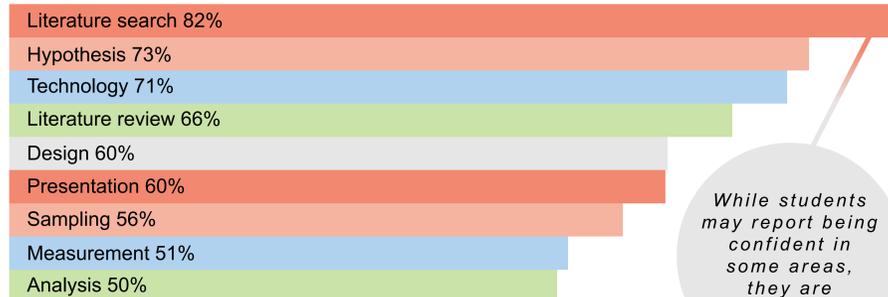
Tool: Open- and close-ended survey questions (Developed by: Melissa Schmidt & Dr. Joanne Smith-Darden)

FIGURES

SWSRC ENGAGEMENT 2017-18



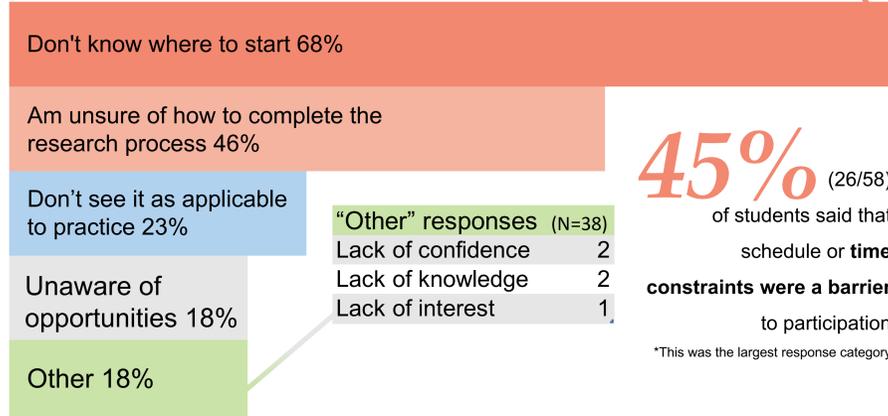
In 2013, 2014, & 2018, students reported confidence in their ability to perform in the following research areas (N=290):



*Confidence was measured from 0-10. "Confident" was considered to be a response of 7+

While students may report being confident in some areas, they are hesitant to participate

Why are you hesitant to engage in research? (N=58, multiple responses per individual)



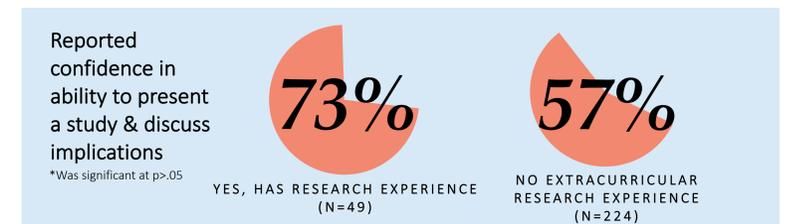
45% (26/58) of students said that schedule or time constraints were a barrier to participation

*This was the largest response category

RESULTS

In 2018, students were asked about their previous experiences with research. Students who had research experience outside of the required curriculum, reported being more confident on 7/9 measures.

“ [I’m] not confident in my ability to understand research enough to learn & practice it ”



When “Experienced” students were asked how their engagement had impacted their learning, 8/9 responded positively

“ I felt more confident & it helped with my overall learning & comprehension ”

CONCLUSIONS

Based on findings from the 2013, 2014, & 2018 year-end surveys, monthly SWSRC surveys, & literature review, recommendations can be made to increase research’s engagement of social work students:

- Incorporate active research opportunities into curriculum
- Provide experience-based learning opportunities both in and outside of the classroom
- Give students more opportunities to present research findings

SWSRC has utilized some of these strategies in their extracurricular activities. Next steps should be to **increase marketing** of extracurricular research activities so that students are **aware of opportunities** and can **schedule accordingly**.

Additionally, students should be given more engagement opportunities in the classroom so that they can **build knowledge & confidence**, possibly making them **more likely to engage** in the extracurriculars.