

EMPOWERMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the process of student empowerment for social work practice that promotes social justice as it occurs in field education. Seventeen in-depth interviews were conducted with qualified field instructors and a model was constructed using grounded theory methodology. The model reflects perceptions of the meaning of social justice among field instructors. It also provides concrete practice and pedagogical strategies aimed at equipping future social workers to engage in the promotion of social justice, a foundational professional value. Environmental supports and barriers are also presented that significantly impact the process. Implications are provided for social work education, practice and research.