

Faculty Showcase '08

Sponsored by Academic Technology at Simmons College



Abbie Frost
School of Social Work

Gianna Gifford
Simmons Library



School of Social Work Technology Competency

Goals

- Use Simmons-specific technologies such as email and Simmons eLearning.
- Access and search Simmons Library online services and electronic databases.
- Properly use the web in their social work practice.
- Use technology in a safe and appropriate way.

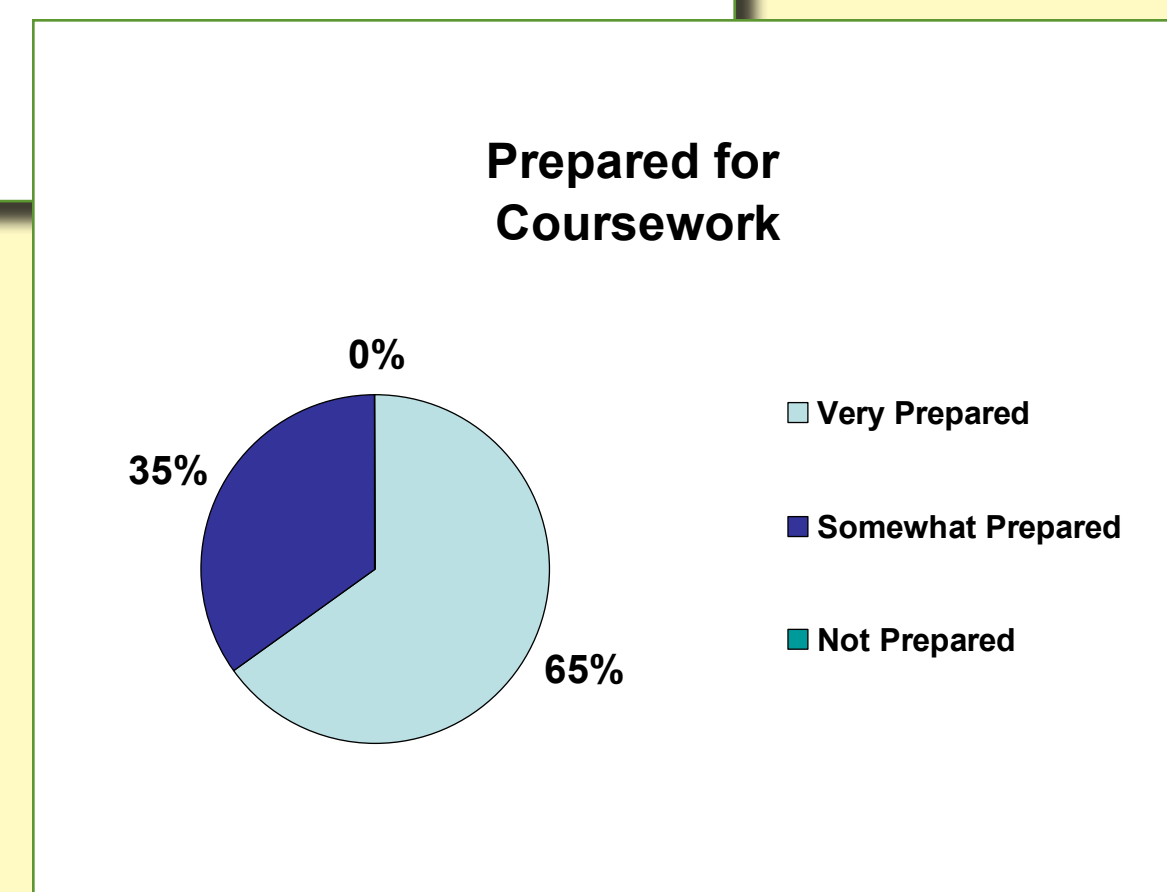
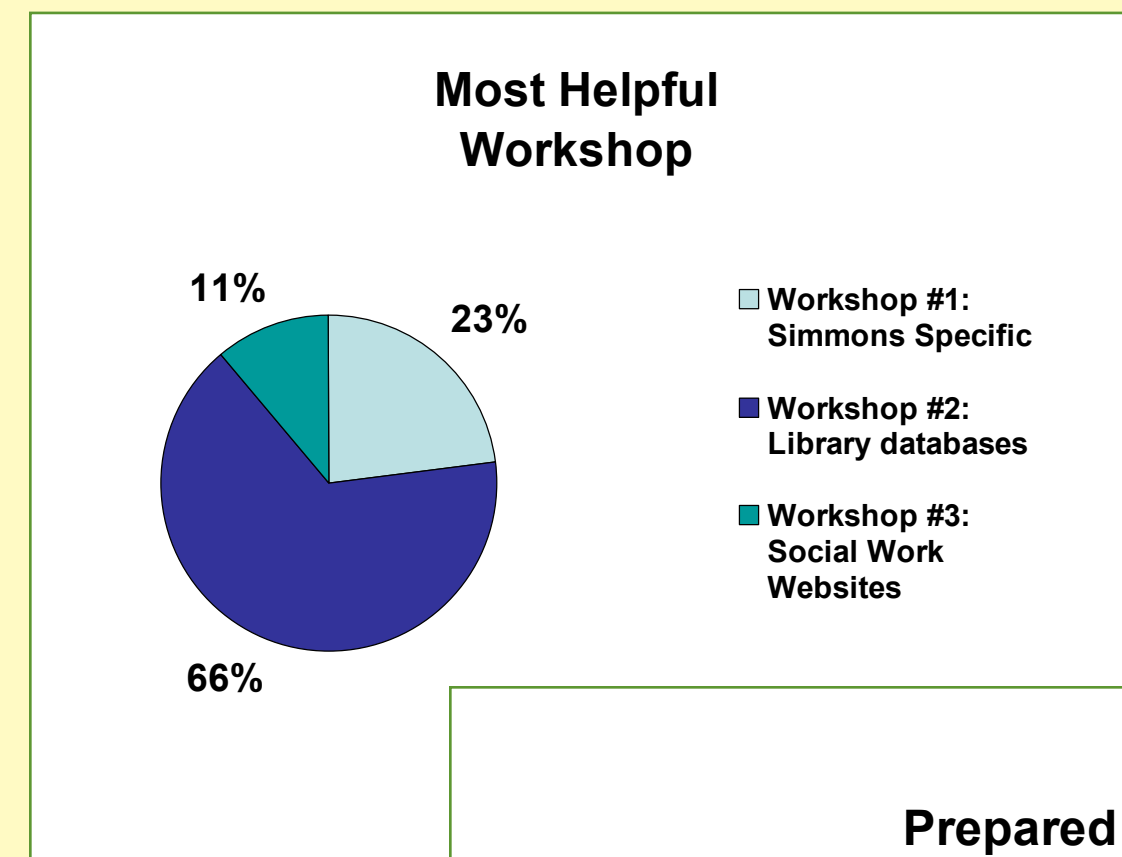
Project Overview

The School of Social Work (SSW) Technology Competency Program (Tech Comps) are designed to address the basic technology information needs of our Master of Social Work (MSW) students. The Tech Comps address basic technology competencies, and are therefore the “ticket of admission” to students’ first semester courses.

All incoming or transfer MSW students at SSW are required to complete assignments that address the core goals of the Tech Comps (see the Goals in the left-hand column of this poster). Competency in these areas prepares students to learn effectively in their courses and to communicate with faculty and other students in a variety of electronic ways, such as accessing email, sending attachments, and using the discussion boards in Simmons eLearning.

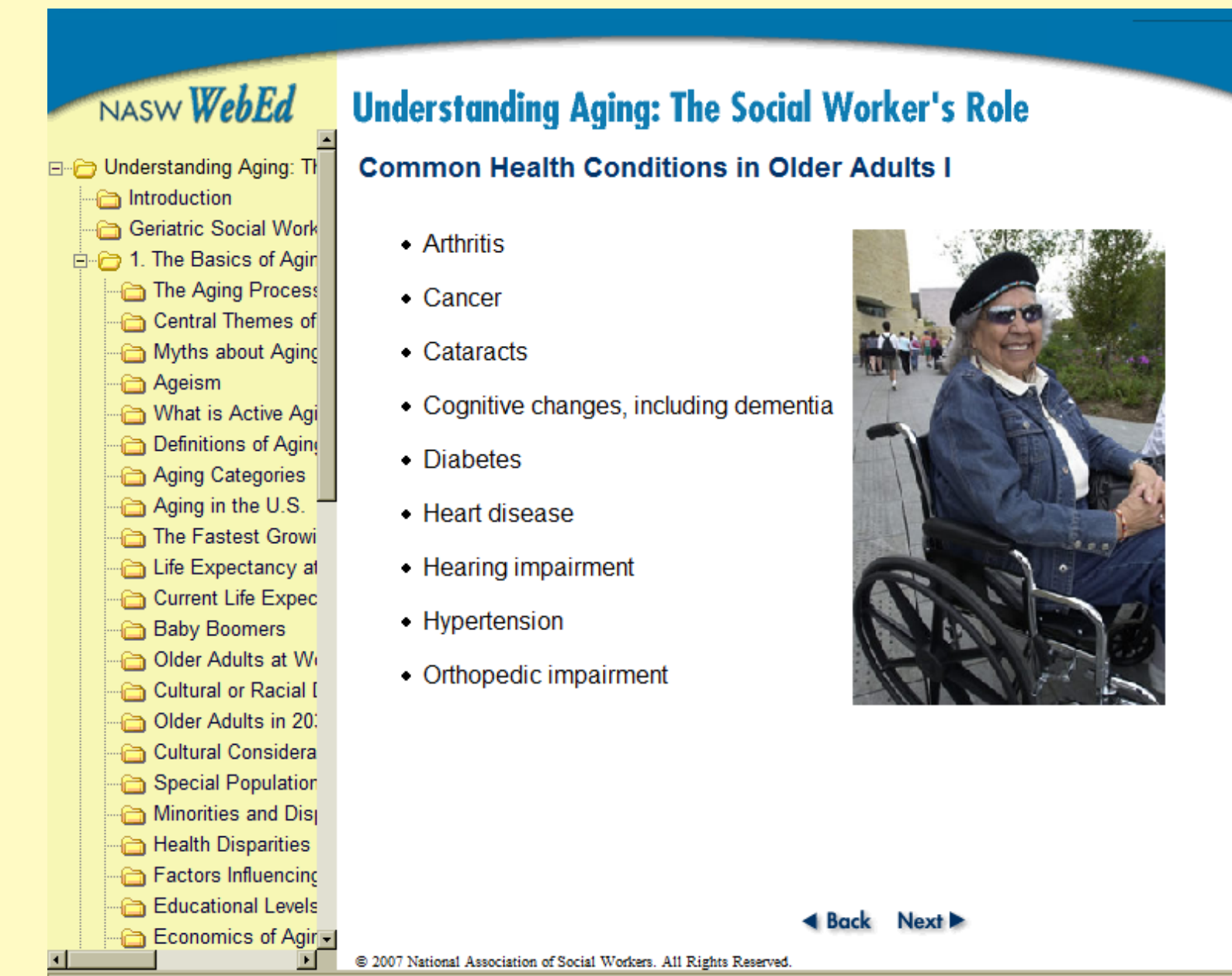
Three face-to-face workshops are offered to support student learning in these areas. Technology staff, our social work librarian, and SSW faculty present information in three separate workshop sessions. Workshop One is held during orientation. Workshops Two and Three are offered during the first and third weeks of the fall semester

respectively. While the workshops are designed with the incoming MSW student’s technology skills and knowledge in mind, there are students who have technology skills and knowledge that exceed the School’s expectations. Students with the required skills may opt to test out of the workshops by completing the assignment before the workshop is held. If students do not complete an assignment before the related workshop is held, they are required to attend.



In fall 2008, 157 MSW students participated in the Tech Comps. Over fifteen percent were able to complete their assignments without attending any of the workshops. An additional 31 percent were able to complete one or two of the assignments without attending a workshop.

The majority of students (66 percent) indicated that the workshop on library online services, electronic databases and searching techniques was the most helpful. After completing Tech Comps, almost two-thirds (65 percent) of students assessed felt they were “very prepared” for the technology requirements at the beginning of the semester, while the remaining 35 percent described themselves as “somewhat prepared.”



Applications Beyond

The SSW Technology Competency Program represents an initial effort in the assessment of student and graduate competency in technology. Beyond this, a focus on student fluencies continues in our MSW curriculum with a focus on search techniques and competencies for the purposes of research. As the College moves forward in the area of basic student fluency in technology, we will continue to examine the common need across Simmons schools. Finally, the SSW Technology Competency Program can offer a model for other schools of social work. This past fall we conducted a nationwide study of MSW programs and found that only three schools nationwide assess student fluency in technology.