



## 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

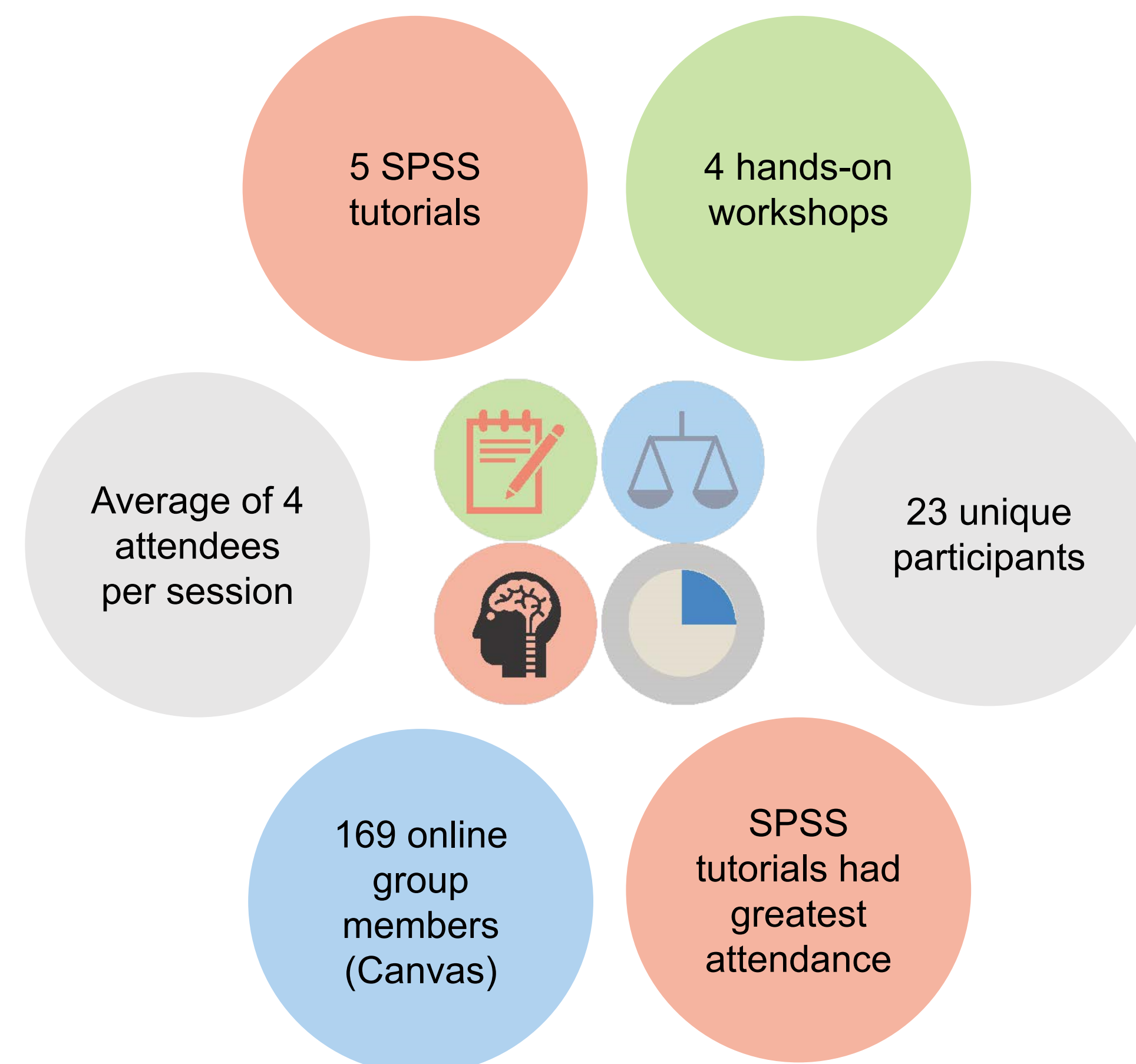
**Administration:** Online; Snowball distribution; Targeted distribution to SWSRC online group (2013, 2014, 2018); BSW, MSW, PhD, & non-degree students

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

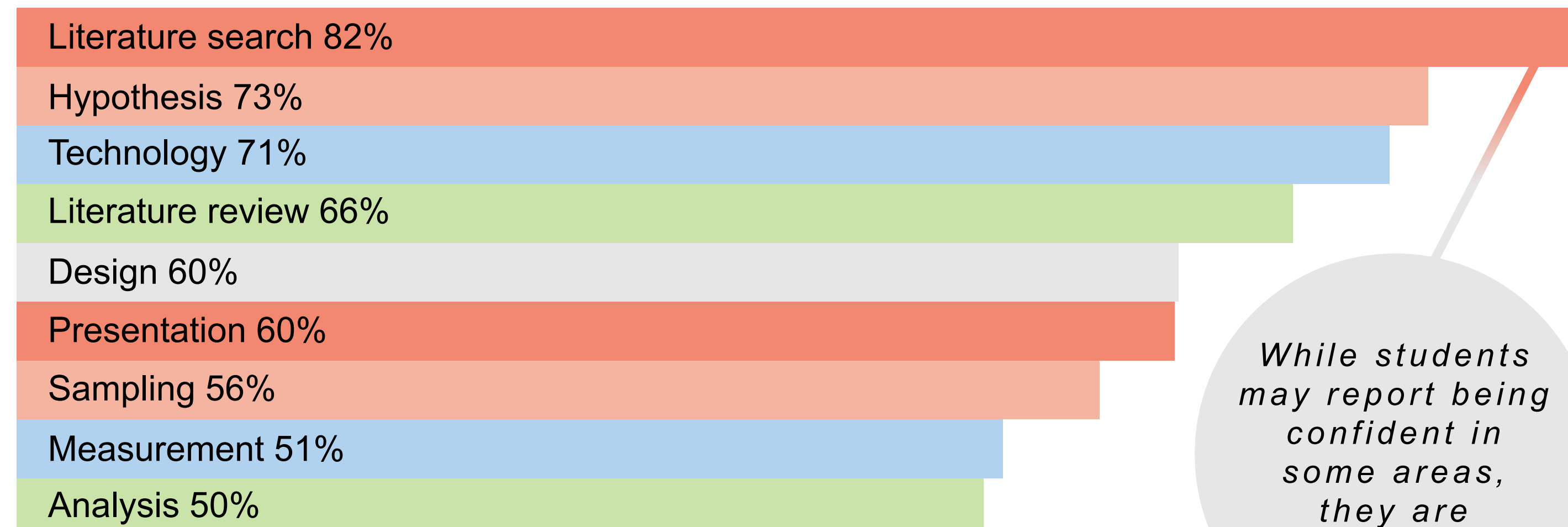
**Tool:** Open- and close-ended survey questions (Developed by: Melissa Schmidt & Dr. Joanne Smith-Darden)

## FIGURES

### SWSRC ENGAGEMENT 2017-18



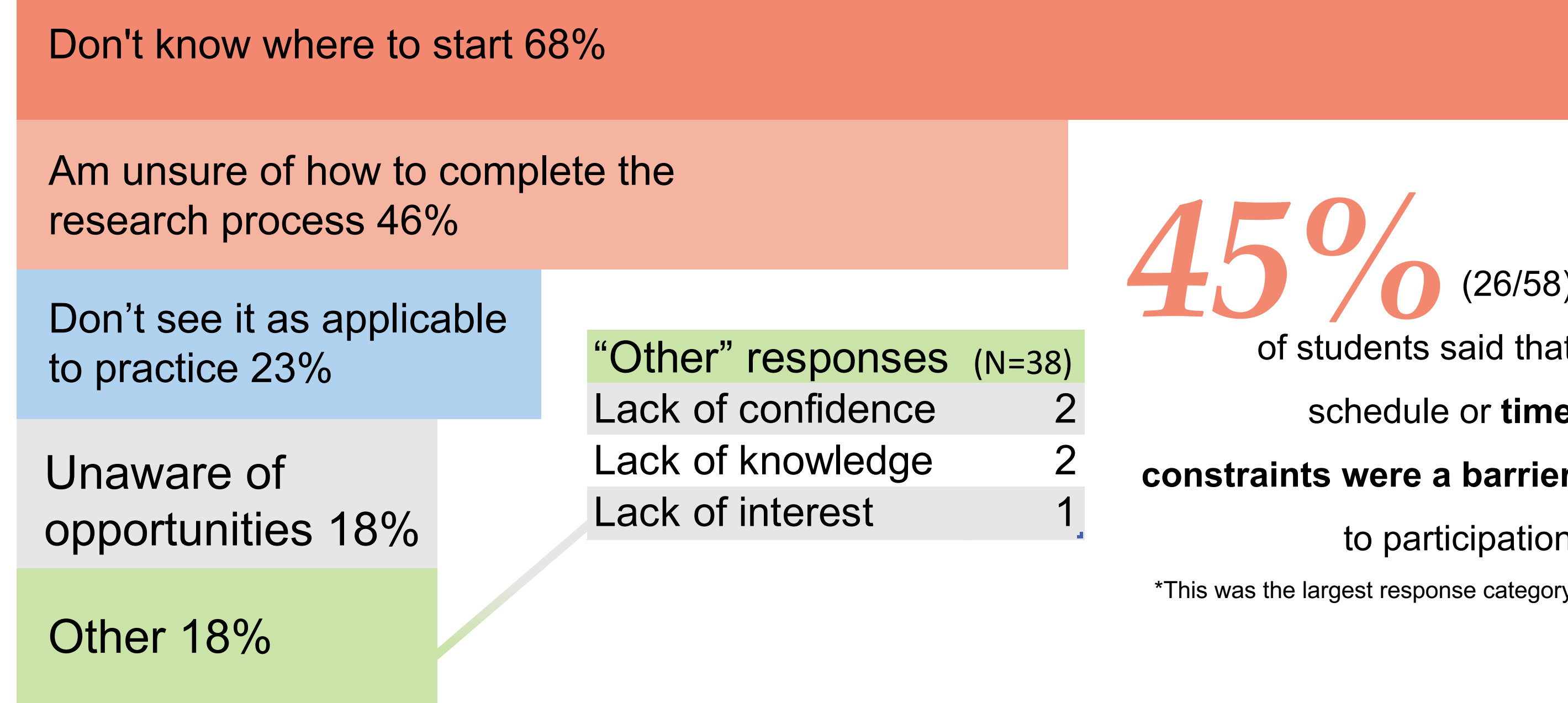
In 2013, 2014, & 2018, students reported confidence in their ability to perform in the following research areas (N=290):



\*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)



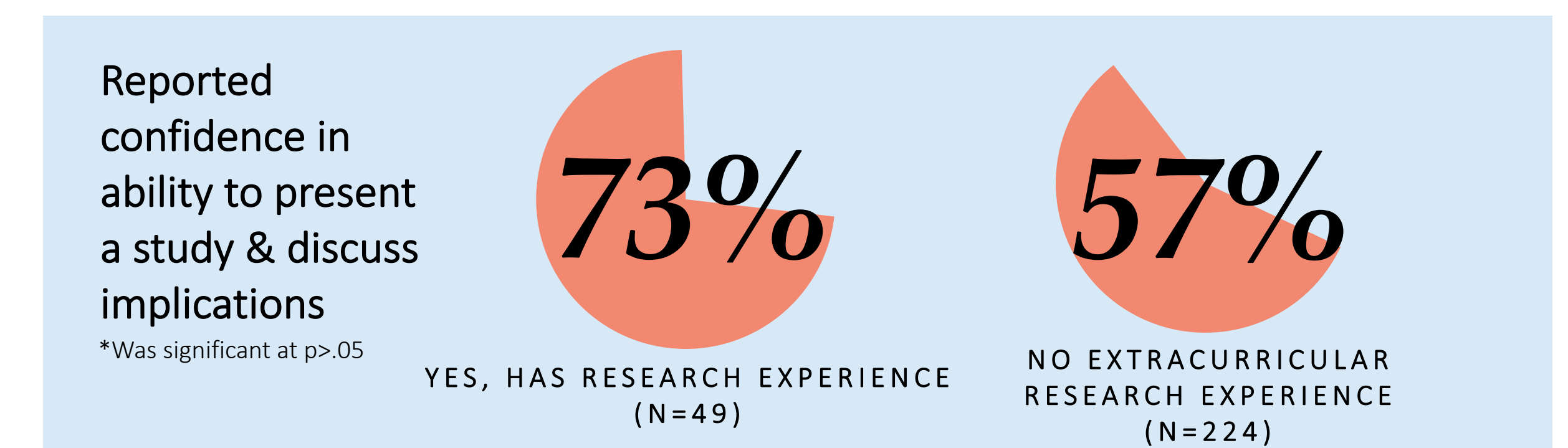
45% (26/58) of students said that schedule or time constraints were a barrier to participation

\*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.