

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SW-526: Evaluating Clinical Practice**

Course Outline

Fall 2004

**Instructor:** David R. Dupper, Ph.D.

**Office:** 208 Henson Hall

**Phone:** (865) 974-5825

**Email:** [ddupper@utk.edu](mailto:ddupper@utk.edu)

**Office Hours:** Thursdays 1-3 PM

**Course Requirements/Plan for Evaluation:**

This class will be conducted as an integrative seminar; students are expected to discuss their readings, to provide relevant case material from their field sites, as well as contribute to class discussions of other students' case material. Student will present their practice evaluation and aspects of it. Besides showing a grasp of clinical evaluation methods, students must demonstrate a grasp of the ethical issues in practice and its evaluation and special issues related to women, people of color, gay/lesbians, elderly, (e.g., lack of standardized instruments, differential definitions of and terms used to describe problems and outcomes).

The instructor will present materials on practice and evaluation and the students will integrate them with their readings and apply the information to cases in their practice experience and field settings. Students will present these applications on a regular basis. Students will be expected to read assigned materials, attend class and participate in discussions, and present case applications, including a final treatment evaluation project.

Students are expected to attend every class session. It is essential that students notify the instructor in a timely manner if circumstances interfere with class attendance or the completion of course assignments.

On-line quizzes (5 @ 10 points each)	50 pts. (12.5%)
Brief paper #1	50 pts. (12.5%)
Brief paper #2	50 pts. (12.5%)
Brief paper #3	50 pts. (12.5%)
Brief paper #4	50 pts. (12.5%)
Final paper	150 pts. (37.5%)

The final course grade will be based on the following:

A = 376-400 points (Superior performance, exceeds expectations)

B+ = 348-375 points (Better than satisfactory performance)

B = 328-347 points (Satisfactory performance, meets expectations)

C+ = 308-327 points (Less than satisfactory performance)

C = 280-307 points (Performance well below the standard expected of graduate students)

**Required Text:**

Bloom, M., Fischer, J. & Orme, J.G. (2003). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Required readings are on reserve in Hodges Library and can be accessed on-line.

**Course Content Outline:****Session 1 (Aug. 19)**

Overview of course and assignments; brief history of evaluation in clinical social work

**Session 2 (Aug. 26)**

Basic principles of single-system designs and group designs; ethical considerations and controversial issues; systematic planned practice

**Readings:**

Bloom et al., (2003), Prologue, Chapters 1, 11, 25

Rosen, A. (1992). Facilitating clinical decision-making and evaluation. *Families in Society*, 73, 522-532.

Mullen, E.J. (2004). Facilitating practitioner use of evidenced-based practice. In A.R. Roberts & K.R. Yeager (Eds.). *Evidenced-based practice manual: Research outcome measures in health and human services* (pp. 205-210). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Tolson, E.R. (1990). Why don't practitioners use single-subject designs? In L. Videka-Sherman & W.J. Reid (Eds.). *Advances in Clinical Social Work Research* (pp. 58-64). Silver Spring, MD: NASW Press.

**Session 3 (Sept. 2)****Brief paper #1 is due**

Class discussion of brief paper #1; principles of measurement

**Readings:**

Bloom et al., (2003), Chapter 2

Chambless, D.L. & Hollon, S.D. (1998). Defining empirically supported therapies. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66, 7-18.

**\*\*Take on-line quiz #1 sometime between September 3-8**

**Session 4 (Sept. 9)**

Specifying client problems; choosing outcomes and target behaviors; developing a measurement and recording plan

**Readings:**

Bloom et al., (2003), Chapters 3 & 4

Franklin, C., Linseisen, T. & Windsor, L.C. (2005). Using standardized measures to enhance psychosocial reports: A case example. In C.W. LeCroy & J. M. Daley (Eds.), *Case studies in child, adolescent, and family treatment* (pp. 277-292). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Kirk, S. & Reid, W. (2001). Client problems as organizing foci for knowledge. *Science & Social Work: A critical appraisal*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Cormier, W.H. & Cormier, L. S. (1991). Selecting helping strategies. In Cormier & Cormier (Eds.), *Interviewing strategies for helpers: Fundamental skills and cognitive behavioral interventions* (3rd ed.) (pp. 292-306). Pacific grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

**\*\*Take on-line quiz #2 sometime between September 10-15**

### **Session 5 (Sept. 16)**

Behavioral observation; individualized rating scales

#### **Readings:**

Bloom et al., (2003), Chapters 5 & 6

Corcoran, K & Davis, M. (2005). Creating useful behavioral measures of client progress and outcomes. In C.W. LeCroy & J. M. Daley (Eds.), *Case studies in child, adolescent, and family treatment* (pp. 246-253). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

**\*\*Take on-line quiz #3 sometime between September 15-22**

### **Session 6 (Sept. 23)**

Standardized questionnaires; reactivity and nonreactive measures; selecting a measure

#### **Readings:**

Bloom et al., (2003), Chapters 7, 9, 10

Dupper, D.R. (1998). An alternative to suspension for middle school youths with behavior problems. Findings from a "school survival" group. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 8, 354-366.

Corcoran, K. (2004). Locating measurement tools and instruments for individuals and couples. In A.R. Roberts & K.R. Yeager (Eds.). *Evidenced-based practice manual: Research outcome measures in health and human services* (pp. 463-470). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Internet resources on evidenced-based practice and research in health care and human services. In A.R. Roberts & K.R. Yeager (Eds.). *Evidenced-based practice manual: Research outcome measures in health and human services* (pp. 463-470). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (pp. 961-969).

**\*\*Take on-line quiz #4 sometime between September 24-29**

### **Session 7 (Sept. 30)**

#### **Brief paper #2 is due**

Class discussion of brief paper # 2; baselining; the A-B design; experimental single-system designs (A-B-A, A-B-A-B, B-A-B); selecting a design

#### **Readings:**

Bloom et al., (2003), Chapters 12, 13, 14 & 18

Nurius, P. (1992). Practice evaluation methods: Practical variations on a theme. In CW LeCroy (Ed.), *Case studies in social work practice* (pp. 268-277). Belmont, CA:

Wadsworth.

### **Session 8 (Oct. 7)**

#### **Brief paper # 3 is due**

Class discussion of brief paper # 3; operationalizing the intervention (i.e., independent variable); organizing, analyzing, and presenting data; basic principles of analysis, visual analysis clinical and statistical significance; computer analysis of single-system design data

#### **Readings:**

Bloom et al., (2003), Chapters 19, 20, 21, 23

Blythe, B.J. (2005). Evaluating the treatment of a sexually assaulted child.

In C.W. LeCroy & J. M. Daley (Eds.), *Case studies in child, adolescent, and family treatment* (pp. 293-300). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Bentley, K. J. (1990). An evaluation of family-based intervention with schizophrenia using single-system research. *British Journal of Social Work*, 20, 101-116.

Slonim-Nevo, V., & Vosler, N. (1991). The use of single-system design with systemic brief problem-solving therapy. *Families in Society*, 38-44.

**\*\*Take on-line quiz #5 sometime between October 8-13**

### **FALL BREAK (no class Oct. 14)**

### **Session 9 (Oct. 21)**

Computer lab session- computing and graphing measures of central tendency and variation with SINGWIN

### **Session 10 (Oct. 28)**

#### **Brief paper # 4 is due**

Class discussion of brief paper # 4; what to consider when reading and evaluating intervention research studies, including issues related to sampling and generalizability of research findings, especially in relation to women, people of color, the aged, gays/lesbians, SES, and other groups oppressed or discriminated against.

#### **Readings:**

Gilbert, D. J. “*Multicultural assessment*”

Snowden, L. R. (1996). Ethnic minority populations and mental health outcomes. In

D.M. Steinwachs et al. (Eds.), *Using Client Outcomes Information to Improve Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment*. Jossey-Bass.

Land, H. & Hudson, S. (1999). Methodological considerations in surveying Latina AIDS caregivers: Issues in sampling and measurement. In S.A. Kirk (Ed.). *Social Work Research Methods: Building Knowledge for Practice* (pp. 456-475). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

### **Session 11 (Nov. 4)**

Student presentations of final research papers

**Session 12 (Nov. 11)**

Student presentations of final research papers

**Session 13 (Nov. 18)**

Course evaluation

Student presentations of final research papers

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN TUESDAY  
NOVEMBER 30, 2004**

## Brief Paper #1

Prepare a brief (1-2 page) paper that describes how practitioners at your field placement agency evaluate their clinical practice. Provide a brief description of your field agency. In one or more interviews, cover the following questions:

- What goals/objectives do they want to achieve with their clients (individuals, families, small groups)? Does this vary from client to client? How do they decide?
- How do they know if they are achieving these goals/objectives with their clients? What kind of data do they collect, how do they collect it, manage it, analyze it? What, if any, measurement tools/instruments do they use? How do they use these data in their practice/agency?
- What are your reactions to these interviews? Are you surprised by your findings? Why or why not?

***This assignment is due at the beginning of class on September 2, 2004 and will be discussed during that class session.***

## Brief Paper #2

Prepare a brief (2-3 pages) paper that describes the client or client system you would like to use in carrying out your final evaluation report in this class. ***Do not use any names or any other personally identifying information in this description.***

- Decide upon some dimension of client behavior as an outcome for assessment and monitoring over time (i.e., target behavior).
- Develop at least three different ways you could measure this outcome (even though you may not implement each of them).
- How, when, and where will data be collected?
- Are there any standardized measures relevant to the target behavior you will be measuring? Any gender, SES, or cultural considerations if you use a particular standardized instrument?
- How would you go about measuring the behavior from your observation in session? Describe the procedures you would use for observing and recording.
- Discuss the reliability and validity of each of your proposed methods of measurement.

The following resources will be helpful in locating a standardized measure.

Corcoran, K., & Fischer, J. (1994, 2nd Ed.). Measures for clinical practice. New York: Free Press.

Edleson, J. (1985). Rapid-assessment instruments for evaluating practice with children and youth. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 8, 17-31.

Fredman, N., & Sherman, R. (1987). *Handbook of measurement for marriage and family therapy*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

Harrison, D. F., & Westhuis, D. J. (1990). Rating scales for sexual adjustment. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 13, 85-100.

Hudson, W. W., & Harrison, D. F. (1986). Conceptual issues in measuring and assessing family problems. *Family Therapy*, 13, 85-94.

Keyser, D., & Sweetland, R. (1985). *Test Critiques*. Kansas City: Westport Publishers.

Levitt, J., & Reid, W. R. (1981). Rapid assessment instruments for practice. *Social Work Research and Abstracts*, 17, 13-19.

***This assignment is due at the beginning of class on September 30, 2004 and will be discussed during that class session.***

### **Brief Paper #3**

Prepare a brief (3-4 pages) paper that addresses each of the following:

- Describes the target problem you will be addressing in your research study.
- Select and review ***at least five articles*** related to the problem you intend to address. The articles should specifically address the way in which the chosen problem can be treated and present empirical information about the effectiveness of the intervention(s).
- According to your review of the literature, what interventions are being implemented to address this particular problem? What ultimate outcomes are pursued? What are some of the primary intermediate outcomes for each? Any variability related to client characteristics?
- Based on your review of the literature, which intervention/intervention package seems most likely to be effective with your client? Provide a rationale for your decision. Does this intervention take into account any cultural, SES, or gender issues involving your client?
- End this brief paper with a clearly stated hypothesis, linking an intervention (independent variable) to a change in a specified behavior (dependent variable).

***This assignment is due at the beginning of class on October 7, 2004 and will be discussed during that class session.***

## Brief Paper #4

Prepare a brief (1-2 page) paper that:

- identifies and *operationally defines* the interventive technique or strategy which is believed will lead to the desired change in your client's target problem.
- identify the criteria by which this interventive strategy was selected from a range of other possible interventions.
- to what extent is your intervention/intervention package sensitive to cultural and gender factors?

*This assignment is due at the beginning of class on October 28, 2004 and will be discussed during that class session.*

## FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Each student is expected to write a research manuscript that uses a single-system design. The research data may be fictitious (if your data could not be collected in time or some other problem occurred with your client), but this report should be written as if the research was actually conducted (i.e., your data should be realistic). Complete reference information for each citation should be included in your reference section at the end of this report. Each student's paper *must* conform to APA (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) guidelines and use the following subheadings:

### Abstract

See APA (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) manual for guidelines

### Introduction/Background (3-4 pages)

Your introduction should include a statement of the problem to be addressed (e.g., increasing social skills, reducing depression) and empirical research concerning the prevalence (i.e., the number of people in a population who have the problem) and incidence (the number of new cases over a period of time) of the problem. It should include a discussion of the importance of the problem you are attempting to alleviate, as well as a rationale for the intervention you propose (e.g., why the existing research supports one type of intervention for this problem rather than another). A literature review of pertinent articles documenting previous empirical research (pertaining to either relevant concepts or interventions and outcomes) should be reviewed concisely and critically in this section. The importance and implications of your study for social work practice should be noted. This section should conclude with the explicit statement of your hypotheses or research questions(s).

### Methods (3-4 pages)

This section contains four subsections. Please provide separate subheadings for each of these four subsections (i.e., Client, Design, Outcome Variables, Intervention).

*Client-* in this subsection you should describe those characteristics of your client (e.g., age, gender, history) that you believe to be related to the intervention (independent variable) or to the outcome (dependent variable).

*Design-* in this subsection you should note the type of design (e.g., AB Multiple Baseline, etc.) and the reason for its use.

*Outcome Variables-* in this subsection you should specify the target problem(s)/behavior(s) and discuss how your dependent variable(s) were operationalized for this study. You should include a discussion of how and why the particular problems were selected for intervention, as well as the outcomes measures used (i.e., the dependent variables). The reason for using the particular measures should be noted, procedures for administering and scoring the measures should be described, and the reliability and validity of the measures should be discussed. Discuss who collected data on the targeted behavior and when, where, and how often these data were collected.

*Intervention-* in this subsection you should describe **in detail** the independent variable or the interventive techniques you used to accomplish treatment goals. Provide a rationale for this particular intervention. Indicate how this intervention was implemented, including the amount and duration of client contact hours. **Your description should be detailed enough to allow another practitioner to replicate this intervention.** Report any alterations from your original intervention plan and the reasons for making these alterations.

### **Results/Findings (2-3 pages)**

This section should describe your results (e.g., did the client's problem improve, deteriorate, or remain stable? If there was a change, was it of a magnitude to be clinically important?) Findings should be presented in graphs and referred to in the text of the paper. Graphs should be easy to read, clearly labeled (e.g. "Figure 1") and carefully drawn according to the relevant conventions (e.g., the vertical axis represents the outcome measure). Indicate how your data were analyzed (i.e. visual analysis & statistical analysis, if performed). Discuss the practical/clinical significance of your findings and how you assessed this.

### **Discussion (3-4 pages)**

This section should begin with a paragraph summary of the results; i.e., the results show that (this intervention) had (this much) effect on this client. This section should also include probable reasons for the relative success or failure of the intervention program, suggestions for increasing the intervention's effectiveness, suggestions for other practitioners, and your plans, if any, for additional future work with this client. Discuss the implications of your findings for social work practice with similar clients, including feasibility and ethical issues. This section should also include a discussion of the limitations of the methods employed (e.g., measurement and design procedures), possible alternative explanations for your findings, and the implications and importance of your results (especially for social work practice). Identify questions for further research growing out of this study. Finally, it should include a discussion of your finding(s) in relation to previous research (e.g., the extent to which your findings support or refute other studies you cited in the "introduction/background" section of your paper) and a discussion of future research that should be undertaken in this area of social work practice.

## **Reference section**

This section should include an accurate listing (APA format) of all sources cited in your paper.

This paper must be typed, and references must be in the most recent APA format (See [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_apa.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html) and/or the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association). *The failure to use correct APA style will result in a reduction of one-half letter grade on your paper.*

***All Final Papers are due no later than November 30, 2004***

***Grades on late papers will be penalized one letter grade (e.g., students who would have received an “A” will receive a “B” and students who would have received a “B+” or “B” will receive a “C”).***

Final Papers will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Mechanics (grammar, spelling, style, typing)
- Organization
- Logic (Does one point flow to the next point? Is the writing jargon-free and readable?)
- Content (Is the writing style *explicit and succinct*? Is it brief and “to the point”? Can it be pared down?)
- Adequacy of the literature reviewed
- Ability to summarize and draw conclusions (Did the writer get his/her point across in a straightforward and direct manner?)

Following are some suggestions you might consider to get started on your final research paper:

- Read Chapters 11 through 13 in Bloom et al. (2003) for a basic understanding of single-system designs.
- Read several of the selected single-system design research articles cited throughout the text.
- Review the journal Research on Social Work Practice for examples of single-system designs.
- In addition to Bloom et al. (2003), you might peruse the following books:  
  
Barlow, D.H., Hayes, S.C. & Nelson, R. O. (1984). The Scientist Practitioner: Research and Accountability in Clinical and Educational Settings. New York: Pergamon Press.

Barlow, D.H. & Hersen, M. (1984). Single Case Experimental Designs: Strategies for Studying Behavior Change. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). New York: Pergamon.

Blythe, B.J. & Tripodi, T. (1989). Measurement in Direct Practice. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Blythe, B., Tripodi, T., Briar, S. (1995). Direct Practice Research in Human Service Agencies. Columbia University. New York: Columbia University Press.

Nugent, W.R., Sieppert, J.D., & Hudson, W.W. (2001). Practice Evaluation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Tripodi, T. (1994). A Primer on Single-Subject Design for Clinical Social Workers. Annapolis Jct., MD: NASW Press.

- Peruse the appendix in Chapter 7 of Bloom et al. (2003). This appendix provides a rich source of references for available standardized scales. You also might take a look at the following which are on reserve in the library:

Corcoran, K., & Fischer, J. (2000A). Measures for Clinical Practice: A Sourcebook. Vol. 1. Couples, Families, and Children (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Free Press

Corcoran, K., & Fischer, J. (2000B). Measures for Clinical Practice: A Sourcebook. Vol. 2. Adults (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Free Press

Rush, A.J. ed al. (2000). Handbook of Psychiatric Measures. Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Association

- Browse the *Evaluating Practice web site:*  
<http://utcmhsrsrc.csw.utk.edu/evaluatingpractice/>