

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

Evaluating Clinical Practice	Instructors: John G. Orme Gary Cuddeback
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Spring, 2003	
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Code of Conduct

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook (www.csw.utk.edu)

The Honor Statement

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (Hilltopics, 2002).

Disability

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library (865) 974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

Course Description

This course focuses on the development of knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate clinical practice with individuals, families, and small groups. Building upon the foundation research and practice courses, this course examines methods for measuring clinical outcomes for individuals, families, and small groups using multiple measurement methods, and determining change in client outcomes using single-system designs.

Course Rationale

Clinical social workers face complex human situations presented by clients that come from diverse backgrounds, and the interventions social workers have at their disposal vary in the degree of effectiveness with any given individual, family, or small group client/client system. In order to provide the most effective intervention for particular clients, clinical social workers must be able to measure and monitor client outcomes in a sensitive, practical, and accurate manner, and determine the extent of client change in a timely fashion in order to modify or terminate interventions as needed.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Use a single system research design to evaluate clinical practice;
2. Gain access to and critically read research literature;
3. Describe the strengths and limitations of the various measurement concepts and tools for evaluating the outcomes and processes of interventions;
4. Identify the obstacles that may be encountered in outcome and process evaluation for various interventions and to identify the steps necessary to overcome these obstacles;
5. Identify the probable short- and long-term benefits and costs of systematic outcome and process evaluation to the practitioner, the client(s), the employing agency, the community, and to the profession of social work;
6. Describe the connection between systematic evaluation of one's own practice using a single system design and knowledge pursued through experimental, quasi-experimental, and qualitative designs;
7. Use computer based resources for the assessment, monitoring, and analysis of intervention research;
8. Report and disseminate intervention research;
9. Conduct practice evaluation within the ethical guidelines of the profession of social work;
10. Avoid potential biases in direct intervention research with clients with varying racial ethnic, age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic, physical and/or mental ability characteristics, and/or from high-risk, vulnerable and other disadvantaged groups.

Texts

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (2003). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the*

accountable professional (4th ed). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Readings and Outline

1/14 Course overview
 Basic principles of single-system designs
 Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapter 1

1/21 Basic principles of measurement
 Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapter 2

FIRST QUIZ

1/28 Specifying problems and goals
 Developing a measurement and recording plan
 Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapters 3 & 4

2/4 Behavioral observation
 Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapter 5

2/11 Individualized rating scales
 Client and practitioner logs
 Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapters 6 & 8

2/18 Standardized questionnaires
 Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapter 7

2/25 Non-reactive measures
 Selecting a measure

Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapters 9 & 10

- 3/4 Basic principles of single-system designs
Ethical considerations and controversial issues
Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapter 11
- 3/11 Baselines
The A-B design
Experimental single-system designs
Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapters 12, 13 & 14
- 3/18 No Class (Spring Break)
- 3/25 Basic principles of analysis
Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapter 19 & 23
- 4/1 Visual analysis
Descriptive statistics
Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapters 20 & 21
- 4/8 Inferential statistics
Selecting a procedure for analysis
Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapters 22 & 24
- 4/15 Ethical considerations and controversial issues
Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapter 25

4/22 Multiple baseline designs
Changing intensity designs
Successive intervention designs
Selecting a design
Readings: Bloom et al. (2003), Chapters 15, 16 & 18
Kolko & Milan (1983)

**PAPERS DUE AT THE
BEGINNING OF CLASS LAST QUIZ**

Course Requirements:

In addition to the assignments listed below, each student is expected to read 100% of the assigned reading material and to come to each class prepared to discuss (e.g., ask and answer relevant questions) the reading material.

Evaluation

Weekly Quizzes 50%
Research Paper 50%
100%

A. Quizzes

Each week at the beginning of class the student will be given a short (i.e., approximately 10 questions) quiz. Each quiz will cover both class and reading material from all preceding weeks, although the primary emphasis will be upon information from the previous week. These quizzes will provide both the instructor and students with ongoing feedback concerning knowledge acquisition. This feedback will provide information necessary to take corrective measures by both the instructor and students to assure adequate learning. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Quizzes will count for 50% of the grade.

Quizzes will be discussed after their completion, and graded quizzes will be returned the next day. The quiz grades will be averaged and a final quiz grade will be assigned

based on this average.

B. Paper

Each student must write up a research report that uses a single-system design. The research is to be fictitious, but the report should be written as if the research actually was conducted, and the "data" should be realistic. The paper should include the following:

Introduction (3-4 pages)--Your introduction should include a statement of the problem to be addressed (e.g., increasing social skills, reducing depression or child neglect), and empirical research concerning the prevalence (i.e., the number of people in a population who have the problem) and incidence (e.g., the number of new cases over a period of time) of the problem. It should include a discussion of the importance of the problem(s) 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). Previous empirical research pertaining to relevant 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 question(s).

Methods Section (3-4 pages)--This section has four subsections. Please provide separate subheadings for each of these four subsections (i.e., Client, Design, Outcome Variables, Intervention).

- First, you should describe characteristics of the "client" (e.g., age, gender, history). These characteristics should be those that you believe to be related to the intervention or to the outcome.
- Second, the type of design (e.g., AB, Multiple-Baseline, etc.) and the reason for its use should be noted.
- Third, you should provide a description of the "client's" problems and how and why the particular problems were selected for intervention, as well as the outcome 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 reviewed.
- Fourth, you should provide a description of the intervention(s) as actually implemented (i.e., the independent variable). The intervention(s) should be sufficiently detailed to allow another person to replicate your intervention.

Results Section (2-3 pages)--This section should describe your results (e.g., Did the "client's" problem improve, deteriorate, or remain stable? If there was change, was it of

a magnitude to be clinically important?). Present the data in graphic form and accompany them with a brief discussion of the observed changes or lack thereof. It is very important that your graph has all of the necessary labels and is carefully drawn according to the relevant conventions (e.g., the vertical axis represents the outcome measure). Report relevant descriptive and inferential statistics, and note the rationale for the techniques used.

Discussion Section (3-4 pages)--This section should start with a paragraph summary of the results; i.e., the results show that (this intervention) had (this much) effect on this "client(s)." This section also should include probable reasons for the relative success or failure of the intervention program, suggestions for increasing the program's effectiveness, suggestions for other practitioners or involved individuals, and your plans, if any, for additional future work with this "client." It also should include a discussion of the limitations of the methods employed (e.g., measurement and design procedures), possible alternative explanations for the findings, and the implications and importance of your results (especially for practice). Finally, it should include a discussion of your results in relation to previous research (e.g., studies discussed in your introduction), and a discussion of future research that should be undertaken.

Reference Section--This should include an accurate list of all of the sources cited in your paper.

Appendix--This should include a listing of the sources and databases you searched and the keywords used in your literature search.

The 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 and/or the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed., 2001, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association). ***The failure to use correct APA style will result in a reduction of one-half letter grade on your paper.***

Papers are due no later than the beginning of class on 4/22/02. The grade on any late papers will be reduced by one letter grade.

Papers will be graded according to the following criteria, and a number grade from 0-100 will be assigned:

- Mechanics (grammar, spelling, style, typing)
- Organization
- Logic
- Content
- Adequacy of the literature reviewed
- Ability to summarize and draw conclusions

Assignment of Final Grades

The mean quiz score and the score on the paper will be averaged, and the final course

grade assigned as follows:

A = 94 - 100

B+ = 89 - 93

B = 84 - 88

C+ = 79 - 83

C = 72 - 78

D = 64 - 71

Appendix I

Starting Your Research Paper

Following are some suggestions you might consider to get started on your practice evaluation 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.
- In addition to Bloom et al. (2003), you might peruse the following books in preparation for your practice evaluation paper:

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 (2nd 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.

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