

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

Social Work 526: Evaluating Clinical Practice

Instructor:

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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, Knoxville, 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 2002-03, page 30).

Disability:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library at 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 course, 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.

Text:

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (1999). Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Course Requirements:

Attendance. Students are expected to attend, be on time, and actively involved in class sessions. All of you are adults, have many responsibilities, and must make difficult time management decisions. I trust that if you miss a class or come ill-prepared (mentally absent) it's for a good reason. Therefore, I do not need a reason/excuse for your absence. However, I do have a set formula for absences:

1 Absence	No problem, we all have things that come up.
2 Absences	Highest grade attainable is a B+
3 Absences	Highest grade attainable is a B and comprehensive exam now required

Four or more absences will require withdrawing from the class and may result in the student earning an unsatisfactory grade.

Readings. Students are expected to complete all assigned reading *before* class, be prepared to ask and answer questions, as well as contribute to classroom/group discussions.

Contracting for grades. Grades will be determined at the beginning of the semester based on a written contact between the instructor and student. Satisfactory progress must be attained in each assignment, typically this means attaining a grade of "B" or better (80%). Students will be permitted to drop down to a lower grade if conditions warrant.

Grade "B"	Grade "B+"	Grade "A"
Brief Assignments	Brief Assignments	Brief Assignments
Agency Report	Agency Report	Agency Report
Clinical Evaluation Project	Clinical Evaluation Project	Clinical Evaluation Project
Poster Session	Poster Session	Poster Session
	Case Presentation	Case Presentation
		Clinical Evaluation Paper ~ or ~ Compr
		Comprehensive Final Exam

Brief Assignments. These will be short in-class and homework assignments related to the class session's learning objectives. Students must complete all assignments, even if absent from class. Note, less than satisfactory work will be returned for revision until reaching a satisfactory level.

Credit is given only if *satisfactory grades* are earned on all assignments.

Agency Report. Through an interview of clinical practitioners at your field placement, you'll prepare a *one page* (single-spaced) report describing how they evaluate their clinical practice. At a minimum, you'll want to understand:

- " Goals/objectives, what do they want to achieve with their clients? Does this vary from client to client? How do they decide?
- " How do they know they're achieving these in their clients - individuals, families or groups?
- " Measurement tools/instruments used?
- " What kind of data do they collect, how do they collect it, manage it, and analyze it?
- " How do they use this information in their practice, agency?
- " Discuss the ethical considerations for how they measure and assess their practice and use of this information within the agency (failure to assess practice, ethnic/cultural bias in measures used, how they collect and use data).

These reports will be turned-in and discussed in class on a date to be announced.

Credit is given if the paper answers at-least these questions, is turned in on time, well written and discussed, and earning a grade of **80%** or better.

Clinical Evaluation Project. In this project you will formulate and carry out an evaluation plan on *one* of your active cases (individuals, families or groups) in your field practice setting and then construct a *professional poster presentation* which contains the research design, method of data collection and analysis, outcome results, and conclusion/discussion. Posters will be presented at the end of the semester during a scheduled "poster session," either traditional or electronic posters will be acceptable. A detailed handout and discussions can be found online.

Credit is given if a score of **80%** or better is earned (average of scores from poster session judges), projects earning less than this minimum average will be returned for revision.

Poster Session. On the last day of class you will present your clinical evaluation project. The way "poster sessions" work is that the posters are setup in a room and attendees wander around being amazed at your outstanding work with you, the presenter, remaining with your poster to answer any

questions. Attendees will also be invited to grade the posters on several categories (e.g. clinical intervention, research methods, presentation material, professionalism).

Credit is given for *actively participating* in the poster session as a presenter and/or attendee.

Case Presentation or Client Data. At the beginning of several classes we'll open with a brief case presentation (individual, couple, family, group) composed of back ground information on the client(s) (e.g. age, sex, admit/discharge dates if in-patient, diagnosis, etc), presenting problem(s), proposed goals/objectives and interventions. In this assignment you'll present the case verbally and provide a written handout. These should be written and presented in a highly professional manner and in a style consistent with your field agency. You will then be responsible for leading the class discussion on how we might measure progress and clinical outcomes for this client, examples or handouts on methods you've considered would be good. The presentation and discussion should last no longer than 10 minutes. Ethically it is appropriate to present such case material as long as the identity of the client(s) is protected, e.g. Ms. Jones or Mr. Smith.

Data Presentations will be an option during the second half of the semester during the classes on data analysis. Students opting to do this form of presentation will only need to provide a copy of this client's CS-DOOM and the raw measurement data, saved in an Excel spreadsheet file, both of which you'll be experts on by this time in the semester. It's a little more work, but requires much less time talking in front of the class and will *not* require you to facilitate any discussions.

Credit is given after professionally presenting your case example both in writing and orally or providing sufficient client data.

Clinical Evaluation Paper. Okay, so you've decided to go after that "A," well this assignment is your chance to demonstrate an "excellent" understanding of practice evaluation. This paper is essentially a written extended version of your poster presentation; it's a combination clinical/research paper. You'll have all the sections included in a research paper, like we did in research methods, (introduction, literature review, methods, results, discussion, conclusion) and a detailed method section for the intervention technique(s) with the client(s) serving as the data set. You'll do a extensive literature review of the particular problem/issue your client is facing, documented interventions, and detailed methodologies for both the intervention(s) and your evaluation methods. The paper must be a minimum of 25 pages (text, references, graphs, tables).

You'll need to begin working on this paper at the start of the semester and progress reports (in-class or in advisory meetings with me) are expected throughout the semester.

Credit is given when the final paper receives a grade of "B" or better, although the student should write the paper in manner which reflects excellent mastery of course material and skills.

Comprehensive Final Examination. This idea actually came from a previous class, actually it shocked me that they wanted this option, it is a good old fashion comprehensive exam covering the course material for the semester. As a matter of fact, everyone has opted for this exam over the paper option. Its format will be a series of essay questions. The test is a take home open book given out on a Friday afternoon (electronically posted on CourseInfo) and returned Monday morning, students will collectively select a weekend towards the end of the semester to take this exam.

Credit is given if the student scores an **85%** or better on this exam, failure to achieve this score will automatically result in a grade of “B+”, no curving or extra-credit.

Course Outline, Class Objectives & Readings:

<p>Class 1 1/13/03 or 1/14/03</p>	<p>Course Overview & Introduction To Evaluating Clinical Practice T Define <i>practice evaluation</i> and how it differs from research T Relate the concept of the <i>scientific practitioner</i> to social work practice T Outline intervention obstacles to practice evaluation T Discuss the benefits of practice evaluation for the client, agency, community, profession T Discuss the ethical considerations (e.g. informed consent, confidentiality) when conducting practice evaluation and in using its products T Address client, practitioner and agency resource limitations T Register and log-on to Course Info</p> <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 1 “Integrating Evaluation and Practice: Introduction to Single-System Design” & Chapter 25 “Not for Practitioners Alone: Evaluation for Clients, Administrators, Educators, and Students.”</p>
<p>1/20/03 or 1/21/03</p>	<p>Martin Luther King Holiday - No class</p>
<p>Class 2 1/27/03 or 1/28/03</p>	<p>Basic Principles of Conceptualization & Measurement T Conceptualize and operationalize client problems T Define and give examples of the four levels of measurement T Apply the research principles <i>validity</i> and <i>reliability</i> to practice evaluation T List the benefits of direct vs. indirect measures T Define the six steps of constructing a measurement plan: <i>CS-DOOM</i></p> <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 2 “Conceptualizing and Measuring Targets and Objectives/Goals”</p>
<p>Class 3 2/3/03 or 2/4/03</p>	<p>Specifying Problems and Goals - Target(s) of Intervention Measurement & Recording Plans T List and critique <i>current evaluation practices</i> in the local social work community T Define <i>advantages</i> of scientific practice evaluation T <i>Identify, prioritize & conceptualize</i> client problems/goals T <i>Operationalize</i> problems/goals T Construct <i>objective(s)</i> for each problem/goal T Outline basic <i>data collection options</i> T Using an actual case, construct a basic <i>measurement plan: CS-DOOM</i></p> <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 3 “Specifying Problems and Goals: Targets of Intervention” & Chapter 4 “Developing a Measurement and Recording Plan”</p>

<p>Class 4 2/10/03 or 2/11/03</p>	<p>Behavioral Observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T Describe the key aspects of behavioral observations T Discuss the influence of “bias” in this process and in practice evaluation T Give examples of the four ways of measuring a behavior: frequency, duration, intervals, intensity. T Create a <i>recording form</i> using a computer spreadsheet T Calculate and interpret a <i>rate</i> of behavior using a computer spreadsheet <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 5 “Behavioral Observation”</p>
<p>Class 5 2/17/03 or 2/18/03</p>	<p>Individualized Rating Scales & Client-Practitioner Logs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T List the benefits/limits of using scales T Demonstrate cultural competence in planning and constructing measures T Construct single item and summative IRS scales in cooperation with clients T Outline the uses of <i>logs</i> in practice evaluation T Construct an evaluation log <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 6 “Individualized Rating Scales” & Chapter 8 “Logs”</p>
<p>Class 6 2/24/03 or 2/25/03</p>	<p>Standardized Questionnaires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T List the characteristics & benefits of standardized scales T Outline the criteria for choosing a scale T List the key elements for administering a scale T Identify several web based resources T Administer, score, record & graph a standardized scale T Demonstrate how to access and critically evaluate research which tests standardized measures T Conduct a comprehensive assessment of a standardized measure <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 7 “Standardized Questionnaires”</p>
<p>Class 7 3/3/03 or 3/4/03</p>	<p>Non-reactive Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T Define reactivity T Outline its sources & ways to control it T Discuss non-reactive measures & give examples T Identify criteria to consider when selecting <i>any</i> measure T Apply several non-reactive measures to an actual client <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 9 “Reactivity and Nonreactive Measures” & Chapter 10 “Selecting a Measure”</p>

<p>Class 8 3/10/03 or 3/11/03</p>	<p>Single-system Designs: Principles, Baselines, A-B and Experimental Designs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T Describe the basic characteristics of single system designs T Highlight the possible benefits of their usage in evaluating a specific area of practice T Explain the challenges in establishing causality and generalizability T Using a case example, construct prospective and retrospective baselines T Detail how these approaches to establishing baselines differ, benefits, complications T Outline the ethical and research principles for specifying the length of a baseline T Using the case presented, plan a case study (A or B design) and single-system (A-B) design, describe how these differ, list the benefits and limitations of each design T Apply one of three possible experimental designs (A-B-A, A-B-A-B, B-A-B) to the same case and discuss the benefits and ethical concerns of such designs <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 11 “Basic Principles of Single-System Design,” Chapter 12 “Baselining: Collecting Information Before Intervention, Chapter 13 “From the Case Study to the Basic Single-System Design: A-B” & Chapter 14 “The Experimental Design: A-B-A, A-B-A-B, B-A-B”</p>
<p>3/17/03 or 3/18/03</p>	<p>Spring Break - No class</p>
<p>Class 9 3/24/03 or 3/25/03</p>	<p>Analyzing Measurement Data: Basic Principles & Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T Identify socio-cultural factors which may bias analysis and interpretation of findings T Distinguish between analyzing data with regard to effort, effectiveness, & efficiency T Understand the difference between theoretical, practical and statistical significance T Create and save a basic computer spreadsheet file containing client data T Code and enter actual client data into this spreadsheet <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 19 “Basic Principles of Analysis”</p>
<p>Class 10 3/31/03 or 4/1/03</p>	<p>Visual & Descriptive Analyses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T Using a spreadsheet file of client data, create line and bar graphs T Analyze graphs, describing the level of the data, phase trends, and drift trend. T Determine and interpret the general pattern for graphed data T Decide when its necessary to use statistical techniques and what to consider when selecting a specific statistic T Using a computer spreadsheet and real client data, compute and provide a meaningful interpretation for measures of central tendency (mean, mode, median), variability (standard deviation, range), and trend (regression) <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 20 “Visual Analysis of Single-System Design” & Chapter 21 “Descriptive Statistics”</p>
<p>Class 11 4/7/03 or 4/8/03</p>	<p>Inferential Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T Describe the <i>proportion</i>/frequency, two-standard deviation-band, chi-square and t-test methods T Outline the strengths and limitations for each T Analyze client data using these three methods T Interpret results and determine the effectiveness of an intervention <p>Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 22 “Tests of Statistical Significance for Single-System Designs”</p>

Class 12 4/14/03 or 4/15/03	The Entire Measurement Process: A Review Exercise T Create a measurement plan in less than 10 minutes T Fabricate data and manage it with a spreadsheet program T Visually and descriptively analyze the client data T Use inferential statistical techniques to further test the data T Interpret your findings and discuss implications for practice
Class 13 4/21/03 or 4/22/03	Poster Session