

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

SW526: Evaluating Clinical Practice

Course Outline
Spring 2004

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Helpful UT Clinical Evaluation Web page: <http://utcmhsrsrc.csw.utk.edu/evaluatingpractice/>

Text:

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (2003). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional* (4th 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:

One Absence - No problem, we all have things that come up.

Two Absences - Highest grade attainable is a B+

Three Absences - Highest grade attainable is a B and comprehensive exam now required

4+ absences - will require withdrawing from the class and may result in the student earning an unsatisfactory grade. Please, see me with any attendance issues.

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 contract between the instructor and student. Satisfactory progress must be attained in each assignment, typically this means attaining a grade of "B" or better (85%). Students will be permitted to drop down to a lower grade if conditions warrant.

Grade "B"

Competency Assessments
Agency Report
Overview of Evaluation
Poster Session

Grade "B+"

Competency Assessments
Agency Report
Overview of Evaluation
Data Presentation
Poster Session

Grade "A"

Competency Assessments
Agency Report
Overview of Evaluation
Data Presentation
Poster Session
Clinical Evaluation Paper

Competency Assessments. These will be short in-class and/or homework assignments related to the class session's learning objectives. Students must complete the competency assessments and obtain a threshold grade of 85% or retake until the threshold is met, even if absent from class. **Credit** is given only if *threshold grades* are earned on these 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 2/3/04 or 2/4/04

Credit is given if the report answers at-least these questions, is turned in on time, well written and discussed, and earning a grade of 85% or better.

Overview of Evaluation Project. In this project you will formulate an evaluation plan on *one* of your active cases (individuals, families or groups) in your field practice setting and then construct a *professional Powerpoint presentation* which contains the problem identification, discussion of the selection of your clinical measurement, design, method of data collection and analysis, and expected results. A detailed handout can be found online. At the beginning of several classes we'll open with a brief case presentation (individual, couple, family, group) composed of background 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. 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. **Course Credit** is given if a score of 85% or better is earned .

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 providing sufficient client data to document clinical evaluation (second half of semester). Clinical efficacy does not need to be demonstrated for grading purposes so a lack of efficacy is an honest outcome too! Due date: 3/22/04. 3/29/04 4/5/04

Poster Session. You will present your clinical evaluation project as a poster session. The way “poster sessions” work is that the posters are setup in a room and attendees wander around being amazed at your outstanding work . You should remain with your poster to answer any questions. Attendee judges will also be invited to grade the posters on several categories (e.g. clinical intervention, research methods, presentation material, professionalism). In this project you must receive 2 out of three pass grades to complete the poster experience. **Course Credit** is given for *actively participating* in the poster session as a presenter with an appealing professional poster documenting your case or group study. **Due Date: 4/12/04 12:30 - 6:30 is the Poster Judging.**

Clinical Evaluation Paper. This assignment is your chance to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of practice evaluation. This paper is essentially a written extended version of your poster presentation; it is a combination clinical/research paper. You will have all the sections included in a research paper, as you 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 the detailed methods you used for both the intervention(s) and your evaluation methods for this client(s). The paper must be a minimum of 20 pages (text, references, graphs, tables). You will 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 a manner that reflects excellent mastery of course material and skills. See the paper outline information at end. **Due date is in class on 4/19/04 or 4/20/04.**

Course Outline, Class Objectives & Readings:

Class 1 1/12 -1/13 *Course Overview & Introduction to Evaluating Clinical Practice*

Define *practice evaluation* and how it differs from research

Relate the concept of the *scientific practitioner* to social work practice

Outline intervention obstacles to practice evaluation

Discuss the benefits of practice evaluation for the client, agency, community, and profession

Discuss the ethical considerations (e.g. informed consent, confidentiality) when conducting practice evaluation and in using its outcome deliverables

Address client, practitioner, and agency resource limitations

Register and log-on to Course Info

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.

1/19/04 Martin Luther King Holiday - No class (See 1/20/04 optional seminar)

1/20/04 Discussion time question/answer (no lecture today) and everyone is invited that can attend (8:30 or 5:30 Class times). I will cover topics such as databases to obtain measurement tools, helpful links, and overview of resource information posted @ UTOonline, Examples of past posters & PowerPoint presentations.

Class 2 1/26 & 1/27 *Basic Principles of Conceptualization & Measurement*

Conceptualize and operationalize client problems

Define and give examples of the four levels of measurement

Apply the research principles of *validity* and *reliability* to practice evaluation

List the benefits of direct vs. indirect measures

Define the six steps of constructing a measurement plan: *CS-DOOM*

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 2 “Conceptualizing and Measuring Targets and Objectives/Goals”

Class 3 2/3 & 2/4 *Specifying Problems and Goals - Target(s) of Intervention*

Measurement & Recording Plans

List and critique *current evaluation practices* in the local social work community

Define *advantages* of scientific practice evaluation

Identify, prioritize, & conceptualize client problems/goals

Operationalizing problems/goals

Construct *objective(s)* for each problem/goal

Outline basic *data collection options*

Using an actual case, construct a basic *measurement plan: CS-DOOM*

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 3 “Specifying Problems and Goals: Targets of Intervention” & Chapter 4 “Developing a Measurement and Recording Plan”

***Class 4** 2/9 (SW Lab) & 2/10 (SW Lab - a.m. class only) *Behavioral Observation*

Describe the key aspects of behavioral observations

Discuss the influence of “bias” in this process and in practice evaluation

Give examples of the four ways of measuring a behavior: frequency, duration, intervals, & intensity.

Create a *recording form* using a computer spreadsheet

Calculate and interpret a *rate* of behavior using a computer spreadsheet

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 5 “Behavioral Observation”

Class 5 2/16 & 2/17 *Individualized Rating Scales & Client-Practitioner Logs*

List the benefits/limits of using scales

Demonstrate cultural competence in planning and constructing measures

Construct single item and summative IRS scales in cooperation with clients

Outline the uses of *logs* in practice evaluation

Construct an evaluation log

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 6 “Individualized Rating Scales” & Chapter 8 “Logs”

Class 6 2/23 & 2/24 *Standardized Questionnaires*

List the characteristics & benefits of standardized scales

Outline the criteria for choosing a scale

List the key elements for administering a scale

Identify several web based resources

Administer, score, record, & graph a standardized scale

Demonstrate how to access and critically evaluate research that tests standardized measures

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of a standardized measure

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 7 “Standardized Questionnaires”

***Class 7** 3/1 (SW Lab) & 3/2 *Non-reactive Measures*

Define reactivity

Outline its sources & ways to control it

Discuss non-reactive measures & give examples

Identify criteria to consider when selecting *any* measure

Apply several non-reactive measures to an actual client

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 9 “Reactivity and Nonreactive Measures” & Chapter 10 “Selecting a Measure”

3/08/04 & 3/09/04 **Spring Break - No class**

Class 8 3/15 & 3/16 *Single-system Designs: Principles, Baselines, A-B and Experimental Designs*

Describe the basic characteristics of single system designs Highlight the possible benefits of their usage in evaluating a specific area of practice Explain the challenges in establishing causality and generalizability

Using a case example, construct prospective and retrospective baselines

Detail how these approaches to establishing baselines differ, benefits, complications

Outline the ethical and research principles for specifying the length of a baseline

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”

Class 9 3/22 & 3/23 *Single-system Designs continued:*

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

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

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Continuation of 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”

***Class 10 3/29 (SW Lab) & 3/30 (SW Lab- a.m. class only)** *Analyzing Measurement Data: Principles & Process*

Identify socio-cultural factors that may bias analysis and interpretation of findings

Distinguish between analyzing data with regard to effort, effectiveness, & efficiency

Understand the difference between theoretical, practical and statistical significance

Create and save a basic computer spreadsheet file containing client data

Code and enter actual client data into this spreadsheet

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 19 “Basic Principles of Analysis”

Class 11 4/5 & 4/6 *Visual & Descriptive Analyses*

Using a spreadsheet file of client data, create line and bar graphs

Analyze graphs, describing the level of the data, phase trends, and drift trend.

Determine and interpret the general pattern for graphed data

Decide when its necessary to use statistical techniques and what to consider when selecting a specific statistic

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)

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 20 “Visual Analysis of Single-System Design” & Chapter 21 “Descriptive Statistics”

Class 12 4/12 12:30 - 6:30 **Poster Judging (Capstone Experience)**

4/13 *Inferential Analysis:* Describe the *proportion*/frequency, two-standard deviation-band, chi-square and t-test methods Outline the strengths and limitations for each. Analyze client data using these three methods Interpret results and determine the effectiveness of an intervention

Readings: Bloom et al. (1999) - Chapter 22 “Tests of Statistical Significance for Single-System Designs”

Class 13 4/19 & 4/20 *The Entire Measurement Process: A Review Exercise*

Create a measurement plan in less than 10 minutes

Fabricate data and manage it with a spreadsheet program

Visually and descriptively analyze the client data

Use inferential statistical techniques to further test the data

Interpret your findings and discuss implications for practice

Class 14 4/26 - 4/27 Continuation of last week's topic.

*** Please note that these meeting times are scheduled in the Beale building if your section has (SW Lab) noted after it due to GEB schedule conflicts. The night course has no conflicts and will meet always in GEB**

Appendix I Starting Your Research Paper

Going for the "A"? - The 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.
- 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 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.

Nugent, W. R., Sieppert, J. D., & Hudson, W. W. (2001). Practice evaluation for the 21st 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 books available at the library:

Corcoran, K., & Fischer, J. (2000A). Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook. Vol. 1. Couples, families and children (3rd ed). New York: Free Press.

Corcoran, K., & Fischer, J. (2000B). Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook. Vol. 2. Adults (3rd ed). New York: Free Press.

Rush, A. J. et al. (2000). Handbook of psychiatric measures. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

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

Suggested Paper Outline

Each student contracting for an 'A' must write up a research manuscript that uses a single-system design. The research data may be fictitious (only if your data could not be collected in time), 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 (5-6 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). 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 question(s).

Methods Section (4-5 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 (3-5 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 use tables if appropriate) 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 (3-5 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.

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 either 4/19/04 or 4/20/04. The grade on any late papers will be reduced by one letter grade. You will need an 85 or better to qualify for your "A" grade. Papers will be graded according to the following criteria, and a number grade from 0 - 100 will be assigned based on:

- Mechanics (grammar, spelling, style, typing) 20%
- Organization 20%
- Logic and Content 20%
- Adequacy of the literature reviewed 20%
- Ability to summarize and draw conclusions 20%