

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

**SW526 - Evaluating Clinical Practice**

Course Outline

Spring 2006

**Instructor:** Dr. Michael Sullivan.  
Email: [msulliv3@utk.edu](mailto:msulliv3@utk.edu)  
Appointments Wed - Fri call first  
Fax: (901) 448-4850

Telephone: 448-4475 Office: Rm. 607  
Office Hours: 9:30-12 Mon & Wed., 12-1 Tues.  
CLASSROOM: 250 & computer lab sessions  
Emergencies: Call office they will contact me

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

**Text:**

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (2006). *Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional* (5<sup>th</sup> 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 suggest withdrawing from the class and a result of 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. Reserve readings located at UTK Hodges electronic reserve.

**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 (85%). Students will be permitted to drop down to a lower grade if conditions warrant.

**Grade "B"**

Competency Assessment  
Logic model  
Overview of Evaluation  
Data Presentation  
PowerPoint Poster Session

**Grade "B+"**

Competency Assessments  
Logic model  
Overview of Evaluation  
Data Presentation  
PowerPoint Poster Session  
Clinical Evaluation Paper

**Grade "A"**

Competency Assessments  
Logic model  
Overview of Evaluation  
Data Presentation  
PowerPoint Poster Session  
Student Poster Presentation  
Clinical Evaluation Paper

**Competency Assessments.** These will be short homework multiple choice questions related to the text and reinforced in 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 when *threshold grades* are earned on these assignments.

**Logic Modeling** During the beginning of the semester classes we will have 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). You will use a logic model (LM) to develop proposed goals/objectives and interventions for the behavior targets. This in-class activity involves students in dyads/triads developing the logic model for their evaluation of a client system. Each LM will include: a client-centered goal statement describing the future state that would be achieved if your interventions are successful, description of the current state of the client system, a problem breakdown list with at least 2 objectives [i.e., mini-goals] for each problem in that list, inputs and methods [i.e., processes, interventions] to be implemented for each problem in the problem list, results [short-term] of the methods to be implemented for each problem, outcomes [long-term] of the methods to be implemented for each problem. Each dyad/triad will very briefly present their LM and a self-critique of 'work still to be done' on their LM. "Blank" LMs will be distributed in class for this activity. It is expected that each student will achieve the level of quality of their work in this activity commensurate with their contracted grade and a minimum level of participation of at least 85%.

**Overview of Evaluation Project. Due 2/20& 2/21.** 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* that contains the measurement plan for the target behaviors (3-5 slides only). You can add this piece to your larger PowerPoint presentation that contains the elements for your poster i.e. problem identification, discussion of the selection of your clinical measurement, design, method of data collection and analysis, and results. A detailed handout for the entire presentation can be found online. Remember this project can only contain the 3-5 slides with your measurement i.e. individualized rating scales or behavior logs.

The presentation 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. Due 4/3 & 4/4 or 4/10-4/11.** This will be a brief 7 minute required presentation during the second half of the semester during the classes on data analysis. Students will only need to provide 3-5 PowerPoint slides with the graphs of this client's progress developed using Excel. You'll be experts on by this time in the semester. It 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 as a lack of efficacy is an honest outcome too!

**Student Poster Session.** This project is for students contracting for an A grade. You will present your clinical evaluation project as a poster session to the class. This is where you print all your PowerPoint slides and select the most appropriate slides to build your poster. A guide for what the poster should contain is posted online. The way "poster sessions" work is that the posters are setup in the classroom and students wander around being amazed at your outstanding work. You should remain with your poster to answer any questions. **Due date is 4/24 or 4/25.**

**Clinical Evaluation Paper. (10-20 pages).** This is for students contracting for a B+ or A grade. 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 10 pages (inclusive of text, references, graphs, tables). You will need to begin conceptualizing this paper at the beginning of the semester and it is suggested you use your PowerPoint presentation as a foundation (You can cut and paste into the presentation into Word and expand it into your final paper). **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. **Due date is last class 4/24 or 4/25.**

## Course Outline, Class Objectives & Readings:

1/16/05 Martin Luther King Holiday - No class (See 1/17/04 optional seminars).

1/17/05 Optional seminars on an overview of clinical evaluation.

Tuesday 9-11 and 5:30-7:30 in classroom 250. This is to be a helpful adjunct to class.

Tour the Course Info website, Q&A, and how to use your field agency experience

**Class 1** 1/23 & 1/24 *Basic Principles of Conceptualization & Measurement*

*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

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

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

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 1 "Integrating Evaluation and Practice: Introduction to single-System Design &- Chapter 2 "Conceptualizing and Measuring Targets and Objectives/Goals"

**Small Group Activity:** **Begin Logic modeling assignment**

**Class 2** 1/30 & 1/31 *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

List the benefits of direct vs. indirect measures

Outline basic *data collection options*

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

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 3 "Specifying Problems and Goals: Targets of Intervention" & Chapter 4 "Developing a Measurement and Recording Plan"

**Small Group Activity:** **Logic modeling assignment**

**Class 3** 2/6 & 2/7 *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

**\*Lab - How to use Excel**

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 5 "Behavioral Observation"

**Class 4** 2/13 & 2/14 *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

**LAB** Calculate and interpret a *IRS and log* using a Excel computer spreadsheet

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 6 "Individualized Rating Scales" & Chapter 8 "Logs"

**Class 5** 2/20 & 2/21 *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

**LAB - Group competition:** Develop an individualized rating scale using Excel

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 7 “Standardized Scales”

**Class 6** 2/27 & 2/28 *Non-reactive Measures Self Study*

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 9 “Reactivity and Nonreactive Measures” & Chapter 10 “Selecting a Measure”

**LAB- Overview of evaluation presentations due**

**Class 7** 3/6 & 3/7 *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. (2006) - 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 8** 3/13 & 3/14 *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. (2006) - Continuation of Ch. 11, 12, & Ch. 15 “Multiple designs for single systems”

**LAB** - Create line graphs using Excel (see handout)

3/20/06 & 3/21/06 **Spring Break - No classes this week**

**Class 9** 3/27 & 3/28 *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)

**LAB** - Create line graphs using Excel on client data, use two standard deviation approach for SD bands.

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 20 “Visual Analysis of Single-System Design” & Chapter 21 “Descriptive Statistics”

**Class 10** 4/3& 4/4 *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 one of these methods.

Interpret results and determine the effectiveness of an intervention

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 22 “Tests of Statistical Significance for Single-System Designs”

**LAB use Singwin software and perform t-tests and proportion frequency tests**

**Class 11** 4/10 & 4/11 *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

**Readings:** Bloom et al. (2006) - Chapter 19 “Basic Principles of Analysis”

**LAB Data Presentations Due (Only data analysis not more than 3-5 slides and 7 minutes)**

**Class 12** 4/17 & 4/18 *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

**LAB Data Presentations Due (Only data analysis not more than 3-5 slides and 7 minutes)**

**Class 13** 4/24 - 4/25 Continuation of last week's topic.

**Student poster presentations for students contracting for an ‘A’ grade**

## 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** (3-5 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 (2-4 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 and client problem). 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 standardized measures should be discussed.
- 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 (2-5 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, time is horizontal axis). Report relevant descriptive and inferential statistics, and note the rationale for the techniques used.

**Discussion** Section (2-4 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 can 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), conclusions and a discussion of future research ideas and/or contributions to social work practice.

**Reference Section**-(1-2 pages)-- 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](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html) and/or the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 5<sup>th</sup> 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 the last class. 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 15%
- Logic and Content 25%
- Ability to summarize and draw conclusions 30%
- Adequacy of the literature reviewed 10%

## 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 your Bloom et al. text 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 your text, 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 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. (2006). 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 (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. et al. (2000). Handbook of psychiatric measures. Washington, DC:  
American Psychiatric Association.

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