

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

**SW 520 Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice
Section 4
(1 credit hour)
Spring, 2008**

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Office Hours: Mondays 4-6 pm
Thursdays 11:00-12:30 pm.
Also by appointment

Pre-requisites: 510, 512, 513, 517, 519, 522, 538.

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.utk.csw.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*, 2007).

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 is a required advanced curriculum course. The course examines how to (1) convert information needs related to practice decisions into well-structured answerable questions; (2) efficiently locate the best evidence with which to answer such questions; (3) critically appraise such evidence; (4) apply results to practice and policy decisions; and (5) evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the application of such results to practice and policy decisions.

COURSE RATIONALE

In order to maximize services to client systems that are effective in achieving valued outcomes, and to minimize ineffective and harmful services, social workers must have the knowledge and skills to formulate well-structured answerable questions about practice and policy decisions, and locate, critically appraise, apply, and evaluate the best evidence for making practice and policy decisions within a culturally affirming generalist social work context.

COURSE COMPETENCIES

By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Define, articulate, and apply principles of critical thinking, by learning how to recognize, define, and avoid practice fallacies, to improve care given and care received with diverse clients/client systems. (*content: assertions and assumptions of practice; common logical fallacies when examining evidence; common errors in reasoning that violate principles of science called "practitioners' fallacies"; steps in evidence based practice; controversies and misconceptions about evidence based practice*).
2. Formulate well-structured answerable questions about practice and policy decisions through engagement with the client, a mutual understanding of expectations, and a careful assessment of service needs and availability, the client/client system's culture, context, and motivation. (*content: Client Oriented Practical Evidence Search" (COPES) questions; evaluation, prevention, assessment, description, and risk questions*).
3. Employ a scientific analytic approach using qualitative and/or quantitative methods to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions (*content: steps in evidence based practice; utilizing electronic searches and information technology using methodological filters; quality of study rating forms and frameworks for evaluating research studies; meta-analysis*).
4. Analyze the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological and other identities and orientations on thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values. (*content: identity formation; experiences of individuals in these contexts; formation of multiple identities; case studies of life experiences in identity formation and their relationships with the thoughts on contemporary social issues; critical analysis of self with respect to the above identity designations; history of cultural insensitivity in research; generalization of research findings to other groups; recruitment and retention of minority and oppressed populations in research studies; problematic issues in making research more culturally competent*).

REQUIRED BOOKS AND READINGS

Gibbs, L.E. (2003). *Evidenced-based practice for the helping professions: A practical guide with integrated multimedia*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thompson Learning.

Readings other than those from the required text for this class will either be placed on BlackBoard or can be found at Hodges through the electronic reserve.

ORGANIZATION OF COURSE AND BLACKBOARD

This course is designed to be primarily web-based. This course is largely about learning a fairly straight-forward methodology. As such, it can easily be done online. The class will only physically meet the first time. The text, other readings, power points and handouts will be the primary basis for understanding the material, which will then be practiced via individual and group assignments that are due weekly.

All content and course materials for this course (with minor exceptions) are on BlackBoard. Content on BlackBoard is organized by week. This includes accompanying PowerPoint slides and handouts. ALL group and individual assignments are available on BlackBoard and are to be completed on BlackBoard. NO paper assignments will be accepted without prior approval of the professor. The one exception is the binder that is due at the end of the semester.

On the first day of class students will self-divide into groups of no more than 3 or 4 and will retain those groups throughout the semester. Problems within the group should be reported to the professor promptly. Student groups are responsible for completing their assignments on BlackBoard by the required due date. There will be a place on BlackBoard for groups to “meet” online to discuss and complete assignments. Alternatively, groups can meet at some other location, including the classroom, to complete their weekly work.

The professor will be on campus either in the classroom or in her office during the time scheduled for each class session. No content will be taught by the professor during this time, but she will be available to answer questions or provide guidance for individuals or groups on their assignments. Other than for the first class session, students are under no obligation to be in the classroom during the designated class time.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grading Criteria

Group assignments	28 points (4 points each)
Collaborative effort and process	7 points
Individual assignments	56 points (8 points each)
Binder	9 points

Each member of the group will be asked to grade their following group members for their level of investment, participation, communication, quality of work and teamwork throughout this course on a scale of 1 to 5 during the third week and the final week. (One equaling the lowest score and five equaling the highest score.) Group members are also expected to provide evidence for their reasoning for each score by providing comments and sharing what they did to address any problems and the overall results. These scores and comments will be emailed to me and will be kept anonymous. I strongly encourage all group members to treat these group activities as a professional collaborative effort and address problems up front in a constructive manner. Your scoring of others, comments and steps you took to constructively address and problem solve will be reflected in your collaborative effort and process grade.

Late assignments will initially cost 3 points and 1 point following each day after without prior permission or cases of documented emergencies. After 5 days the assignment will turn into a zero.

Final Grade

The University of Tennessee does not award minus grades at the graduate level. Therefore, the following grading scale is used for the final grade:

95 – 100	A Superior performance, exceeds expectations
90 – 94	B+ Better than satisfactory performance
85 – 89	B Satisfactory performance, meets expectations
80 – 84	C+ Less than satisfactory performance
73 – 79	C Performance well below the standard expected of graduate students
66 – 72	D
<66	F

SYLLABUS SUMMARY

Session	Content	Assignments	Dates/Due Dates
1	Course overview; EBP; Critical thinking	Class meets at 1:00 PM	March 5
		Week 1 Group Assignments	9 AM, Mar. 6
2	Answerable research question	Week 1 Individual Assignments	3 PM, Mar. 12
		Week 2 Group Assignments	9 AM, Mar. 13
		Spring Break	March 17
3	Track down evidence	Week 2 Individual Assignments	3 PM, Mar. 26
		Week 3 Group Assignments	9 AM, Mar 28
4	Evaluating evidence: Multiple study reviews	Week 3 Individual Assignments	3 PM, April 2
		Week 4 Group Assignments	9 AM, April 3
5	Evaluating evidence: Multiple study reviews	Week 4 Individual Assignments	3 PM, Apr. 9
		Week 5 Group Assignments	9 AM, Apr. 10
6	Applying research evidence	Week 5 Individual Assignments	3 PM, Apr. 16
		Week 6 Group Assignments	9 AM, Apr. 17
7	Pulling it all together	Week 6 Individual Assignments	3 PM, Apr. 23
		Week 7 Group Assignments	9 AM, Apr. 24
		Final Assignments	3 PM, Apr. 25

Session 1: Course Overview; Critical Thinking

Define, articulate, and apply principles of critical thinking, by learning how to recognize, define, and avoid practice fallacies, to improve care given and care received with diverse clients/client systems. (*content: assertions and assumptions of practice; common logical fallacies when examining evidence; common errors in reasoning that violate principles of science called “practitioners’ fallacies”; steps in evidence based practice; controversies and misconceptions about evidence based practice*).

Content	Course overview; overview of evidence-based practice (EBP); critical thinking; fallacies in thinking and reasoning; EBP and NASW Code of Ethics
Required Readings	Gibbs, Chapter 1- Evidence-Based Practice: Definition and What it offers to You and to Your Clients (pp. 1-22); Chapter 2- Become Motivated to Apply the Current Best Evidence (pp. 25 - 52). Gambrill, E.D. (2003). Evidence-based practice: Sea change or the Emperor’s new clothes? <i>Journal of Social Work Education</i> , 39, 3-23. Gambrill, E. (1999). Evidence based practice: An alternative to authority-based practice. <i>Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services</i> , 80, 341
PowerPoint	Overview of evidence-based practice (EBP); fallacies in thinking and reasoning; critical thinking ; Critical Thinking Power Point
Handouts	PowerPoint slides REACH, Module 1, Handouts 2 – 5, 7 – 8 REACH, Module 1, Glossary Critical Thinking
Video Clips	Gibbs CD: HITTT segment
Assignments, Group	
Exercise 1	Exercise 1-1, pp. 19 – 21, in Gibbs text.
Exercise 2	Exercise 1-2, pp. 21 – 24, in Gibbs text.
Exercise 3	REACH, Module 1, Activity 3
Exercise 4	Exercise 2-1, pp. 27 – 32, 33.
Assignments, Individual	
Exercise 1	Exercise 2-2, pg. 32, 34 – 38 OR Exercise 2-3, pp. 32, 34 - 38 in Gibbs text.
Exercise 2	REACH, Module 1, Activity 1.
Exercise 3	Create a notebook

Session 2: Posing an Answerable Research Question

Formulate well-structured answerable questions about practice and policy decisions through engagement with the client, a mutual understanding of expectations, and a careful assessment of service needs and availability, the client/client system's culture, context, and motivation. (*content: Client Oriented Practical Evidence Search” (COPES) questions; evaluation, prevention, assessment, description, and risk questions*).

Content	Posing an answerable research question
Required Reading	Gibbs, Chapter 3- Pose a specific Question of Importance to Your Client’s Welfare pp. 53-76.
Required Reading	Yeager, K.R. (2006). A practical approach to formulating evidence-based questions in social work. In A.R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.) (pp. 47-58). <i>Foundations of Evidenced-Based Social Work Practice</i> . New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.
PowerPoint	Posing an answerable research question
Handouts	PowerPoint slides REACH, Module 2, Handouts 1 – 2
Videos	REACH Case Examples, Scene 1
Assignments, Group	
Exercise 1	Exercise 3-1, pp. 74 – 77, in Gibbs text.
Exercise 2	Exercise 3-4, pg. 87, in Gibbs text.
Exercise 3	REACH, Module 2, Activity 1
Assignments, Individual	
Exercise 1	Exercise 3-2, pp. 81 – 84, in Gibbs text.
Exercise 2	REACH, Module 2, Activity 1
Exercise 3	REACH, Module 2, Activity 2

Session 3: Tracking down evidence

Employ a scientific analytic approach using qualitative and/or quantitative methods to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions (*content: steps in evidence based practice; utilizing electronic searches and information technology using methodological filters; quality of study rating forms and frameworks for evaluating research studies; meta-analysis*).

Content	Strategies for locating the best external evidence
Required Readings	Gibbs, Chapter 4- Locate the Best External Evidence to Answer Your Question pp. 88-137.
PowerPoint	Strategies for locating the best external evidence
Handouts	PowerPoint slides REACH, Module 2, Handouts 3 – 6 REACH, Module 2, Glossary EBP Annotated Bibliography
Videos	REACH Case Examples, Scene 2.
Assignments, Group	
Exercise 1	Exercise 4-1, pp. 139 – 145, in Gibbs text.
Assignments, Individual	
Exercise 1	REACH, Module 2, Activities 3 – 7 .
Exercise 2	Complete scoring assessments of group members along with comments and email them to me.

Session 4: Evaluating treatment effectiveness: Multiple study reviews

Employ a scientific analytic approach using qualitative and/or quantitative methods to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions (*content: steps in evidence based practice; utilizing electronic searches and information technology using methodological filters; quality of study rating forms and frameworks for evaluating research studies; meta-analysis*).

Content	Evaluating treatment effectiveness research: multiple study reviews: systematic reviews; meta-analyses; practice guidelines
Required Readings	Gibbs, Chapter 5, Treatment Effectiveness Research: Evaluating Study Quality and Applying Results to Practice pp. 147 – 155; Gibbs, Chapter 6 – Meta-Analysis: Evaluating Review Quality and Applying Findings to Practice pp. 185 – 187. After doing Group Exercise 1 (below), read the systematic review, meta-analysis, and practice guidelines you located. If you could not locate one of these, read the corresponding paper below. Systematic review: If you have not located a systematic review in your area, go to the following web site and choose one that appears related to your area: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/SWCG/titles.asp Meta-analysis: Durlack, J.A. & Wells, A.M. (1997). Primary prevention

mental health programs for children and adolescents: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology (Special issue: Meta-analysis of primary prevention programs)*, 25, 115-152.

Practice guidelines: use APSAC

PowerPoint Evaluating treatment effectiveness research (1)

Handouts PowerPoint slides
REACH, Module 3, Handouts 1 – 7
REACH, Module 3, Glossary

Assignments, Group

Exercise 1 Based upon the papers you located last week through your search, choose at least one from each of the following categories: meta-analysis, systematic review, and practice guidelines. If none was located, run another search using previous search criteria but adding in the study type as a keyword. The abstract of the paper will typically provide enough information to determine the type of research.

Exercise 2 REACH, Module 3, Exercises 1 – 5 for each of the three articles (systematic review, meta-analysis, practice guidelines)

**Assignments,
Individual**

Exercise 1 REACH, Module 3, Exercises 1 – 5 for systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and practice guidelines. Use the same client you used in the individual assignment the previous week. If none was located, run another search using previous search criteria but adding in the study type as a keyword. If you still cannot locate any of these, broaden your research question and rerun your search using your previous search strategy. If none of these steps work, discuss the implications of not having such papers available and how you will need to adjust for this as you review other available research.

Session 5: Evaluating treatment effectiveness: Single studies

Employ a scientific analytic approach using qualitative and/or quantitative methods to rigorously, critically and open-mindedly investigate, analyze, synthesize, and interpret available primary and secondary data and research findings, evaluation outcomes and other information toward formulation of professional judgments and conclusions (*content: steps in evidence based practice; utilizing electronic searches and information technology using methodological filters; quality of study rating forms and frameworks for evaluating research studies; meta-analysis*).

Content Evaluating treatment effectiveness research: randomized controlled trials (RCT), quasi-experimental study; case control study; pre-experimental study

Required Readings **Using this week's Group Exercise 1, read the (RCT), quasi-experimental study, case control, and pre-experimental study you located.**

RCT: Cohen & Mannarino

Quasi-experimental:

Case control:

Pre-experimental:

PowerPoint

Evaluating treatment effectiveness research (2)

Handouts

PowerPoint slides

Video Clips

REACH Case Examples, Scene 3. Watch the same scenario as you did earlier.

**Assignments,
Group**

Exercise 1

Based upon the papers you located through your search, choose at least one from each of the following categories: RCT, quasi-experimental, case control, and pre-experimental. If none was located, run another search using previous search criteria but adding in the study type as a keyword.

Exercise 2

REACH, Module 3, Exercises 1 – 5 for each of the four articles (RCT, quasi-experimental, case control, pre-experimental). If you do not have one of these, use the corresponding readings in the required readings list.

**Assignments,
Individual**

Exercise 1

REACH, Module 3, Exercises 1 – 5 for RCTs and quasi-experimental, case control, and pre-experimental studies. If none was located in your initial search, run another search using previous search criteria but adding in the study type as a keyword. If you still cannot locate any of these, broaden your research question and rerun your search using your previous search strategy. If none of these steps work, discuss the implications of not having such papers available and consider other literature that may be helpful in making your decision.

Session 6: Applying research evidence; other types of research

Analyze the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological and other identities and orientations on thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values. (*content: identity formation; experiences of individuals in these contexts; formation of multiple identities; case studies of life experiences in identity formation and their relationships with the thoughts on contemporary social issues; critical analysis of self with respect to the above identity designations; history of cultural insensitivity in research; generalization of research findings to other groups; recruitment and retention of minority and oppressed populations in research studies; problematic issues in making research more culturally competent*).

Content

Applying evidence-based practice to your client population; Considering client characteristics and culture; Evaluating other types of research: surveys; qualitative studies.

Required Reading

Gibbs, Chapter 8, Descriptive and Qualitative Studies: Evaluating Study Quality and Applying Results to Practice pp. 218 – 219, 227 – 228.

Required Reading

Gone, J. P. & Alcantara, C. (2007). Identifying effective mental health

Required Reading

interventions for American Indians and Alaska Natives: A review of the literature. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13, 356-363.
Okamoto, S.K. & LeCroy, C.W. (2006). Evidence-based practice and manualized treatment with children. In A.R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.) (pp. 204-213). *Foundations of Evidenced-Based Social Work Practice*. New York, N.Y.:Oxford University Press.

Using this week's Group Exercise 1, read the survey and qualitative study you located. If you could not locate one of these, read the corresponding paper below.

Survey: Mullen, E. J., & Bacon, W. (2006). Implementation of practice guidelines and evidence-based treatment: A survey of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. In A.R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.) (pp. 81-92). *Foundations of Evidenced-Based Social Work Practice*. New York, N.Y.:Oxford University Press.

Qualitative study:

At least one reading each from Group Exercise 3 and Individual Exercise 2 below

PowerPoint

Evaluating other types of research; Applying evidence-based practice to your client population

Handouts

PowerPoint slides
REACH, Module 3, Handout 8
REACH, Module 4, Handouts 1 – 6

Video Clips

REACH Case Examples, Scene 4.

Assignments, Group

Exercise 1

Based upon the papers you located through your search, choose at least one from each of the following categories: survey, qualitative survey. If none was located, run another search using previous search criteria but adding in the study type as a keyword.

Exercise 2

REACH, Module 3, Exercises 1 – 5 for each of the articles (survey, qualitative survey). If you did not locate one of these, use the corresponding readings in the required readings list.

Exercise 3

Locate and read one or more articles related to working with persons with cultural identities (e.g., specific class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) similar to those of your client/client system. Read the article(s) and answer the questions on BlackBoard related to unique issues when practicing with this cohort of clients.

Exercise 4

REACH, Module 4, Activities 3 – 4 for your case scenario

Assignments, Individual

Exercise 1

REACH, Module 3, Exercises 1 – 5 for the qualitative study located in your search. If none was located in your initial search, run another search using previous search criteria but adding in the study type as a keyword. If none of these steps works, consider how/if this types of study could have helped

make a practice decision.

Exercise 2 Locate and read one or more articles related to working with individuals with cultural identities (e.g., specific class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) similar to those of your client/client system. Read the article(s) and answer the questions on BlackBoard related to unique issues to consider when practicing with this cohort of clients.

Exercise 3 REACH, Module 4, Activities 3 – 4 for your client/client system

Session 7: Research into Practice; Becoming a Life-long Learner

Content Implementing the EBP; informed consent; becoming a life-long learner

Required Readings Gibbs, Chapter 10, Teaching Others pp. 250 - 262
Mullen, E. J. (2006). Facilitating practitioner use of evidence-based practice. In A.R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.) (pp. 152-159). *Foundations of Evidenced-Based Social Work Practice*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.

Mullen, E. J., & Bacon, W. (2006). Implementation of practice guidelines and evidence-based treatment: A survey of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. In A.R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.) (pp. 81-92). *Foundations of Evidenced-Based Social Work Practice*. New York, N.Y.:Oxford University Press.

Gira, E. C., Kessler, M. L., & Poertner, J. (2004). Influencing social workers to use research evidence in practice: Lessons from medicine and the allied health professions. *Research on Social Work Practice, 14*(2), 68-79.

PowerPoint Implementing the EBP; becoming a life-long learner

Handouts PowerPoint slides
REACH, Module 4, Handouts 7 – 9
REACH, Module 4, Glossary

Assignments, Group

Exercise 1 Choose one of the EBPs you read about and do REACH, Module 4, Activities 1 – 2, 5 – 6, and 9 – 10

Assignments, Individual

Exercise 1 Given everything you have reviewed and considered, make a decision about which of the EBPs you will discuss with your client. Of those, choose the one you most prefer to implement. Write a brief paper (3 - 4 pages) discussing why you choose the group of EBPs to discuss with your client, why you prefer the one EBP for this particular client, and issues you need to consider in its implementation.

Exercise 2 Do REACH, Module 4, Activities 1 – 2, 5 – 6, and 9 – 10 for the EBP you prefer.

Exercise 3

Write 2 or 3 paragraphs about what it means to be a lifelong learner. Then list steps you will consider taking after graduation to become a lifelong learner.

Exercise 4

Hand in binder.

Exercise 5

Email scoring assessments of group members along with comments