

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

**SW520 Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice
Online Self-Study Course
(1 credit hour)
Spring, 2009**

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Office Hours: 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*, 2008).

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 2222 Dunford (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a required concentration 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. (CT/EBP-C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4; Values/ethics-C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4; Pops at-risk & SJ- C.1; Research-C.3; Practice-C.1). (*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. (CT/EBP-C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4; Diversity-C.3, C.4; Values/ethics-C.1, C.2, C.4) (*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 (CT/EBP-C.3, C.4; Practice-C. 2) (*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; using research to inform practice and practice to inform research*).
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. (CT/EBP-C.1, C.2, C.4; Diversity- C.3, C.4; Values/ethics- C.1, C.2, C.3). (*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 READINGS

There is no required text for this course. All readings are on the BlackBoard site for this class and can be downloaded or read from there.

ORGANIZATION OF COURSE AND BLACKBOARD

This course is designed to be web-based, excluding the first class session. This first class session is optional and is solely intended to review course technology for those uncomfortable working within BlackBoard. NO substantive content will be reviewed.

This course is largely about learning a fairly straight-forward methodology. As such, it can easily be done online. Weekly podcasts, demonstrations, readings, and handouts will be the primary basis for understanding the material, which will then be practiced via individual assignments that are due weekly.

All content and course materials for this course are on BlackBoard. Content on BlackBoard is organized by week. For each week, a podcast and/or demonstration that is a review of essential content is included, as are accompanying PowerPoint slides and handouts. ALL individual assignments are available on BlackBoard and are to be completed on BlackBoard. NO hardcopy assignments will be accepted without prior approval of the professor. The final paper will be submitted via the BlackBoard Digital Dropbox.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grading Criteria

Individual assignments	12 points for each of 7 weeks
Paper	16 points

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:

93 – 100	A
88 – 92	B+
83 – 87	B
78 – 82	C+
73 – 77	C
68 – 72	D+
63 – 67	D
<63	F

Paper

For this class, you will be developing a question related to practice and then through a series of steps answering that question and determining how to apply your findings. The purpose of this paper is to bring this process and your findings together in a single place. For some of this paper, you may be able to utilize what you have already written in certain assignments. Other of the content will be original.

This approximately 7- to 10-page paper in APA format will review in greater detail your semester-long project. It will elaborate on:

- (a) your research question and why you chose it and felt it was appropriate;
- (b) your organization or agency, its mission, and who it serves;
- (c) the targeted client population and the problem/issue being addressed;
- (d) values, expectations, and other important information about the target population that is important to consider in choosing an intervention;
- (e) the problem/issue in this target population the research question is addressing,
- (f) your search process, including the databases, search engines, web sites, and other indices you decided to search, including reasons for choosing these;
- (g) your findings based on the papers you reviewed for your assignments and other **key** papers. For this section, use EBP techniques and critical thinking to systematically examine the results of your search.
- (h) any restrictions on what is possible to implement, given your findings, based upon your client population and organization;
- (f) your decision about what you would implement after considering the target population's cultures, values, and expectations, agency resources, and other appropriate information. Be sure to justify why you made the decision for that intervention.

SYLLABUS SUMMARY

Session	Content	Assignments	Due Date
1	OPTIONAL FACE-TO-FACE MEETING: technology concerns		March 2
	Course overview; EBP; Critical thinking	Week 1 Assignments	March 9
2	Answerable research question	Week 2 Assignments	March 23
3	Track down evidence	Week 3 Assignments	March 30
4	Evaluating evidence: Multiple study review	Week 4 Assignments	April 6
5	Evaluating evidence: Experimental design studies & surveys	Week 5 Assignments	April 13
6	Evaluating evidence: Qualitative; Matching research evidence to client cultures and needs	Week 6 Assignments	April 20
7	Implementing EBPs; Becoming a life- long learner	Week 7 Assignments; Paper	April 27

Session 1: Course Overview; EBP; Critical Thinking

Content	Course overview; overview of evidence-based practice (EBP); critical thinking; fallacies in thinking and reasoning; EBP and NASW Code of Ethics
Required Readings	<p>McCracken, S. G., & Marsh, J. C. (2008). Practitioner expertise in evidence-based practice decision making. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 18</i>, 301-310.</p> <p>Critical Thinking Handbook, pg. 6 – 8, 10 – 14, 20</p> <p>Risen, J., & Gilovich, T. (2007). Informal logical fallacies. In R. Sternberg, H. J. Roediger, III, & D. F. Halpen (Eds.), <i>Critical thinking in psychology</i>, Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.</p>
Podcast	Overview of evidence-based practice (EBP); fallacies in thinking and reasoning; critical thinking
PowerPoint	Overview of evidence-based practice (EBP); fallacies in thinking and reasoning; critical thinking
Handouts	REACH, Module 1, Handouts 2 – 5, 7 – 8 REACH, Module 1, Glossary
Assignments	
Exercise 1	Recognizing fallacies in thinking
Exercise 2	Identifying a client group need

Session 2: Posing an Answerable Research Question

Content	Posing an answerable research question
Required Readings	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.
Podcast	Posing an answerable research question
PowerPoint	Posing an answerable research question
Handouts	REACH, Module 2, Handouts 1 – 2
Videos	REACH Case Examples, Scene 1 (Watch one of the three choices.) These videos are examples of the process of EBP.
Assignments	
Exercise 1	Developing an answerable research question. Please pay particular attention to this exercise. The question you design will be the one with which you work for the rest of the semester.
Exercise 2	Client system, challenges, and context

Session 3: Tracking down evidence

Content	Strategies for locating the best external evidence
Required Readings	none
Podcast	Strategies for locating the best external evidence
PowerPoint	Strategies for locating the best external evidence
Demonstrations/ Tutorials UT Library	Search strategies: http://www.lib.utk.edu/instruction/learnhow/searchstrategy.html Finding articles http://www.lib.utk.edu/instruction/learnhow/findingarticles.html Searching the internet http://www.lib.utk.edu/instruction/learnhow/internetsearching.html
Handouts	REACH, Module 2, Handouts 3 – 6 REACH, Module 2, Glossary EBP Annotated Bibliography Directory of internet resources on evidence-based practice and research in health care and human services. In A.R. Roberts & K. R. Yeager (Eds.) (pp. 349-360). <i>Foundations of Evidenced-Based Social Work Practice</i> . New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.
Videos	REACH Case Examples, Scene 2. Watch the same scenario as you did the previous week. If you watched the first scenario, you will need to choose between two possible scenarios for this week.
Assignments Exercise 1	Identify keyword and search terms and completing the search

Session 4: Evaluating effectiveness: Multiple study reviews

Content	Evaluating treatment effectiveness research: multiple study reviews; systematic reviews; meta-analyses; practice guidelines
Required Readings	<p>Systematic review: If you could not locate a systematic review or meta-analysis during your search, please go to the following web site and choose one that appears related to your area. The systematic review MUST include a meta-analysis (i.e., it must quantitatively review available studies in this area). If you are unsure of whether the review includes a meta-analysis, please review the paper below so that you are aware of what a meta-analysis looks like. If you are still unsure you may email me the systematic review so that I can check.</p> <p>http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/SWCG/titles.asp</p>
Optional: Examples of other types of reviews	<p>Meta-analysis: Leichsenring, F., Rabung, S., & Leibing, E. (2004). The efficacy of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy in specific psychiatric disorders. <i>Archives of General Psychiatry</i>, 61, 1208-1216.</p> <p>Practice guidelines: American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Quality Improvement, Subcommittee on Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (2000). Clinical practice guideline: Diagnosis and treatment of the child with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. <i>Pediatrics</i>, 105(5), 1158-1170.</p>
Podcast	Evaluating Multistudy Reviews
PowerPoint	Evaluating Multistudy Reviews
Handouts	PowerPoint slides REACH, Module 3, Handouts 1 – 8 REACH, Module 3, Glossary
Assignments Exercise 1	Assessing a systematic review or meta-analysis

Session 5: Evaluating effectiveness: Single quantitative studies

Content	Evaluating treatment effectiveness research: randomized controlled trials (RCT), quasi-experimental study; case control study; pre-experimental study
Required Readings	<p>If you could not locate an RCT or survey during your search, please read the pertinent reading below. Please read Exercise 1 for further clarification.</p> <p>RCT: Fraser, J. A., Armstrong, K. L., Morris, J. P., & Dadds, M. R. (2000). Home visiting intervention for vulnerable families with newborns: Follow-up results of randomized controlled trial. <i>Child Abuse & Neglect</i>, 24(11), 1399-1429.</p> <p>Survey: Elliott, D. M., Mok, D. S., & Briere, J. (2004). Adult sexual assault: Prevalence, symptomatology, and sex differences in the general population. <i>Journal of Traumatic Stress</i>, 17(3), 203-211.</p>
Podcast	Evaluating Single Quantitative Studies
PowerPoint	Evaluating Single Quantitative Studies
Handouts	PowerPoint slides Review handouts from last week
Video Clips	REACH Case Examples, Scene 3. Watch the same scenario as you did earlier.
Assignments	
Exercise 1	Assessing an RCT.
Exercise 2	Assessing a survey.

Session 6: Applying research evidence; other types of research

Content	Applying evidence-based practice to your client population; Considering client characteristics and culture; Evaluating other types of research: qualitative studies; papers on cultural sensitivity.
Required Readings	<p>If you could not locate a qualitative study during your search, please read the pertinent reading below. Please read Exercise 1 for further clarification.</p> <p>Qualitative study: Edmond, T., Sloan, L., & McCarty, D. (2004). Sexual abuse survivors' perceptions of the effectiveness of EMDR and eclectic therapy. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 14</i>, 259-272.</p>
Example of paper applying intervention/prevention programs to client cultures:	Gone, J. P. & Alcantara, C. (2007). Identifying effective mental health interventions for American Indians and Alaska Natives: A review of the literature. <i>Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 13</i> , 356-363.
Podcast	Evaluating qualitative research. Applying evidence-based practice to your client population
PowerPoint	Evaluating qualitative research. Applying evidence-based practice to your client population
Handouts	PowerPoint slides Review handouts from week 4
Video Clips	REACH Case Examples, Scene 4. Watch the same scenario as you did earlier.
Assignments	
Exercise 1	Assessing a qualitative study
Exercise 2	Assessing fit between client system and intervention, practitioner, and organization

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

Content	Implementing the EBP; informed consent; becoming a life-long learner
Required Readings	Mullen, E. J., Bledsoe, S. E., & Bellamy, J. L. (2008). Implementing evidence-based social work practice. <i>Research on Social Work Practice, 18</i> , 325-335.
Podcast	Implementing the EBP; becoming a life-long learner
PowerPoint	Implementing the EBP; becoming a life-long learner
Handouts	PowerPoint slides REACH, Module 4, Handouts 1 – 9 REACH, Module 4, Glossary
Web links	Links are provided on BlackBoard for some web sites that have implementation resources.
Assignments	
Exercise 1	Implementation resources needed for EBP
Exercise 2	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.

Paper is due April 27.