

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

SW520 Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice
Online Self-Study Course
(1 credit hour)
Spring, 2008

Instructor: Rebecca (Becky) Bolen, Ph.D.
203 Henson Hall
865-974-3209
rbolen@utk.edu

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*, 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.

NOTE: It is not required that you use this book, as it is fairly expensive, but it is required that you have a text on evidence-based practice in social work. For each week you will be responsible for reading the equivalent chapters.

All readings other than those from the required text 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. This course is largely about learning a fairly straight-forward methodology. As such, it can easily be done online. Weekly podcasts, the text, other 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 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 paper assignments will be accepted without prior approval of the professor.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grading Criteria

Individual assignments	15 points for each of 5 weeks
Paper	15 points
Surveys	No credit, but if not completed, 1 point will be subtracted from the final grade for each missing survey

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.

This approximately 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	Course overview; EBP; Critical thinking; Answerable research question	Week 1 Assignments	June 6
2	Track down evidence; Evaluating evidence: Multiple study reviews	Week 2 Assignments	June 13
3	Evaluating evidence: Experimental design studies & surveys	Week 3 Assignments	June 20
4	Evaluating evidence: Qualitative; Matching to client needs	Week 4 Assignments	June 27
5	Implementing EBPs; Lifelong learning	Week 5 Assignments; Paper	July 3

Session 1: Course Overview; Critical Thinking; Answerable Research Question

Content	Course overview; overview of evidence-based practice (EBP); critical thinking; fallacies in thinking and reasoning; EBP and NASW Code of Ethics; posing an answerable research question
Required Readings	Gibbs, pgs. 1 – 9, 13 – 19, 25 – 27, 28 – 31, 34 – 37, 39 – 44, 53 – 76 Critical Thinking Handbook, pg. 6 – 8, 10 – 14, 20 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.
External Links	(optional) www.logicalfallacies.info (This web site provides supplemental information on fallacies.)
Podcast	Overview of evidence-based practice (EBP); fallacies in thinking and reasoning; critical thinking; posing an answerable research question
PowerPoint	Overview of evidence-based practice (EBP); fallacies in thinking and reasoning; critical thinking; posing an answerable research question
Videos	(optional) REACH Case Examples, Scene 1 (Watch one of the three choices.) These videos are examples of the process of EBP.
Handouts	PowerPoint slides REACH, Module 1, Handouts 2 – 5, 7 – 8 REACH, Module 1, Glossary REACH, Module 2, Handouts 1 – 2
Assignments	
Exercise 1	Recognizing fallacies
Exercise 2	Identifying client needs
Exercise 3	Developing a 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 4	Do end-of-week survey

Session 2: Track down evidence; Evaluating evidence: Multiple study reviews

Content	Strategies for locating the best external evidence; evaluating evidence; multiple study reviews—meta-analysis, systematic review, qualitative review
Required Readings	Gibbs, Chapter 4, pgs. 88 – 138; 147 – 152; 166 – 167; 185 – 187 Systematic review: If you are not able to locate a systematic review or meta-analysis applicable to your research question, go to the following web site and choose one that appears related to your area. Before doing so, please read Exercise 2 for more information. http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/SWCG/titles.asp
Supplemental: Examples of other types of reviews	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. 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.
Podcast	Locating the best external evidence; evaluating multiple study reviews
PowerPoint	Posing an answerable research question
Handouts	REACH Module 2, Handouts 3 – 6 REACH Module 3, Handouts 1 - 8 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	(optional) 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	Searching for the best evidence
Exercise 2	Review of systematic review or meta-analysis.
Exercise 3	End-of-week survey

Session 3: Experimental design studies: Surveys

Content Evaluating treatment effectiveness research: randomized controlled trials (RCT) and other experimental design studies; surveys

Required Readings These readings are optional depending upon what papers you located in your search. Please read Exercise 1 for further clarification.

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. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24(11), 1399-1429.

Survey: Elliott, D. M., Mok, D. S., & Briere, J. (2004). Adult sexual assault: Prevalence, symptomatology, and sex differences in the general population. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 17(3), 203-211.

Podcast Evaluating Single Quantitative Studies

PowerPoint Evaluating Single Quantitative Studies

Handouts PowerPoint slides
Review handouts from last week

Video Clips (optional) REACH Case Examples, Scene 3. Watch the same scenario as you did earlier.

Assignments

Exercise 1 Review of RCT

Exercise 2 Review of survey

Exercise 3 Do end-of-week survey.

Session 4: Applying research evidence; other types of research

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

Required Readings Gibbs, Chapter 8, pp. 218 – 219, 227 – 228

The following reading is optional depending upon what papers you located in your search. Please read Exercise 1 for further clarification.

Qualitative study: Edmond, T., Sloan, L., & McCarty, D. (2004). Sexual abuse survivors' perceptions of the effectiveness of EMDR and eclectic therapy. *Research on Social Work Practice, 14*, 259-272.

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 2

Video Clips (optional) REACH Case Examples, Scene 4. Watch the same scenario as you did earlier.

Assignments

Exercise 1 Review qualitative study

Exercise 2 Considering the client's cultural identity, values, & expectations

Exercise 3 Do end-of-week survey.

Session 5: Research into Practice; Becoming a Life-long Learner

Content	Implementing the EBP; informed consent; becoming a life-long learner
Required Readings	Gibbs, Chapter 10, pp. 250, 258 - 262
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	Do Week 5, Exercise 1
Exercise 2	Write 2 or 3 paragraphs about what it means to be a lifelong learner, also considering steps you will take after graduation to become a lifelong learner.
Exercise 3	Do end-of-class survey.
Exercise 4	Final evaluation of class and instructor.

Paper is due.