

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

S520: Evaluation Processes for Social Work (3 credits)

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|----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------|---------|
| <i>Instructors:</i> | Gail Folaron | Bill Barton | Jerry Powers | <i>Semester Year:</i> | Spring 1997 | | |
| <i>Offices:</i> | ES 4122 | ES 4142 | ES 4138H | <i>Section Nos.:</i> | R445 | R446 | R447 |
| <i>Phones:</i> | 274-6729 | 274-6711 | 274-6724 | <i>Rooms:</i> | ES 2103 | SL 216 | ES 2109 |
| <i>Office hours:</i> | as arranged | | | <i>Time:</i> | Thursdays, 9:00 am - 11:40 am | | |

I. Course Rationale & Description

Based on the students' undergraduate research and statistics pre-requisite, this course introduces students to the knowledge and skills needed to evaluate their own practice and the effectiveness of social service programs within which they work. A range of qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches are presented to insure skill in using a variety of evaluation designs, methodologies and techniques applicable to generalist roles in social work practice. Attention is given to the social work practice continuum of problem definition, goal setting, intervention, and evaluation of goal attainment. The role of evaluation in every practice situation is carefully examined. The social worker's ethical responsibility to monitor one's practice, as well as recognize ethical issues which may arise in the evaluation of practice and in the use of evaluation findings, is examined.

II. Objectives

In this course, students are expected to demonstrate achievement of the following objectives:

1. Understand and develop a commitment to the responsibility to evaluate one's own practice.
2. Understand the role that social work values and ethics play in selecting and applying research methods to the evaluation of practice, with special attention to issues related to people of color, women, lesbian women and gay men, and groups such as those distinguished by age, ethnicity, culture, class, religion and physical or mental ability.
3. Understand the range of quantitative and qualitative research designs, methods, instruments, measurement models and analytical tools available to assess outcomes of practice and the effectiveness of specific interventions or programs.
4. Develop beginning skills in defining goals in measurable terms.
5. Develop beginning skills in selecting and applying appropriate measures for evaluating one's own interpersonal practice.
6. Understand the instruments appropriate for use in the assessment of client functioning and the determination of needs.

7. Understand the range of potential effects that varying evaluation methods can have on the process of practice.
8. Understand the purposes of evaluation in the social, political and organizational context of human service programs.
9. Compare and contrast program evaluation with basic research.
10. Understand the types of evaluation activities appropriate for various stages in the development and implementation of programs, including planning and needs assessment; start-up and process evaluation; and ongoing operation, monitoring and outcome evaluation.
11. Understand the standards of evaluation research -- utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy -- and their interrelationships.
12. Develop beginning skills in differentially selecting the most appropriate approaches to the evaluation of practice in specific micro and macro practice situations.

III. Content Outline & Readings

There are three major segments, or "blocks" of material for this course. Each "block" will consist of five weeks of class sessions and be the responsibility of one of three instructors (Folaron, Barton, Powers) who will rotate through the different sections of this course. Thus, each section will experience the "blocks" in different sequences. You will not change rooms -- the instructors will. Student performance in each block will be evaluated separately, and each block will receive equal weight in the determination of final grades. The three blocks are:

- ♦ Accessing and Analyzing Data to Inform Practice (Powers)
- ♦ Micropractice Evaluation (Folaron)
- ♦ Program Evaluation (Barton)

The three blocks share a common conceptual framework, including problem definition, goals and objectives, information seeking, analysis and interpretation, and decision utilization.

Required Text

Mark, R. (1996). Research made simple: A handbook for social workers. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Specific readings from the text and additional sources will be assigned within each of the three course blocks. There may be some overlap and duplication of chapters, that is, a given chapter may be assigned in more than one of the blocks. This is necessary to deal with the fact that you will encounter the blocks in different sequences, and some of the readings may be relevant to and useful for more than one block. Obviously, you do not

have to re-read a particular chapter, although sometimes a second reading from a slightly different perspective can deepen your understanding.

From time to time, there may be assigned readings from sources other than the required text. In the syllabus, these readings are preceded by an asterisk (*) and may be found on reserve in the library.

IV. Course Format & Assignments

There are three sections of this course and all will meet on Thursday mornings at the times and locations shown at the beginning of this syllabus. The schedule for each section is as follows:

| WEEKS | S520, SECTION: | | |
|---------|--|--|--|
| | R445 Thurs. 9 - 11:40 ES 2103 | R446 Thurs. 9 - 11:40 SL 216 | R447 Thurs. 9 - 11:40 ES 2109 |
| 1 - 5 | Block B Micropractice Eval. <i>Folaron</i> | Block C Program Eval. <i>Barton</i> | Block A Data for Practice <i>Powers</i> |
| 6 - 10 | Block C Program Eval. <i>Barton</i> | Block A Data for Practice <i>Powers</i> | Block B Micropractice Eval. <i>Folaron</i> |
| 11 - 15 | Block A Data for Practice <i>Powers</i> | Block B Micropractice Eval. <i>Folaron</i> | Block C Program Eval. <i>Barton</i> |

Detailed outlines and assignments for the three blocks are on the following pages of the syllabus:

- ♦ Block A: Accessing and Analyzing Data to Inform Practice (Powers) -- pp. 4-5.
- ♦ Block B: Micropractice Evaluation (Folaron) -- pp. 6-7.
- ♦ Block C: Program Evaluation (Barton) -- pp. 8-9.

A. Accessing and Analyzing Data to Inform Practice (Powers)

1. Overview

One of the basic assumptions of scientifically grounded practice (at both the programmatic and the clinical levels) is that it is fundamentally a problem-solving process. As such, it presumes that clients are best served when that process relies on methods that maximize the reliability and validity of the information upon which practice decisions are based. During this component of the course, we will explore a number of strategies for building the knowledge base that informs our practice, including systematic procedures for accessing available information as well as methods for generating and analyzing original data.

2. Topics and Required Readings

- i. Accessing available sources of information -- the library and its resources.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 5, "Defining a research problem and using the library to search the literature."

- ii. Striving for precision in practice -- integrating the language of science into practice.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 2, "Understanding research vocabulary."

- iii. Evaluating the effects and effectiveness of intervention -- the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

- iv. Characteristics of single system research -- the time series design.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 9, "Single-subject designs."

- v. Alternative models for evaluating practice -- constructive and dismantling strategies.

*Powers, G. T. (1990). Designs and procedures for evaluating crisis interventions. In A. R. Roberts (Ed.), Crisis intervention handbook. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

- vi. Adapting statistical methods for use in theory-based practice -- the Q-Sort technique.

*Stephenson, W. (1953). The study of behavior: Q-technique and its methodology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 7, "Group research designs."

- vii. The role of measurement and statistics in practice evaluation -- analyzing and interpreting data.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 13, "Measurement," ch. 14, "Reliability and validity," ch. 15, "How to analyze data," and ch. 16, "Statistical hypothesis testing."

3. *Evaluation of Student Performance*

Student performance in this component of the course will be based on an objective type test administered at the end of the five week unit of instruction. The test will be comprised of approximately 50 multiple choice and true/false questions related to content discussed in class or addressed in the related readings. The grade obtained on this unit examination will be weighted one third in determining the final grade for the course.

4. *Related Readings*

Barlow, D. H., & Herson, M. (1984). Single case experimental designs, 2nd ed. New York: Pergamon Press.

Kazdin, A. E. (1986). The evaluation of psychotherapy: Research design and methodology. In S. L. Garfield & A. E. Bergin (Eds.), Handbook of psychotherapy and behavior change. New York: Wiley.

B. Micropractice Evaluation (Folaron)

1. Overview

This section is designed to teach students how to evaluate interpersonal practice with micro systems. Evaluation requires systematically collecting and analyzing client information throughout service delivery and using this information to guide clinical decision-making. Students will learn the methods and logic of research, the process of identifying problems; setting measurable goals; formulating hypotheses; and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.

2. Topics and Required Readings

i. Week 1: General overview of micropractice evaluation.

Historical overview; principles for practice; evaluation throughout the problem solving process; accountable practice; documentation of effectiveness; setting personal goals. Goal attainment scaling.

*Blythe, B. J. & Tripodi, T. (1989). Measurement in direct practice. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, ch. 1.

ii. Week 2: Problem identification and goal setting.

Specifying problems and goals; characteristics of good goal statements; types of goals. Problem and goal checklists.

*Blythe & Tripodi, Measurement.... ch. 3.

*Bloom M., & Fischer, J. (1982) Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. ch. 3

*** OR ***

*Jayaratne, S., & Levy, R. (1979). Empirical clinical practice. New York: Columbia University Press. ch. 2.

iii. Week 3: Data collection and beginning analysis.

Monitoring and evaluating clinical practice interventions; quantitative subjective measures. Self anchoring scales; rating scales; visual inspection of data.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 5, "Defining a research problem and using the library to search the literature."

*Blythe & Tripodi, Measurement.... ch. 4.

iv. Week 4: Objective measures and technology.

Monitoring and evaluating clinical practice through objective measures; computer software. Rapid assessment instruments.

*Fischer, J., & Corcoran, K. (1987). Measures for clinical practice: A sourcebook. New York: Free Press. pp. 1-72.

*** OR ***

*Hudson, W. (1982). The clinical measurement package: A field manual. Chicago: Dorsey Press. (All).

v. Week 5: Qualitative designs and measurement.

Monitoring and evaluating clinical practice through subjective qualitative measures; analyzing qualitative data; triangulation. Post session reports, client logs; self assessment/report questionnaires.

3. *Evaluation of Student Performance*

Students will be expected to complete weekly assignments cumulating in a final five page paper. The first four assignments will each be worth 10% of the final grade for this section. The final paper will be worth 50%. Ten percent of the grade will be based on class attendance and quality of participation. The grade obtained in this section will be averaged in with the other two sections and account for one third of the total grade for the course.

4. *Related Readings*

Berlin, S. B., & Marsh, J. C. (1993). Informing practice decisions. New York: Macmillan.

Kiresuk, T. J., & Sherman, R. E. (1968). Goal attainment scaling: A general method for evaluating comprehensive community mental health programs. Community Mental Health Journal, 4(6), 443-453.

Levitt, J. L., & Reid, W. R. (1981). Rapid assessment instruments for practice. Social Work Research and Abstracts, 17(1), 13-19.

Powers, G. T. (1990). Designs and procedures for evaluating crisis interventions. In A. R. Roberts (Ed.), Crisis intervention handbook. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Swenson (1988). The professional log: Techniques for self directed learning. Social Casework, 69, 307-311.

C. Program Evaluation (Barton)

1. Overview

It is becoming increasingly important for human service providers to be able to demonstrate that their programs are effective and make efficient use of increasingly scarce resources. Research methods can help administrators and other decision makers design, implement and evaluate programs by:

- ♦ assessing the need for programs;
- ♦ monitoring the delivery of services;
- ♦ assessing the impact of services upon clients.

This component of the course will introduce students to the basic research concepts used in program evaluation. Special attention will be paid to the dynamic, political and interpersonal context within which program evaluation research is planned, carried out and used. We will also discuss a variety of ethical issues that may arise in any kind of social work practice research with special attention to issues of diversity.

Familiarity with program evaluation methods is essential for social workers in planning and management positions, and the introduction in this course will be followed by a more detailed program evaluation course in the second year for M.A.C.R.O. students. Interpersonal practice students, however, may someday find themselves in supervisory or administrative roles and/or may work in an agency that conducts evaluation research, so the basic concepts of program evaluation should be useful to them as well.

2. Topics and Required Readings

- i. Overview -- purposes; types of program evaluation; standards; steps in the evaluation process.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 1, "Research and the scientific method," ch. 2, "Understanding research vocabulary," ch. 10, "Qualitative research," and ch. 11, "Program evaluation."

- ii. Evaluation planning -- identifying stakeholders; specifying goals and focal questions; Developing a work plan -- sources of information; data collection strategies.

*Posavac, E. J., & Carey, R. G. (1992). Program evaluation: Methods and case studies, 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. chs. 2 - 4.

- iii. Needs assessments; Monitoring/Implementation evaluation.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 6, "Sampling," and ch. 12, "Sources of data."

iv. Outcome evaluations; Efficiency analyses.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... ch. 7, "Group research designs."

*United Way of America. (1996). Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach. Alexandria, VA: [author]

Required: Introduction (pp. 1-9) and Step 2 (pp. 31-57).

Optional: Step 1 (pp. 11-30) and Step 3 (pp. 59-79).

v. Dissemination and utilization; Ethics in research.

Text: Mark, Research made simple ... chs. 3, "Ethics," and ch. 4, "Culture- and gender- sensitive research" (includes issues re: race, culture, gender, and sexual orientation).

*Posavac, E. J., & Carey, R. G. (1992). Program evaluation: Methods and case studies, 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. chs. 5, 13.

3. *Evaluation of Student Performance*

Student performance in this component will be based on one brief paper (max. 5 pages) outlining a proposal for an evaluation study of some kind as chosen by the student (needs assessment; implementation evaluation; outcome evaluation, etc.). More specific details about this assignment will be distributed in class. Grades from this component will constitute one third of the course grade.

4. *Related Readings*

Kosecoff, J., & Fink, A. (1982). Evaluation basics: A practitioner's manual. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Patton M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods, 2nd ed. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (1986). Utilization-focused evaluation, 2nd ed. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Posavac, E. J., & Carey, R. G. (1992). Program evaluation: Methods and case studies, 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

United Way of America. (1996). Measuring program outcomes: A practical approach. Alexandria, VA: [author].

V. **Evaluation of Course and Instructors**

Consistent with School and University policies, a formal evaluation of each component of the course and each instructor will be completed at the end of each five-week component. An evaluation of the entire course will be completed at the end of the semester.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Berlin, S. B., & Marsh, J. C. (1993). Informing practice decisions. NY: Macmillan.
- Blalock, H. M. (1979). Social statistics, rev. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J. G. (1995). Evaluating practice: Guidelines for the accountable professional, 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
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- Cooper, H. M. (1989). Integrating research review: A guide for literature reviews, 2nd ed. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
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- Durning, D. (1993). Participatory policy analysis in a social service agency: A case study. Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 12, 297-322.
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- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). Fourth generation evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Horowitz, G. (1981). Sadistic statistics. Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group.
- House, E. R. (1980). Evaluating with validity. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hudson, W. W. (1982). The clinical measurement package. Chicago, IL: Dorsey Press.

- Jayaratne, S., & Levy, R. L. (1979). Empirical clinical practice. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Johnson, A. G. (1977). Social statistics without tears. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Johnson, D. E. et al. (1987). Needs assessment: Theory and methods. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Kagle, J. D., & Cowger, C. D. (1984). Blaming the client: Implicit agenda in practice research? Social Work, 29(6), 347-351.
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- Mitchell, J. V. (Ed.) (1983). Tests in print III. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
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