

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

S621 Social Work Research: Interpersonal

Dr. Rebecca Van Voorhis

Fall 1999

I. Course Rationale & Description

Based on S520, this course assists interpersonal students to further develop the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the outcomes of their interpersonal practice efforts. Emphasis is placed upon knowledge of qualitative and quantitative designs, methodologies, and techniques which specifically apply to interpersonal practice evaluation. Students will recognize the impact of race, gender, age, and sexual orientation on the research process and be able to critically review published studies with attention to researcher bias.

II. Objectives

Students are expected to show mastery of the following objectives:

1. Show competence in critically reflecting on interpersonal practice to continuously build one's practice wisdom.
2. Formulate research questions on interpersonal practice.
3. Critically analyze social work literature for bias and limitations focusing particularly on people of color, women, lesbians, gay men, and other populations at risk, such as those groups distinguished by age, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, and physical or mental ability.
4. Show skill in using research designs, methods, instruments, and analysis in assessing the effects and effectiveness of interpersonal practice.
5. Apply research methods in ways that are sensitive to the client's race, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors significant to the client's functioning.
6. Systematically gather information about interpersonal practice and use research information to continuously improve practice.
7. Learn to contribute research knowledge to the profession's knowledge base through oral and written presentations.
8. Understand the potential ethical, social, and political effects of research questions and methods of evaluation on both the research process and interpersonal practice.

Course Outline

Unit 1 Practice Wisdom: Integrating Empirical Knowledge and Practice Experience

- Bridging the Gap Between Practice and Research for Social Workers
- Inductive and Deductive Ways of Knowing for Social Work Practice
- Ongoing Implicit Practice Evaluation
- Basis for Continuous Improvement of Social Work Practice

Readings:

Hartman, Ann. (1990). "Many Ways of Knowing," *Social Work*. Volume 35. pp. 3-4.

Atherton, Charles, R. (1993). "Empiricists versus Social Constructionists: Time for a Cease-Fire," *Families in Society*. Volume 74. pp. 617-624.

Klein, Waldo and Martin Bloom. (1995). "Practice Wisdom," *Social Work*. Volume 40, Number 6. pp. 699-708.

Scott, Dorothy. (1990). "Practice Wisdom: The Neglected Source of Practice Research," *Social Work*. Volume 35. pp. 564-568.

Hartman, Ann. (1992). "In Search of Subjugated Knowledge," *Social Work*. Volume 37, Number 6. pp. 483-484.

Wasow, Mona. (1992). "What Are We Doing to Ourselves?" *Social Work*. Volume 37, Number 6. pp. 485-487.

Case Study

Barkley, Russell A. (1998). "Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder" *Scientific American*, Volume 279, Number 3, pp. 66-71

Unit 2 Evaluating Interpersonal Practice: Reflection on Our Actions and Their Effects

- Rationale for Evaluation of Interpersonal Practice
- Tape Recordings and Practitioner Logs
- Supervisory Conferences and Team Staffing

Readings:

Schon, Donald. (1995). "Reflective Inquiry in Social Work Practice," in *Practitioner-Researcher Partnerships*. Edited by P. Hess & E. Mullen. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press. pp. 31-55.

Hess, Peg. (1995). "Reflecting In and On Practice: A Role for Practitioners in Knowledge Building," in *Practitioner-Researcher Partnerships*. Edited by P. Hess & E. Mullen. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press. pp. 56-82.

Epstein, Irwin. (1995). "Promoting Reflective Social Work Practice," in *Practitioner-Researcher Partnerships*. Edited by P. Hess & E. Mullen. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press. pp. 83-102.

Pray, Jackie E. (1991). "Respecting the Uniqueness of the Individual: Social Work Practice within a Reflective Model," *Social Work*, Volume 36. pp. 80-85.

Schon, Donald. (1983). "Psychotherapy: The Patient As a Universe of One," in *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York: Basic Books. pp. 105-127.

Swenson, Carol. (1988). "The Professional Log: Techniques for Self-Directed Learning," *Social Casework*. Volume 69. pp. 307-311.

Case Study

Gelles, Richard. (1982). "Applying Research on Family Violence to Clinical Practice," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. Volume 44. pp. 9-20.

Recommended Reading:

Wood, Katherine. (1987) "Practice Evaluation Across Theoretical Orientations," in *Perspectives on Direct Practice Evaluation*. Naomi Gottlieb (Ed.), Seattle: University of Washington School of Social Work. pp. 21-36.

Unit 3 Developing Questions to Focus the Evaluation of Interpersonal Practice

- Defining Problems and Solutions
- Setting Practice Goals and Objectives
- Planning Interventions
- Monitoring Progress Toward Goals and Objectives

Reading:

Strauss and Hafez. (1981) "Clinical Questions and 'Real' Research," *American Journal of Psychiatry*. Volume 138:12. pp. 1592-1596.

Case Study

Rapp, Shera, and Kisthardt. (1993). "Research Strategies for Consumer Empowerment of People with Severe Mental Illness," *Social Work*, 38 (6). pp. 727-735.

Unit 4 Using Qualitative and Quantitative Methodology to Evaluate Interpersonal Practice

- Subjectivity - Objectivity
- Breadth - Depth
- Summative - Formative
- Inductive - Deductive
- Generalization - Extrapolation
- Single Subject Designs, Case Studies, and Ethnographic Designs

Readings:

Rosen, Aaron. (1992). "Facilitating Clinical Decision Making and Evaluation," *Families in Society*, 73. pp. 522-530.

Combs-Orme, Terri. (1990). "The Interface of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Social Work Research," in *Advances in Clinical Social Work Research*. Edited by L. Videka-Sherman & W. Reid. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press. pp. 181-188.

Glisson, Charles. (1990). "Distinguishing and Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods," in *Advances in Clinical Social Work Research*. Edited by L. Videka-Sherman & W. Reid. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press. pp. 189-193.

Allen-Meares, P. and B.A. Lane. (1990). "Social Work Practice: Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collection Techniques," *Social Work*, 35(5). pp. 452-458.

Berlin, Sharon. (1983). "Single Case Evaluation: Another Version" *Social Work Research and Abstracts*. pp. 3-11.

Collins, Pauline M. (1994). "Conjoint Marital Therapy: A Practitioner's Approach to Single-System Evaluation," *Families in Society*, 75. pp. 131-141.

Reid, William and I. Davis. (1987). "Qualitative Methods in Single-Case Research," in *Perspectives on Direct Practice Evaluation*. Naomi Gottlieb (Ed.). Seattle: University of Washington School of Social Work. pp. 56-74.

Holbrook, Terry L. (1995). "Finding Subjugated Knowledge: Personal Document Research," *Social Work*. Volume 40, Number 6. pp. 746-751.

Case Studies

Mackey, Richard A. & Mackey, Eileen F. (1994). "Personal Psychotherapy and the Development of a Professional Self," *Families in Society*, 75, pp. 490-498.

Reid, William. (1994) "Field Testing and Data Gathering on Innovative Practice Interventions in Early Development," in *Intervention Research*. Edited by Jack Rothman and Edwin Thomas. New York: Haworth Press. pp. 245-264.

Dean, Ruth and Helen Reinherz. (1987). "Psychodynamic Practice and Single-System Design: The Odd Couple," in *Perspectives on Direct Practice Evaluation*. Naomi Gottlieb (Ed.), Seattle: University of Washington School of Social Work. pp. 134-152.

Recommended Readings:

Neuman, W. Lawrence. (1997). "Qualitative Research Designs," in *Social Research Methods*, Neuman, W.L. Third Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. pp. 327-339.

Patton, Michael. (1990). "Particularly Appropriate Qualitative Applications," in *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, Patton, M. Q. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. pp. 92-104 and 129-134.

Gilgun, Jane. (1994). "A Case for Case Studies in Social Work Research. *Social Work*, 39(4), pp. 371-381.

Tripodi, Tony. (1994). *A Primer on Single-Subject Design for Clinical Social Workers*. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.

Fawcett, S.B., Y. Suarez-Balcazar, F.E. Balcazar, G.W. White, A.L. Paine, K. A. Blanchard, and M.G. Embree. (1994) "Conducting Intervention Research-The Design and Development Process," in *Intervention Research*. Edited by Jack Rothman and Edwin Thomas. New York: Haworth Press. pp. 25-54.

Tyson, Katherine B. (1992). "A New Approach to Relevant Scientific Research for Practitioners: The Heuristic Paradigm," *Social Work*, 37(6). pp. 541-555.

Unit 5 Measurement: Selecting and Administering Appropriate Tools to Measure Change

- Client Logs
- Self-Anchored Scales
- Standardized Scales
- Depth Interviews
- Participant Observation

Readings:

Nelson, Judith C. (1996). "Teaching Students to Evaluate Practice Outcomes by Monitoring Clients' Responses to Opportunities," *Journal of Social Work Education*, 32, pp. 181-189.

Tracy, E.M. and J.K. Whittaker. (1990). "The Social Network Map: Assessing Social Support in Clinical Social Work Practice." *Families in Society*, 71. pp. 461-470.

Tracy, E. M. and N. Abell. (1994). "Social network map: Some further refinements on administration." *Social Work Research*, 18, pp. 56-60.

Case Study

"Mental Health: Does Therapy Help?" *Consumer Reports*, November, 1995. pp. 734-739.

McIntosh, Jennifer. (1993). "The Family Functioning Scale in Research and Practice: Lessons from A Three-Year Demonstration Project," *Families in Society*, 74, pp. 308-313.

Stuntzner-Gibson, Denise, Koren, Paul E. & DeChillo, Neal. (1995). "The Youth Satisfaction Questionnaire: What Kids Think of Services," *Families in Society*, 76, pp. 616-623.

Review Readings

Bloom, Martin, and Joel Fischer. (1982). "Standardized Measures," in *Evaluating Practice: Guidelines for the Accountable Professional*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall. pp. 132-165.

Bloom, Martin, and Joel Fischer. (1982). "Self-Anchored and Rating Scales," in *Evaluating Practice: Guidelines for the Accountable Professional*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall. pp. 166-180.

Bloom, Martin, and Joel Fischer. (1982). "Client Logs," in *Evaluating Practice: Guidelines for the Accountable Professional*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall. pp. 181-199.

Recommended Resources:

Fischer, Joel & Kevin Corcoran. (1994). *Measures for Clinical Practice: A Sourcebook. Vol. 1 Couples, Families and Children. Vol. 2 Adults*. New York: Free Press.

Donovan & Segal. (1992). "Selected Measurement Resources: A Social Work Research Teaching Aid," *Journal of Teaching in Social Work* Volume 6(1). pp. 195-203.

Unit 6 Making Sense of the Information and Using It to Refine Practice Interventions

- Triangulation
- Clinical Significance and Statistical Significance
- Generalizations and Extrapolations
- Qualitative and Quantitative Sampling Errors
- Description, Analysis, Interpretation of the Information

Readings:

Patton, Michael. (1990). "Triangulation," in *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, Patton, M. Q. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. pp. 464-472.

Patton, Michael. (1990). "The Paradigms Debate and Credibility," in *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, Patton, M. Q. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. pp. 477-493.

Patton, Michael. (1987). "Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Data," in *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. pp. 161-164.

Case Studies

Davis, Inger, and W. Reid. (1988). "Event Analysis in Clinical Practice and Process Research," *Social Casework*. pp. 298-306.

Thomas, Edwin. (1994). "Evaluation, Advanced Development, and the Unilateral Family Therapy Experiment," in *Intervention Research*. Edited by Jack Rothman and Edwin Thomas. New York: Haworth Press. pp. 267-295.

Unit 7 Issues in Evaluation of Practice

- Theoretical and Methodological
- Ethical
- Practical, Logistical and Political
- Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Biases in Research

Readings:

Becerra, Rosina. and R. Zambrana. (1985). "Methodological Approaches to Research on Hispanics," *Social Work Research & Abstracts*. Volume 21, No. 2. pp. 42-49.

Dillworth-Anderson, P., L. Burton, and W. Turner. (1993). "The Importance of Values in the Study of Culturally Diverse Families. *Family Relations*, 42(3), pp. 235-237.

Glesne, Corrine, and Alan Peshkin. (1992). "But Is It Ethical? Learning To Do Right," in *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*. White Plains, N.Y.: Longman. pp. 109-125.

Weaver, Hilary N. (1997). "The Challenges of Research in Native American Communities: Incorporating Principles of Cultural Competence." *Journal of Social Service Research*, 23(2), pp. 1-15.

Case Studies:

Laseter, Robert L. (1997). "The Labor Force Participation of Young Black Men: A Qualitative Examination," *Social Service Review*, 71, pp. 72-88.

Nugent, William R. (1993). "Differential Validity in Social Work Measurement," *Social Service Review*, 67, pp. 631-650.

Recommended Reading:

Reinharz, Shulamit. (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Contacting Me and Appointments

My office is room 4145 on the fourth floor of the Education/Social Work Building. My telephone/voice mail number is 274-6732. Messages for me can be left on my telephone voice mail when I am not in my office. My e-mail address is rvanvoor@jupui.edu. The School fax number is 317-274-8630. I will be available to talk with students before and after most class sessions. Please schedule an appointment with me when you wish to have a private conversation or an extended discussion.

Grading

Your course grade will be determined both by the amount of work which you do and the quality of the work which is done. Your work must reflect graduate quality to be accepted. Furthermore, the quality of your work, including your attendance and participation, will determine whether you earn the full letter grade or a +/- with the letter grade.

To earn a passing grade of C

- Attend 70% of the class sessions
- Complete course readings
- Participate in class discussions
- Satisfactorily complete 70% of the exercises as assigned in class for completion during or between class sessions

To earn a B

- Attend 80% of the class sessions
- Complete course readings
- Participate in class discussions
- Satisfactorily complete 80% of the exercises as assigned in class for completion during or between class sessions
- Complete one of the assignments as described in the next section

To earn an A

- Attend 90% of the class sessions
- Complete course readings
- Participate in class discussions
- Satisfactorily complete 90% of the exercises as assigned in class for completion during or between class sessions
- Complete two of the assignments as described in the next section

Assignments

Using the Social Network Map

With a client system, complete an assessment of the client's social supports using the *Social Network Map*. Analyze the characteristics of the client's social network and the perceived availability of social support. Assess the positive and negative aspects of the social network, and determine whether the social network consists of reciprocal support relationships. Plan and implement intervention which focuses on increasing the positive supports and/or reciprocal supports in the social network. Following 3-4 contacts with this client system, complete the relevant parts of the *Social Network Map* to evaluate the change in the client's social support system. The *Social Network Map* can be found in Tracy, E.M. and J.K. Whittaker. 1990. "The social network map: Assessing social support in clinical social work practice." *Families in Society*, Volume 71. pp. 461-470. Additional information about the use of this instrument can be found in the Tracy and Abell (1994) article: "Social network map: Some further refinements on administration." *Social Work Research*, 18, pp. 56-60.

Assignment Tasks

- (1) Submit your initial assessment using the 'Social Network Map and Grid' along with a 1-2 page interpretation of the information about your client's network, the goal(s) which seek to enhance the client's support system, and your plan for intervention to achieve the goal(s).

Due Date: By October 12, 1999

- (2) Submit the initial and final Social Network Maps and prepare a 2-3 page description of your use of this map. Use the data in the two maps to analyze the effectiveness of your intervention in achieving the goal(s) of strengthening the client's social network.

Due Date: November 23, 1999

Professional Growth

To practice monitoring change and progress toward a goal, you are to select something about your professional functioning that you will target for change. Please select an area of interpersonal skill which you want to strengthen or some aspect of your intrapsychic (internal) functioning which needs to be managed better so that you can do effective interpersonal practice. *This means that you cannot select some left-brain activity, like library research on autism.* Describe your current level of skill and your goal for improved functioning. Establish a plan to strengthen your functioning and describe the interventions you plan to use to facilitate your change and achieve your goal. In other words, having set a goal for your growth, what steps will you take to help yourself grow? *This means that you need some interventions and can't just rely on your 'willpower' to attain your goal.* If you choose this assignment, a brief written statement on the focus of your professional growth is due by September 21st.

Review the article by William Reid, et al, (1990) "Change Process Research: A New Paradigm?" in *Advances in Clinical Social Work Practice*, edited by Reid and Videka-Sherman. Adapt this approach to monitor the change which occurs in the selected aspect of your professional functioning. For a month, make regular journal entries about both your opportunities and efforts to increase your skill in this targeted area and the context of attempting this change. For instance, if you seek to improve your skill in maintaining limits with your client system, record your opportunities to set limits and your attempts (i.e. your intervention steps) to maintain limits, as well as what was occurring prior to and following your action. In addition, you should reflect after contacts with this client system to record times when you had the opportunity to set limits but did not maintain limits. Journal about the context of 'missed' chances to use this skill.

Assignment Tasks

- (1) Brief statement about the focus of your professional growth and a 2-3 paragraph rationale concerning the importance of selecting this target for change. Describe the intervention plan that you will implement to attain your goal for growth.

Due Date: September 21, 1999

- (2) Submit your journal entries after you have had three contacts with your client and practiced building the interpersonal skill. Discuss the interventions that you have used to help you achieve your professional growth. What adjustments in your intervention plan might aid you to achieve more growth? Please include your statement from the first phase about the focus for your professional growth.

Due Date: By November 2, 1999

- (3) In your final report include your journal, the statement about the focus for your professional growth, your intervention plan for achieving growth, and a 2-3 page analysis of what you learned about the process of attempting change. Discuss whether your intervention plan was helpful in attaining professional growth and assess whether in hindsight you would use any different approach to intervention to better attain your goal. Please note that the purpose of this assignment is to focus on the *process* of making change and the outcome achieved is of lesser importance. The learning which should occur is an increased understanding of the many factors which affect goal attainment.

Due Date: November 30, 1999

Building Professional Awareness

For this assignment, keep a professional log which records the strong feelings you experience in response to a client system. The goal is to build your self-awareness about your "hot spots" and consider ways to resolve your feelings and increase your practice effectiveness. Such feelings as anger, sexual attraction, and fear are essential for us to recognize and resolve so we can work effectively with clients. This assignment will increase your *consciousness* and help you to see what your client system probably sees about you! With greater awareness, you can then take steps to deal with your feelings so they won't interfere with your work with this client system.

- Use your log to describe the strong feelings which you experience with clients.
- Tape record interaction with a client system and transcribe the portions during which your feelings occurred.
- Reflect on this encounter and write in your log what the meaning of these feelings might be. Uncover what triggers your feelings.
- Consider how you can resolve your feelings. You could ask your field instructor to help you decide what steps you can take to resolve your feelings.
- Use your log to describe what you do to resolve your feelings and how effective these actions are in resolving your feelings.

To complete this assignment, maintain this log of your efforts to manage your strong feeling(s) for at least 4 client contacts. While it is desirable for these to be contacts with the same client system, you may log about 2 different client systems, as long as at least 2 contacts with each client system are described in your log.

Carol Swenson's article, "The Professional Log," in *Social Casework* (1988), may assist you in completing this assignment.

Assignment Tasks

- (1) Set a goal for what you want to accomplish through this project. Write a 2-3 paragraph rationale explaining what makes it important for you to address this 'hot spot.' Describe the intervention plan that you plan to undertake to aid you to manage your hot spot.

Due Date: September 21, 1999

- (2) Maintain the log of your strong feelings(s) and your efforts to resolve your feelings. Submit this log after your third log entry. Discuss the interventions that you have used to help you manage your hot spot. Are there other interventions that you could use to better manage your hot spot? Please include the statement from Phase 1 about your goal, the rationale for building professional awareness in this area, and your intervention plan.

Due Date: By October 26, 1999

- (3) After at least 4 client contacts, submit your log, the goal statement, and provide a brief analysis of your progress in managing this "hot spot. Discuss whether your intervention plan was helpful in managing your hot spot and assess whether in hindsight you would use any different approach to intervention to better manage your hot spot.

Due Date: December 7, 1999

Student Evaluation of the Course and Its Instruction

Student feedback concerning the course and its instruction is encouraged throughout the semester. I encourage your candid feedback so that continuous improvement in my instruction can occur. A formal, summative evaluation of the course and its instruction will be completed at the semester's end.