

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**S621 Social Work Research: Interpersonal**

Dr. Gail Folaron

Fall 1997

**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.

**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.

### Required Text:

Glesne, C. & Peshkin, A. (1992). Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction. NY: Longman.

### Other Required Readings (on reserve)

Becerra, R. M. & Zambrana, R.E. (1985). Methodological approaches to research on Hispanics, Social Work Research & Abstracts, 21(2), 42-49.

Denzin, N. K (1989). Interpretive interactionism. Newbury Park: Sage. Chapter 5: Thick Description.

Denzin, N. K (1989). The research act, 3rd Edition. NJ: Prentice Hall. Chapter 10: Triangulation.

Fontana, A. & Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of Science. In Handbook of qualitative research, pp. 361-376.

Gilgun, J. F. (1994). A case for case studies in social work research, Social Work, 39(4), 371-379.

Klein, W. C. & Bloom, M. (1995). Practice wisdom, Social Work, 40(6), 799-807.

Schorr, L. B. (1989). Within our reach: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage. NY: Anchor Press, chapter 10: The lessons of successful programs.

Thornton, S. & Garrett, K.J. (1995). Ethnography as a bridge to multicultural practice. Journal of Social Work Education, 31(1), 67-74.

Tyson, K. B. (1992). A new approach to relevant scientific research for practitioners: The heuristic paradigm, Social Work, 37(6), 541-556.

### Outline of Course Content

#### **Week 1: Introduction: Many ways of knowing**

The research practitioner debate...review of quantitative, qualitative and single subject design methods of inquiry... the nature of qualitative inquiry...qualitative research as a method for evaluating interpersonal practice...application of method to practice.

#### *Reading Assignments*

Schorr, L. B. (1989). Within our reach: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage. NY: Anchor Press, chapter 10: The lessons of successful programs.

Tyson, K. B. (1992). A new approach to relevant scientific research for practitioners: The heuristic paradigm, Social Work, 37(6), 541-556.

Glesne, C. & Peshkin, A. (1992). Becoming qualitative researchers, Intro. & Chapter 1.

#### **Week 2: Preparing a Research Project**

Developing a research question ...Choosing a method of inquiry... Introduction to journal writing ...Examples of qualitative research

#### *Reading Assignments*

Denzin, N. K (1989). The research act, (3rd Ed), Chapter 10: Triangulation.

Gilgun, J. F. (1994). A case for case studies in social work research, Social Work, 39(4), 371-379.

Glense & Peskin, pp 13-18 & 21-30

Thornton, S. & Garrett, K.J. (1995). Ethnography as a bridge to multicultural practice. Journal of Social Work Education, 31(1), 67-74.

Additional article to be assigned

#### *Other assignments*

- Explore access within your agency
- Find agency form permission to tape and bring to class next week
- Draft a cover story - write in your logs
- Find a qualitative article related to the field of practice in which you are currently working and be prepared to discuss the method and your overall reactions to the article.

#### *Optional reading*

Bloom & Fischer (1982). Evaluating Practice: Guidelines of the accountable professional, Chapter 8: Client Logs (optional reading)

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

### **Week 3: Preparing to Interview, Ethics and the Literature**

Ethics in interviewing & the Human Subjects Review Board ... the promise of confidentiality... interviewing informants ...exploring the literature... choosing a sample ... gaining access ...Data Collection... Developing interview questions

#### *Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peskin, pp. 32-37 & chapter 6

Ethical Issues in Research, Encyclopedia of social work, pp.884-893.

Interview an informant and log details of the interview

Revise your cover story

#### *Other assignment*

Research the professional social work literature to find out what works. You may find a program such as the highly touted Homebuilders model of intensive homebased service delivery or you may find an intervention such as mentoring, contracting or reframing. Bring the article to class and be prepared to discuss your findings. Critically analyze your article for evidence of effectiveness. In other words, does the author provide any evidence that the program or intervention is effective or is the author selling a model without substantive support? Write the citation of the article in your log along with a brief summary and a few comments on your reaction to the article.

#### **Week 4: Developing an Interview Guide**

Structured & unstructured interviewing ...how to develop research questions....probing  
...beginning a relationship

##### *Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, Chapter 4

Fontana, A. & Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of Science. In Handbook of qualitative research, pp. 361-376.

##### *Other assignments*

Schedule appointment for interviewing

Review interview questions & develop categories

Log process & reactions

#### **Week 5: Interviewing, Observing, and Recording data**

Review of interview guides ... writing field logs

##### *Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, pp. 30-31 and 93-100

##### *Other assignment*

Interview for one hour, introduce research, get signed permission, build relationship

In your log -Write up interview & your reactions.

#### **Week 6: Participant Observations and Thick Description**

Introduction to the role of the participant observer ... writing thick descriptive detail ...

##### *Reading Assignments*

Denzin, N. K (1989). Interpretive interactionism. Newbury Park: Sage. Chapter 5: Thick Description.

Glense & Peshkin, pp.45-50 and Denzin's article on thick description

##### *Other assignment*

Interview respondent and tape record

In your log - write up comments on the interview and describe the setting, client, problem and/or anything other relevant details in thick, descriptive detail.

#### **Week 7: Subjectivity & Bias, Impact of Race & Gender**

Review of interviews & observations ... exploring subjectivity ... theoretical underpinnings ... member checks

##### *Reading Assignments*

Becerra, R. M. & Zambrana, R.E. (1985). Methodological approaches to research on

Hispanics, *Social Work Research & Abstracts*, 21(2), 42-49.

Glense & Peshkin, pp. 39-51

Klein, W. C. & Bloom, M. (1995). Practice wisdom, *Social Work*, 40(6), 799-807.

*Other assignment*

-Review the article assigned in week 2 for attention to subjectivity. Log findings. Be prepared to discuss in class

-Type transcript

**Week 8: Subjectivity and The Role of Theory**

*Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, pp. 19-21

Review discussion on theory in Gilgun article

*Other assignment*

Finish typing transcript and bring copies for each student on your team next week. Put headings on your transcripts which include your name, the role of the person you interviewed, such as client, worker, supervisor, etc, and your box number.

**Week 9: Data Analysis: Coding**

Coding & analysis as an ongoing process ... revising the interview guide and updating questions

*Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, pp. 127-132

Code one transcript from your research team. This should take no less than 1 hour. On the week that your transcript is discussed you should log your reactions and the comments from the group. It may be helpful to have a second note-taker during group so that you can focus on the discussion.

Submit copy of transcript to respondent for feedback and elaboration. Log results. Be prepared to discuss in group.

**Week 10: Coding and Locating Themes**

Coding & analysis as an ongoing process ... revising the interview guide and updating questions

*Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, pp. 100-107

*Other assignments*

Code 2 transcripts from your research team. Code what is there, what is not there, what does the researcher avoid asking?

Write an interim report in logs (Refer to section on monthly reports on p. 131 in Glesne &

Peshkin). Be sure to include:

1. What seems important to you as you review the data?
2. Where would you focus?
3. What questions would you like to ask?
4. How do you interpret the data?
5. What do you think warrants further study?
6. Any hunches?

### **Week 11: Advanced Data Analysis ... Refining Codes & Defining Categories**

#### *Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, pp. 132-149

#### *Other Assignments*

- Triangulate your data through other methods such as document analysis or observation or by other sources of information such as other respondents
- Code another transcript from your research team. Code what is there, what is not there, what does the researcher avoid asking?

### **Week 12: Qualitative Computer Programs**

#### *Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, pp.141-145

- Code another transcript from your research team. Code what is there, what is not there, what does the researcher avoid asking?

### **Week 13: Trustworthiness & Audits**

#### *Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, pp. 146-147

#### *Other assignments*

- Review the article assigned in week 2 and explore for trustworthiness. Write comments in log. Be prepared to discuss in class.
- Draft final report

### **Week 14: Communicating Results to Enhance Practice Knowledge**

#### *Reading Assignments*

Glense & Peshkin, Chapter 8  
Review Gilgun article

### **Week 15: Semester Review**

Summary of the semester ... questions & answers ... tying up loose ends ... where do we go from here?  
... course evaluations

Final report due

### Course Assignments & Grading:

Course assignments include

1. Maintain a log or journal throughout the course documenting observations, descriptions, interview data, memo, comments & personal reflections
2. Review a published qualitative study
3. Develop an interview guide
4. Interview one respondent
5. Transcribe and analyze your interview
6. Code interviews for each member of your research team
7. Triangulate your data for trustworthiness
8. Write and submit a final report (one per group)

### Grading Policy

Course grades will be based on a combination of class participation, including attendance, demonstration of knowledge of course content through interim projects, and submission of detailed field logs & reflections. The relative value of these factors is:

- 30% Class participation (including coding for colleagues which will be peer graded)
- 20% Interview transcript
- 30% Field logs
- 20% Final report

### Appointments, Office Location, Telephone Number

My office is in room ES 4122, on the 4th floor of the Education/Social Work Building. I will be available for drop in appointments Monday from 4:00-5:30 and Wednesday 12-1. If these times are inconvenient or if you wish to have a private conversation or an extended discussion, feel free to schedule an appointment. My phone numbers is 274-6792 (office). You can also reach me by E-Mail at GFolaron@IUPUI.edu