

Plan B Road Map

The following outlines the requirements of the Plan B.

- I. A one- hour course is set up for students who choose to do a Plan B (SOWK 5755) for fall and an additional one-hour course in spring. The face-to-face course contact would occur for 3 hours on Friday from 1:30-4:30 pm on each of the five intensive weekends in the fall and spring.
- II. The Plan B consists of a research paper and practice evaluation. The fall semester assignment is the research paper (including a brief oral defense of paper), and application of the research in a practice evaluation is to be conducted during spring semester, resulting in a final Plan B defense toward the middle of April.

FALL SEMEMSTER

GOAL: Student is to demonstrate a deep understanding and expertise of a theory/evidence-based practice model.

All second-year and advanced standing students are required to attend a Plan B orientation class during the summer. This orientation will include a discussion of the basis of the research paper for the fall: a theory, theory-informed research, theory-informed practice, and evidence-based intervention. Guest speaker – Jenny Garcia, HS Librarian will attend the orientation to give students an overview of library resources they can use for their Plan Bs.

FALL CLASS STRUCTURE

1. **Class #1:** review syllabus and class expectations. Discuss premises of research paper and literature/research review relative to the choice of a theory and theory-informed model. Also, discuss how this paper will lead to a practice evaluation (intervention) to be implemented in their assigned field site during the spring semester. Practice evaluation (intervention) must be rooted in the theory/model explored in the fall research paper. The student is to become the expert on the theoretical perspective and intervention/application of that perspective in a real world practice setting: “What is the theoretical fit for you? What evidence-based practices support that theory?”

Research Paper (proposed):

Paper is to be 10-15 pages of theoretical paradigm/theory-informed and evidence-based practice model; 3-5 pages on personal connection to theory and possible applications practice area/interest and setting. Peer review discussions will be conducted during class time. Student will revise the proposal and submit to the chair for review by the end of October. Full proposal will go to entire committee by the early part of November and a proposal meeting will be held during the 2nd and 3rd. weeks of November.

OUTLINE:

- Brief introduction to chosen theory
- Key definitions of theory

Integrated Literature Review

- Theory—in-depth exploration/explanation of theory
 - History: contributors/who developed it; contextualize as to why this theory at this point in time.
 - Critical Assumptions of Theory
 - Critical Analysis of Theory
 - Evidence-base contributions/applications
 - Criticisms
 - Limitations
 - Summary
 - Conceptual understanding of theory to include best applications as supported by literature and research findings

Possible Applications

- Personal connection to theory/"I": Why this theory? 2-3 paragraphs
- This theory relative to practice setting/population/practice area (NOTE: students must still support with literature and scholarly references).

- Examples: Field site (i.e., Peak Wellness, substance abuse recovery groups); population (i.e., veterans, adolescents/child protection); practice area (i.e., trauma, domestic violence, grief and loss)
2. Guest Lecturer - Jenny Garcia, HS librarian, will present on SPICE as a framework for formulating practice evaluation research questions and research strategy:
 - S—my setting
 - P—my population (the client or client population with whom I am conducting the evaluation; the issue that I am investigating)
 - Who, what, when, where
 - Define practice setting, staff, organization, client
 - I—my intervention
 - C—my comparison relative to the literature or to what has been done in the setting previously
 - I and C involve the research question with consideration to what is appropriate in this setting for this population relative to what is presently being done
 - E—my evaluation as reflected in the score on the scale that I used or on the pre-test/post-test measurements
 3. **Class #2:** students will prepare a detailed outline of their paper to share with their cohort, along with a minimum of 15 peer-reviewed references. This is to be a thorough and exhaustive review of the research/literature including primary sources.
 4. **Class #3:** students will submit their research paper 10 days prior to class to another student in the cohort and will bring in the paper for peer review discussion.
 5. **Class #4:** Students defend their papers to their group on this weekend: grade includes written (paper) and the oral presentation and is the final grade for the semester. After successful defense and revisions, students will finalize their Plan B committee – with guidance from the chair for inside/outside members, and send all committee members the final copy of their research paper.

6. **Class #5:** This is the final 3-hour meeting. Students will begin formalizing their proposal for the practice evaluation (intervention) to be conducted in the Spring Semester. Topics covered will include practice evaluation format; IRB considerations and format. An overview of the Spring semester will be given during this class.

SPRING SEMESTER

GOAL: Application of the selected practice intervention in field setting and evaluation of one's own ability to implement appropriately and effectively with fidelity to the practice intervention.

Social work has historically focused primarily on the delivery of services. Often there was no evidence to prove that the interventions were successful and sustaining. Over the last several decades, social work practice has evolved considerably. Since social service programs are heavily funded by public resources, the gatekeepers of public monies (e.g. local government, legislature, congress, etc.) have required organizations funded by public dollars to prove that their services are successful.

With this evolution, social service programs have had to restructure many aspects of their services to insure that their interventions are based on empirical evidence indicating that the services provided are successful. With empirical based practice methods, social workers use research and outcome measurement practice and problem solving tools where data is collected systematically. They specify problems, as well as monitor the interventions, techniques, and outcomes in measurable terms and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions used.

The spring semester course involves demonstration of the application of the theory-informed/evidence-based practice model and intervention, i.e. a practice evaluation. A direct practice evaluation informs effectiveness of your practice. The final deliverable is a formal a final Plan B defense which includes the written practice evaluation (following the format provided) and an oral defense of the completed project.

SPRING CLASS STRUCTURE

Spring Semester class sessions are structured to function as work sessions to operationalize implementation of the practice evaluation and to prepare students for their written/oral final defense.

1. **Class #1:** Discuss and review outline for practice evaluation implementation, including plans for who/where/what/how long for practice evaluation implementation. DUE: IRB written proposal; Proof of CITI Training.
2. **Class #2:** Discuss progress on implementation; brain-storm for problem solving of issues that have come up. Review first draft of written practice evaluation.
3. **Class #3:** Submission of full draft of completed Practice evaluation; including integration of a summary of the fall research paper. Discuss issues related to data collection and interpretation.
4. **Class #4:** Planning for final defense. Final draft of complete Plan B to chair. Instructor and peer review.

NOTE – Completed final Plan B must be submitted to Chair by 3rd week of March. Once approved by chair, submit to committee and plan for Final Defense during 2nd and 3rd weeks of April.

5. **Class #5:** not a “formal” class time – this is the final defense scheduled individually with each committee. Possible showcasing of work?

Details of Practice Evaluation Assignment:

Social work students completing a Plan B will conduct an evaluation of social work practice in their Advanced Practicum setting. Evaluation of practice exercises described here are educational assignments and are **not** research projects in the sense that data is **not** being gathered for publication or other public dissemination purposes.

Note - Any project that gathers data about human subjects with the intent of publicizing the results of data analysis (through publication or other forms of public presentation) constitutes a research project. No such research can be conducted without obtaining prior approval from the Institutional Review Board

1. Practice evaluations follow a single system design and may focus on:
 - Agency clients or consumers (individuals, families, or groups),
 - Agency programs or on other units of attention (such as staff),
2. The target of practice evaluation may be
 - A client problem (e.g. increase the number of days a student attends school),
 - A client strength (e.g. maintain high level of school attendance),
 - A program goal (e.g. 80% of agency clients will follow through with referrals),
 - Or some other measurable aspect of practice deemed important by the student and the Field Instructor.
3. Data collection may include one or more:
 - Standardized questionnaires
 - Self-report tools such as self-anchored scales and logs
 - Field notes or other ways of recording activity and impressions in action research
 - Behavioral observations used in a practice session
 - Parent, or teacher rating scales
 - Archival data such as probation reports, employment records, school reports, or medical records, etc.
4. Students will utilize graphs and other data charts to provide a visual summary of their findings.
 - **Thesis Statement** is the main point, idea or message of your paper condensed into one or two sentences. The statement should appear in the introduction of your paper and the rest of the paper supports that main idea. For more information about the thesis statement, go to:
Center for Writing Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign
<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/tips/thesis/>
OWL Online Writing Lab, Purdue University
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/1/>

Outline of Practice Evaluation (use the following Headings)

1. Intervention:

- a. What intervention model is going to be used – support with research/EBP from your fall paper?

Note - Students must introduce something new to either the client/system or new to the Intern

- b. Comparison – consideration to:

- i. What has been the plan for change to date:

1. Could be nothing (new client)/ new client issue
2. Could be what was previous efforts to address target behavior = could be clients efforts, agencies efforts

- ii. What is the agency’s standard practice for this type of issue – does this differ from standard practice

2. **Evaluation Design:** Ex., AB or AB-B or B-C

3. **Assessment Tool:** E of SPICE. Students are to research the use of a tool/a measurement/a scale to evaluate practice effectiveness. Provide detailed information on chosen measurement tool.

4. **Data Collection:** relative to the research question

5. **Intervention Assessment:** Utilize data collected to assess whether or not the intervention was effective.

6. **Evaluation Assessment:** Was the evaluation method effective to evaluate your intervention?

7. **Recommendations for Practice:** (with this specific client system)

8. **Self-Assessment: Social Worker as Researcher:**

This section is intended for you to reflect on your experience as a research practitioner. Treat this much like the reflection journals that you have had to do through many of your classes regarding your learning and how that learning has informed your professional practice and your personal perspectives in working with given populations and challenges. Give consideration to the following questions:

- a. What were the challenges and successes of
 - i. Your chosen theory/evidence-based practice
 - ii. Your agency setting and staffing dynamics

iii. Your client population

- b. What was the dominant paradigm/social construction/narrative regarding agency clients?
- c. How has the project furthered your understanding of clients/client populations/settings or agencies/the social work profession itself?
- d. How did the intent of your practice evaluation parallel or diverge from the outcome of your evaluation? What was the consonance and dissonance of your intent from your outcome?
- e. What have you discovered or more clearly defined about professional use of self and what that means for you?
- f. How has this project contributed to your ability to think critically about clients and systems from the micro/mezzo/macro perspectives? In what ways has this furthered your understanding of client systems at micro/mezzo/macro levels?
- g. How has your project informed your sense of self in terms of your areas of competence and in terms of assessing areas for future growth and learning?
- h. In summary, how has this project informed your future practice as a professional social worker?