

Indiana University
School of Social Work

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Cournoyer*
Firsich
Iverson

PRACTICUM I (S581)

(Fall, 1984)

Introduction

The Practicum I course is intended to enable the first year MSW student to begin the lifelong process of developing the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to perform competently as a professional social worker. The course allows the student to examine her/his personal values as they compare with social work professional values and to initiate the process of becoming a social worker. The course exposes the student to a wide range of issues, needs, and problems extant in the community and familiarizes him/her with resources which might prove useful in helping to address those concerns. During the course, the student visits several social service agencies, converses with professional social workers, attends community meetings, interacts with a variety of people from different segments of society, and conducts a community study.

The course also provides an opportunity for the student to identify, define, practice, and refine those interactional helping skills necessary for beginning social work practice. Collectively, the "helping skills" are considered to be essential for the development of a social work relationship and promoting change in the target system. Primary among the skills addressed in the course are those related to: (1) the clear expression of warm, nonjudgmental caring and respect for the members of the client system, (2) the regular demonstration of empathic understanding of the client(s) communications, in whatever form they are expressed, (3) the presentation of oneself as a genuine, authentic person, and (4) the assertive expression of one's knowledge and opinions in an open, non-controlling way. In order to adequately develop and refine these primary skills, the student must continually engage in a process of self-assessment of those values, attitudes, attributes, and behaviors which encourage or inhibit one's helpfulness to others.

Course Description

The course is organized into four related components. First, a theoretically and empirically based series of lectures and demonstrations occurs on Monday afternoons. Second, an experientially oriented laboratory designed to train the student in selected interactional helping skills takes place during one of the Wednesday periods (either morning or afternoon). Third, a seminar which addresses selected issues and topical areas of importance to social work practice also occurs during a Wednesday period. And fourth, a range of field experiences take place at various times throughout the semester. Together, these parts comprise a course which has as its major function the preparation of the first year MSW student for beginning social work practice in the form of the practicum field placement which occurs during the second semester.

*As Course Coordinator, Dr. Cournoyer conducts the lectures/demonstrations and leads a section of the lab/seminar/field experience. Professor's Firsich and Iverson each lead sections of the lab/seminar/field component of the course.

Course Content

The content and learning experiences offered in the four components of the course (lecture, lab, seminar, and field) are intended to be related. Some intentional overlap of content and process occurs. The student should be able to perceive the relationship between the different elements of this course as well as begin to grasp the inter-connectedness of all the courses offered in the first year of the MSW program.

1. The Lecture/Demonstration Series

The series of lectures and demonstrations affords the student an opportunity to learn about the theoretical and empirical bases for the various skills addressed in the laboratory portion of the course. Descriptions, definitions, illustrations, and actual or videotaped demonstrations of each of the skills will be provided during this series. The skills addressed in this course are generally organized in accord with the sequence of the typical social work process. Verbal, nonverbal, and written skills related to the preparation, beginning, contracting, and some forms of the intervention (work), evaluation and ending phases of social work practice are addressed. Other skills related to these latter three phases are deferred until the Practice II and Practicum II courses which are offered during the Spring semester.

2. Interactional Helping Skills Laboratory

During the laboratory sessions, the student participates in training exercises designed to enable him/her to practice those interactional helping skills presented in the lecture/demonstration series. These skills are considered to be central to the development and maintenance of a professional social work relationship with client and resource systems of various kinds and sizes. Systematic self-assessment and regular feedback from the instructor and classmates allow each student to gauge her/his progress in skill selection, development, and refinement. Audiovisual equipment is routinely utilized in order to facilitate the teaching/learning process.

//For a list of the specific interactional helping skills addressed in the course, please refer to the (attached) "Laboratory Study Guide."//

3. The Practicum Seminar

The seminar addresses content themes and issues which are integrally related to the context and practice of social work. The student is encouraged to identify and analyze values, attitudes and professional goals in light of the School's curriculum, the profession of social work, and the nature of society. Specific opportunities are provided for students to enhance their personal and professional self-awareness as it relates to the practice of social work.

Activities designed to enable students to confront selected value dilemmas common to social work practice are offered. Also provided are experiential exercises designed to enhance the student's awareness and sensitivity to the significance of racial, ethnic, age, gender, cultural, social, and economic factors as they affect social work practice and the societal context in which it occurs.

4. Field Experiences

The field activities address content which relate to the pervasive, powerful influence of the community, in its many facets, upon different segments of the population. Psychological, sociopolitical, and environmental needs, problems and resources of various neighborhoods and selected groups are explored. Various roles, functions, and activities of social workers individually and collectively are considered. Selected agencies, community boards or councils, and other significant organizations are observed, analyzed, and discussed.

Included among the various field experiences are visits to selected social service agencies and programs, discussions with practicing social work workers, interviews with members of a selected community, attendance at professional and community meetings, and the completion of a community study. These learning experiences are intended to help familiarize the student with some of the personal, social, and environmental strengths, needs, problems, and resources within various communities.

Course Objectives

Upon the satisfactory completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Understand and assess the rationale, structure and organization of the School's MSW curriculum and determine its relevance for her/his career objectives.
2. Understand and compare one's own values with the value system of the profession and confront various value dilemmas in service delivery.
3. Participate in ongoing peer exchange, support, and development as an active rather than passive participant.
4. Demonstrate increased awareness of and sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, age, and economic differences.
5. Demonstrate increased awareness of various settings for social work practice and identify the commonalities of social work functions and tasks.
6. Demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which social, political, and economic systems influence behavior.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the interactional helping skills necessary to fulfill various social work roles throughout the preparation, beginning, contracting, and some forms of the intervention (work), evaluation, and ending phases of practice.

8. Demonstrate satisfactory performance of the interactional skills addressed in the course through actual or simulated social work practice.
9. Demonstrate an ability to selectively choose appropriate skills for utilization with different clients or peers, in various contexts, and at different phases in the social work process.
10. Demonstrate an ability to accurately assess the appropriateness of skill selection and the quality of skill performance of oneself and others.
11. Demonstrate an ability to speak and write well-organized, coherent, and grammatically correct communications.

Major Assignments and Evaluation

The specific course agenda and the reading assignments are provided under separate cover (attached). The major assignments from which the course grade is derived include:

1. "Celebration of Difference" Interview (10%). Each student, identifies a person, family, or group who differs from the student in terms of race, ethnic or cultural orientation, sexual preference, or other characteristic quality which tends to differentiate people from each other. The student conducts an interview for the purpose of better understanding these "differences." Based upon the interview (but maintaining the anonymity and privacy of the persons involved) each student prepares a 2-3 page process recording of the interview.

Due Date: Wednesday, October 10, 1984

2. Mid-Term Exam (20%). This exam is a cognitive measure of the student's understanding of the skills addressed, content covered, and learning experiences completed thus far in the lecture, lab, field, and seminar components of the course.

Exam Date: Monday, October 15, 1984

3. Community Study (20%). Each student, in a small group, conducts a study of a selected community. (For the purposes of this assignment, a "community" may be a neighborhood, a discrete population group, or a collection of persons attempting to cope with a specific social problem. From the study, the small group of students:

a) prepares a formal "community study paper" (not to exceed fifteen typewritten pages) which describes and analyzes the community in a multidimensional way;

b) delivers a presentation (during the MSW-I retreat) which expresses the highlights and the results of your community study; and

c) participates in a "community tour" intended to introduce students to the Indianapolis area as a context for social work practice.

Due Date: The tour and retreat takes place on Wednesday, October, 31, 1984. The paper should be submitted on Wednesday, November 14, 1984.

4. Formal Videotape Performance (20%). Each student, serving in the role of a social worker, makes two formal videotapes of a professional encounter with an actual or simulated client or client system. The first of these is ungraded and is intended to introduce the student to the process. Each student is provided an evaluation of his/her performance by the instructor. The specific objectives for the experience and the criteria upon which the evaluation is conducted are provided prior to the videotaping.

The second formal videotaping (conducted during the last three weeks of the semester) is evaluated in the same manner as the first but accounts for 20 percent of the student's course grade.

5. Final Exam (25%). As a final measure of student learning, this examination focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on knowledge and skills addressed since the mid-term evaluation.

Exam Date: Monday, December 10, 1984

6. Participation (5%). In order to satisfactorily accomplish the course objectives, each student should actively engage in the group discussions, and in the class and field activities. The instructor evaluates each student's participation in terms of her/his completed homework assignments, attendance and involvement with the various course experiences, and in the quality and quantity of interaction with class members.

Texts*

Required:

Lawrence Shulman. The Skills of Helping (2nd Ed.). Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1984.

Suanna J. Wilson. Recording. New York: The Free Press, 1980.

David R. Evans, Margaret T. Hearn, Max R. Uhlemann, and Allen E. Ivey. Essential Interviewing: A Programmed Approach to Effective Communication. Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1979.

*Many of the basic social work principles and processes from which the specific elements of this course are derived may be found in Beulah Compton and Burt Galaway, Social Work Processes (3rd Ed.), Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1984 and in Anthony N. Maluccio (Ed.), Promoting Competence in Clients, New York: The Free Press, 1981.

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S581

Cournoyer
Fall, 1984

COURSE AGENDA/READING ASSIGNMENTS

The course agenda provided below is intended as a general guide to the semester's learning activities. The assigned readings represent the core reading requirements for the course. Please be certain to complete them. Additional recommended readings are provided in the bibliography and/or are available from the instructor for those of you so interested.

- Wed., 8-22 (AM) Introductions; Initial Lab Exercise
(PM) Lab Exercise (Continued)
- Mon., 8-27 (PM) Lecture: Course Introduction; Rationale & Overview

READ: Shulman, Ch. 1
- Wed., 8-29 (AM) Lab
(PM) Seminar: Professional Education & the MSW Curriculum

READ: Shulman, Ch. 2; Evans, Ch. 1
- Mon., 9-3 *****LABOR DAY HOLIDAY*****
- Wed., 9-5 (AM) Lab
(PM) Seminar: Social Work as a Profession

READ: Wilson, Chs. 12 & 13; Shulman, Ch. 3
- Mon., 9-10 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Preparing for First Contacts

READ: Shulman, Ch. 4; Evans, Ch. 2
- Wed., 9-12 (AM) Lab
(PM) Seminar: Personal and Professional Values and Ethics

READ: Evans, Ch. 3; Wilson, Chs. 1-5;
- Mon., 9-17 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Beginning with Clients and Others

READ: Shulman, Chs. 16 & 17
- Wed., 9-19 (AM) Lab
(PM) Seminar: A "Celebration of Human Difference" - Gender

READ: Evans, Ch. 5 & 4

- Mon., 9-24 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Exploring the Person, Problem, and Situation
- Wed., 9-26 (AM) Lab:
(PM) Seminar: Human Difference - Race and/or Ethnicity

READ: Wilson, Ch. 6;
- Mon., 10-1 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Relationship Building

READ: Evans, Ch. 6
- Wed., 10-3 (AM) Lab:
(PM) Seminar: Human Difference - Socioeconomic Class
- Mon., 10-8 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Contracting
- Wed., 10-10 (AM) Lab:
(PM) Seminar: Human Difference - Age

PROCESS RECORDING OF "DIFFERENCE INTERVIEW" DUE TODAY
- Mon., 10-15 (PM) *****MID-TERM EXAMINATION*****
- Wed., 10-17 (AM) Lab:
(PM) Seminar: Resources & Policies for Beginning Practice

READ: Evans, Chs. 7-11
- Mon., 10-22 (PM) *****AGENCY VISIT*****
- Wed., 10-24 (AM) *****AGENCY VISIT*****
(PM) Seminar: Discussion of Agency Visits

READ: Shulman, Ch. 6
- Mon., 10-29 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Beginning & Contracting with Families
- Wed., 10-31 (AM) *****COMMUNITY TOUR*****
(PM) *****RETREAT*****

READ: Wilson, Chs. 7-9
- Mon., 11-5 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Beginning and Contracting with Groups

READ: Shulman, Chs. 7 & 8
- Wed., 11-7 (AM) Lab:
(PM) Seminar: Individual Behavior in the Group Context

READ: Shulman, Chs. 9-11

- Mon., 11-12 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Work Phase Skills with Individuals, Families and Groups
 READ: Shulman, Chs. 11-14
- Wed., 11-14 (AM) Lab:
 (PM) Seminar: Open
 COMMUNITY STUDY PAPERS DUE TODAY
- Mon., 11-19 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Work Phase Skills (Continued)
 READ: Shulman, Chs. 5 & 15 & Epilogue
- Wed., 11-21 *****THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY*****
- Mon., 11-26 (PM) *****PREPLACEMENT FIELD VISITS*****
- Wed., 11-28 (AM) Lab:
 (PM) Seminar: Discussion of Preplacment Visits
 READ: Wilson, Chs. 10 & 11
- Mon., 12-3 (PM) Lecture/Demonstration: Evaluation, Endings, & Transitions
- Wed., 12-5 (AM) Lab:
 (PM) Seminar: Lab/Seminar Termination & Feedback
- Mon., 12-10 (PM) *****FINAL EXAMINATION*****

LABORATORY STUDY-GUIDE

As a means by which to organize your study and practice for the laboratory portion of the course, I have identified a number of discrete "helping skills." Most of these are described and sometimes illustrated in the Shulman and Evans readings. Others will be defined in the classroom. By the conclusion of the course you should be able to identify, define, provide an example of, and demonstrate each of these skills in a simulated or actual socialwork situation. [As a possible way to utilize this study guide, let me suggest that you, as individuals or as members of study groups, do the following: 1) take each skill and identify the page numbers in Evans and/or Shulman which make reference to it - note that the different authors do not always use the same terminology for each skill, and they sometimes use the same words to refer to different skills; 2) paraphrase from the readings and/or lectures a clear definition or description of the skill, including any recommendations for its use; 3) create a clear example of the skill being used by a social worker in a social work situation; and 4) practice the skill with one or more colleagues or friends - perhaps with the use of a tape recorder - until you think you can demonstrate the skill in at least one or two types of social work situations.]

PART ONE (Skills addressed prior to the Mid-Term Exam)

*Preparing/Getting Set (1,2,3)

*"Tuning-In" (to Client's Sense of Urgency, to the Worker's own Feelings, and to the Possible Meaning of the Client's Struggle) (2)

*Clarifying Purpose and Role(s), and Sessional Contracting (2,3)

*Listening, Observing (Direct and Indirect Cues) and Attending (including Nonverbally Communicating Warmth, Respect, Authenticity)/Focusing and Following (1,2,3)

Containing (2)

Encouraging (3)

*Reaching for Feedback (including Feedback about Roles and Purpose, Checking for Artificial Consensus, etc.) (2,3)

Communicating Hope and Optimism Regarding the Potential of the Work (2)

*Effective Inquiry/Questioning, Probing, Seeking between Session Data, Checking for Underlying Ambivalence, and Reaching for Other Feelings (1,2)

*Responding with Understanding to Direct and Indirect Expression of Content and Meaning/Reflecting Content (1,2,3)

Partializing (including Partializing Client Concerns) (2)

Specifying (Moving from the General to the Specific (Being Concrete) (2,3)

*Responding with Understanding to Direct and Indirect Expression of Feelings/Reflecting Feeling (and to Feelings/Meanings Combined) (1,2,3)

*Helping the Other to Personalize (Meaning, and/or Feeling, and/or Problem/Goal, and/or Plan) (3)

PART TWO (Skills addressed prior to the Final Exam)

*Structuring (1)

Pacing (3)

Supporting (including Supporting in Taboo Areas) (2,3)

*Focusing (Holding to Focus and Making Sessional Transitions) (2,3)

*Sharing Information (Providing Relevant Factual Data) (2,3)

*Sharing Worker Opinions (Advising/Interpreting/Offering New Perspectives/Providing Feedback in a Way that is Open to Examination/Asserting (2,3)

*Communicating Feeling and Immediacy (1)

*Self-Disclosure (Sharing Personal Thoughts, Experiences, and Feelings) (1,2,3)

Reaching Inside of and Using Silences (2)

*Responding with Immediacy (including Dealing with the Authority Theme) (1,2,3)

*Confronting (including Challenging the Illusion of Work) (1,2,3)

Using Humor (3)

Touching (3)

Generalizing (2)

Rehearsing (2)

Summarizing (3)

Identifying Next Steps (2)

Interacting with Systems People Directly (2)

Pointing Out Endings (2)

Reaching for and Sharing Ending Feelings (2)

Identifying Major Learnings and Areas for Future Work (2)

*Transferring, Referring, Terminating (2,3)

1) Evans (et. al.) text; 2) Shulman text; 3) Cournoyer lecture or handout

NOTE: Skills considered "primary" (at least for the purposes of this course) are designated by an () asterisk.