

TOPICS: CURRENT TOPICS IN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK
SOWK 485/585
Summer II-June 22, 2009-July 24, 2009
Minnesota State University Mankato
Department of Social Work in conjunction with Extended Learning

FACULTY

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PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The Topics in Social Work course provides an opportunity for students at the Bachelors, Masters, post-Baccalaureate and post-Masters level to enroll in an academic course that focuses on a current topic in the field. This course is being offered for 3 credits at the undergraduate or graduate level. This specific Topics course will focus on the fundamentals of Response to Intervention (RtI) and its application to school social work practice in general and special education.

This course is specifically designed to address issues presented at the Minnesota School Social Work Association's Summer Institute held at Superior Shores Resort in Duluth, MN June 23-25, 2008. Therefore attendance at the Institute is mandatory and constitutes the face to face hours required for the course.

PLACE IN BSSW/MSW CURRICULUM

This Topics in Social Work course is one of the courses offered by the MSU, M Social Work Department that is considered an elective course for both the Bachelor of Science in Social Work and the Master of Social Work program. It is generally taken upon or after admission to the social work major or to the MSW program. Although it is preferred that SOWK 430/530 School Social Work is taken as a pre-requisite OR a student has at least one year experience as a school social worker, this is not required. Additionally, students from related professions are invited to enroll as this will enrich student learning in the course.

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

The Topics in Social Work course contributes to the University mission related to promoting learning through effective teaching and scholarship. It is essential that school social workers stay abreast of new developments within the field and be able to assess the impact of this on their

current practice. Best practices in the field are ever changing and require ongoing continuing education. The course is also supportive of the College mission to promote exploration, understanding, explanation and transformation of the social world through graduate teaching and learning.

BSSW/MSW PROGRAM GOALS

This course meets the departmental goals to prepare students as competent professionals at both the graduate and undergraduate level, and to further the education of practitioners in the field of social work. Students from all disciplines are encouraged to develop an understanding of the roles and tasks of not only social workers but also other helping professionals, understand the issues of working with diverse populations in school settings and populations at risk, and engage in critical thinking about these issues as they impact their work with children, families and staff in school settings. Finally, students should be able to engage in self directed and cooperative learning, each of which is a skill for professional practice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1) To understand the fundamentals of Response to Intervention (RtI) and how topics presented at the Institute fit in the three-tiered process.
 - (a) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the RtI process;
 - (b) Students will explain the applicability of RtI to their work with students.
 - (c) Students will identify the areas of knowledge needed to further their understanding of the RtI process.

- 2) To understand a framework that promotes the use of evidence-based practices across academic, physical, social-emotional and behavioral domains for all students promoted by the Minnesota Department of Education.
 - (a) Students examine the research-base for the proposed framework.
 - (b) Students will explore the implementation of a continuum of services in a school setting or the implementation of a similar continuum of services in a community setting.

- 3) To become knowledgeable about the *WhyTry?* program
 - (a) Students will examine the research-base for the program.
 - (b) Students will discuss the implementation of this research-based program with fidelity in a school or community setting, and how to evaluate student outcomes.

- 4) To obtain a beginning level of knowledge in monitoring the progress of students and making decisions based on the results.
 - (a) Students will demonstrate an understanding of progress monitoring and its place in the RtI process.
 - (b) Students will articulate vocabulary utilized in monitoring progress.
 - (c) Students will discuss how progress monitoring can be implemented into daily practice.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

No text will be assigned for this course. It is expected that students will access MSU, M library services to consult research related to each assignment in this course.

TEACHING METHODS

This class is a hybrid course that combines attendance at the Minnesota School Social Work Summer Institute with web-based assignments and hands-on learning. Students are expected to attend the entire Institute and incorporate the information from the workshops into all assignments for this course. Assignments will be clearly delineated by academic level (undergraduate/graduate) and number of credits to be earned in the course (1 or 3 credits). Students will be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching methods utilized in this course. Feedback will be collected via a survey form posted on the course website. Desire to Learn (D2L) will be the platform utilized for the course website.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment 1: RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

SOWK585

Research and describe in detail (800 words) the concept of the Response to Intervention process. Support your description with a minimum of 5 journal articles and 5 websites. Post the description on the course D2L website discussion board. Provide a link to websites and a bibliography of journal articles written in APA style. Respond to two other student's postings. **This assignment is due July 4, 2008.**

Assignment 2: A FRAMEWORK FOR PROVIDING A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES TO STUDENTS

SOWK585-3 credits

- A) Find 6 journal articles that provide a research-base for components of the continuum of services presented at the Institute. Create an annotated bibliography. Post on the course website. **This assignment is due July 9, 2008.**

- B) Write a comparison (1000 words) of your findings in the journal articles to the information provided at the MSSWA School Social Work Institute. Additionally, describe barriers to implementation of the continuum of services and how you as a school social worker/social worker would implement this strategy in your practice to improve outcomes for students. Post information from task A and B on the course D2L website discussion board. Respond to two other student's postings. **This assignment is due July 9, 2008.**

Assignment 3: *WhyTry?*

SOWK585-3 credits

- A) Review information about evidence-based practice presented on the final day of the Institute and compare it to the research-base for *WhyTry?* posted on the D2L website.
- B) Review research on how to successfully implement a research-based program in a school or similar setting, the implementation of a program with fidelity, and the measurement of student outcomes.
- C) Post a discussion of information found (about 1,000 words) from task A and B on the D2L course website discussion board. Respond to two other students' postings. **This assignment is due July 15, 2008.**

Assignment 4: PROGRESS MONITORING

SOWK485

- A) Find information on the Internet about progress monitoring as part of the RtI process. Create a glossary of 3 terms used in conjunction with progress monitoring and post a summary of the overall concept, definitions for the three terms, and links to related websites on the course D2L website discussion board.
- B) Write a summary (300 words) of information learned at the Institute and describe how this skill can be used in all settings. Post information from task A and B on the course D2L website discussion board. **This assignment is due July 21, 2008.**

SOWK585-1 credit

- A) Find information on the Internet about progress monitoring as part of the RtI process. Create a glossary of 3 terms used in conjunction with progress monitoring and post a summary of the overall concept, definitions for the three terms, and links to related websites on the course D2L website discussion board.
- B) Write a summary (300 words) of information learned at the Institute and describe how this skill can be used in all settings. Post information from task A and B on the course D2L website discussion board. **This assignment is due July 21, 2008.**

SOWK585-3 credits

- A) Find information on the Internet about progress monitoring as part of the RtI process. Create a glossary of 5 terms used in conjunction with progress monitoring and post a summary of the overall concept, definitions for the five terms, and links to related websites on the course D2L website discussion board.

- B) Describe the relationship between progress monitoring and measuring student outcomes.
- C) Write a summary (800 words) of the connection between evidence-based practice, progress monitoring and measuring student outcomes on the course D2L site. Respond to two other student's postings. **This assignment is due July 21, 2008.**

Assignment 5: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

All Students: Post on the course D2L discussion board three of the most valuable skills you learned as a result of participating in this class and attending the MSSWA School Social Work Institute and a plan for implementing them into your current or future practice. **This posting is due July 23, 2008.**

EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

A total of 200 points can be earned in this course. Points will be accumulated through: 1) Response to Intervention—40 points, 3) Framework for Continuum of Services—50 points, 4) *WhyTry?*—50 points, 5) Progress Monitoring—40 points and 6) From Theory to Practice—20 points.

Students will be evaluated in accordance with the following system of letter grades: A, B, C, D and F.

UNDERGRADUATE GRADING SCALE

- A - 90-100%
- B - 80-89%
- C - 70-79%
- D - 60-69%
- E - 59% or below

A grade of “incomplete” will only be awarded under rare circumstances. Students must meet with the instructor to request an “incomplete” as soon as possible in the semester, but at least two weeks before the last day of the course. The request must include a plan with a timeline for completing and having evaluated all coursework prior to the first day of the subsequent semester.

GRADUATE GRADING SCALE

- A – 90% to 100% of possible points represents work of definitely superior quality
- B – 80% to 89% of possible points represents a level of performance that is above average
- C – 70% to 79% of possible points represents a below-average performance
- D – 60% to 69% of possible points represents unacceptable performance
- F – 59% or below represents unacceptable performance

A grade of “incomplete” will only be awarded under rare circumstances. Students must meet with the instructor to request an “incomplete” as soon as possible in the semester, but at least two

weeks before the last day of the course. The request must include a plan with a timeline for completing and having evaluated all coursework prior to the first day of the subsequent semester.

COURSE, DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY POLICIES

For complete policies please refer to the MSW Program Graduate Student Handbook as well as the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, College of Graduate Studies and Research, and Minnesota State University, Mankato policy documents for Graduate Students.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The University and Department of Social Work is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities to all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, veteran's status, National origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and mental disabilities, creed, status due to receipt of public assistance, or any other groups against which discrimination is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Minnesota Statute Chapter 363, and other applicable state or federal laws or State University System policy. Complaints of discrimination are filed with the Office of Affirmative Action located at 112 Armstrong Hall.

ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

In accordance with University Policy, the Department of Social Work is committed to ensuring equal educational opportunity and full participation for qualified persons with disabilities as is legally required under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 including section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. All students with a disability may request accommodation through the Office of Disability Services. Visit the Office of Disabilities Services at 132 Memorial Library or call 507-389-2825 (V/TTY). Student disability accommodations will be made by faculty based upon the advisement of the Office of Disability Services.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY AND ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students are expected to comply with the *Student Responsibility Policy* and *Academic Honesty Policy* stipulated in the *MSW Program Graduate Student Handbook*.

APA STYLE WRITING POLICY

Students are expected to comply with the stylistic guidelines of the American Psychological Association, fifth edition. The APA manual is available at the MSU Memorial Library reference desk, call number BF 76.7.P83 2001). The reference for the APA manual is:

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

An on-line source to help with using APA is located at: <http://www.apastyle.org/>

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- Dupper, D.R. (2003). *School social work: Skills & interventions for effective practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
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