I. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION OF COURSE

Developing skills to evaluate program outcomes and/or practice effectiveness is the primary purpose of the course. Practice skills should be based on professional knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics. Students are expected to demonstrate competencies in using research to inform practice.

The course introduces students to the practitioner-researcher role. Students learn how to apply social work research concepts and procedures to social work practice situations. The basic goal of this course is to improve the student's ability to apply research methodologies for evaluating social work practice. The course emphasizes evidence-based practice interventions, including the knowledge and skills required for the systematic search for these interventions and their application to diverse populations and settings.

The course supports the use of research knowledge in making practice decisions that improve the quality of services, initiate change in policy, and improve the delivery of social services. In addition, a major focus throughout the course is on strengthening the skills of students to evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate their own practice interventions.

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1 Revised 2013 by Dr. Sally Mathiesen, Dr. Susan Woodruff
Students will use the process of evidence-based practice to identify, analyze, appraise, and select a "best" practice related to a practice question relevant to advanced practice. In addition, the students will critique measurement instruments that are used to evaluate practice effectiveness. This information will then provide a foundation of knowledge of evidence that will be applied in the advanced practice courses.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, the student will be able to demonstrate competence in the following areas (EPAS - Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards, Council of Social Work Education; PB – practice behavior):

1. Describe the role that program evaluation plays to improve program outcomes and/or practice effectiveness. [EPAS 2.1.6 PB 22; EPAS 2.1.10d, PB 41] (Measured by exams; assignments)

2. Describe how different aspects of the evaluation process need to be sensitive to the age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation of the client population. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-13] (Measured by exams; assignments)

3. Describe the principal components of an evaluation plan typically used to assess the effectiveness of a program including specification of an evaluation design, the identification and measurement of target problem(s), and the analysis and interpretation of data. [EPAS 2.1.3 PB 12; EPAS 2.1.10b PBs 32 & 35; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41] (Measured by exams; assignments)

4. Describe selected concepts, strategies, and procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of social work programs and practices. [EPAS 2.1.3 PB 12; EPAS 2.1.10b PBs 32 & 35; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41] (Measured by exams; assignments)

5. Recognize the scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge (i.e., evaluating programs) for practice. [EPAS 2.1.3 PB 12; EPAS 2.1.10b PBs 32 & 35; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41; EPAS 2.1.6 PBs 21-22] (Measured by exams; assignments)

6. Analyze a practice situation in terms of the need for an evaluation and the desired outcomes for a target population. [EPAS 2.1.3 PB 11; EPAS 2.1.6 PBs 21-22; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41] (Measured by final assignment)

7. Identify a practice-effectiveness question and search for evidence that addresses the question. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PB 21] (Measured by final assignment)
8. Design a plan to gather data for making decisions about the effectiveness of an intervention or program. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PB 21] (Measured by final assignment)

9. Evaluate the quality of research studies and critically think about applying research findings to the practice situation. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PB 22] (Measured by exams; assignments)

10. Critique research methods for conducting evaluations of evidence-based practices in an effort to shape or influence the decision-making related to agency policy and the delivery of services. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PB 22] (Measured by exams; assignments)

11. Apply critical thinking skills in evaluating a practice intervention/program. [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-13] (Measured by exams; assignments)

12. Recognize the importance of using research literature in the selection of interventions/programs [EPAS 2.1.3 PBs 11-12; EPAS 2.1.6 PBs 21-22; EPAS 2.1.10d PB 41] (Measured by exams; assignments)

13. Apply the National Ass’n of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics in evaluating an intervention/program [EPAS 2.1.1 PBs 1-6; EPAS 2.1.2 PBs 7-10; EPAS 2.1.4 PBs 14-17; EPAS 2.1.7 PBs 23-24; EPAS 2.1.9 PBs 27-28] (Measured by exams; assignments)

14. Describe the importance of conscious use of self as a researcher when interacting with groups/organizations/communities in studying program outcomes for diverse populations. [EPAS 2.1.1 PBs 1-6; EPAS 2.1.2 PBs 7-10; EPAS 2.1.4 PBs 14-17; EPAS 2.1.7 PBs 23-24; EPAS 2.1.9 PBs 27-28] (Measured by exams; assignments)

15. Recognize and clarify conflicting values and ethical dilemmas that interfere in a practitioner’s ability to design research studies in an unbiased manner. [EPAS 2.1.1 PBs 1-6; EPAS 2.1.2 PBs 7-10; EPAS 2.1.4 PBs 14-17; EPAS 2.1.7 PBs 23-24; EPAS 2.1.9 PBs 27-28] (Measured by exams; assignments)

**Please note that other required readings may be posted on Blackboard or provided in class by the professor.**
Recommended:


Cournoyer, Barry. (2004). *The evidence-based social work skills book*. New York: Allyn and Bacon. **It is highly recommended that students retain this textbook from the first year as a review. The professor will cover relevant material via PPTs.**


IV. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There are three (3) major assignments for this course: 2 objective exams, and a poster presentation of a program evaluation plan. The poster presentation will include an individual written interpretation and discussion of the program evaluation.

ASSIGNMENTS 1 & 2: EXAMS -- 70% of total course grade (2 @ 35% EACH) – OCTOBER 7 AND DECEMBER 2

There will be 2 open book/open note exams in a multiple-choice and true/false format. The exams will cover course readings, class discussion, skill building exercises and lectures.

**NOTE: THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE EXAM 2 A CLOSED BOOK EXAM, BASED ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH STUDENTS ARE CLEARLY ENGAGED AND INVESTED IN THE LEARNING PROCESS.**

Assigned readings are listed in the syllabus. **Students are expected to study all assigned readings, whether or not they are discussed in class.** Students are to bring an 882-ES scantron card and a Number 2 lead pencil for each exam. It is strongly recommended that students bring more than one scantron card. Scantron machines sometimes miscalculate scores when eraser marks are present. You will receive the grade given by the machine after grading. Therefore if you erase on your card you should plan to complete a new one to ensure receiving full credit for your work. A make-up exam will be offered only to students who have received prior approval from the instructor for missing the regularly scheduled exam with a valid and verifiable
excuse. Students that do not complete the exam or the make-up for the exam will receive a 0 for the exam.

ASSIGNMENT 3: POSTER SESSION TO PRESENT PROGRAM EVALUATION PLAN – 30% of Course Grade

30% of course grade for poster (MATERIAL FOR POSTER DUE NOVEMBER 25; POSTER DISPLAY SESSION ON DECEMBER 9)—all group members receive the same grade.

NOTE: This group presentation REQUIRES the submission of an Individual Interpretation of Results (2-page summary; details presented below): DUE NOVEMBER 25.

NOTE: Content to be displayed on the poster, as well as each student’s individual interpretation of the results, must be submitted to the instructor by November 25 for evaluation. The material for the poster must be submitted as ONE FILE or it will be returned to the makers. The poster session will occur on December 9.

The purpose of the project is to provide an opportunity for students to understand and appreciate the role that practice-relevant research can play in strengthening the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. This assignment also serves to address the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards related to preparing students to engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

NOTE: The instructor may choose to have student groups submit their papers through Blackboard, into the Turn-in-in.com system. If this method is used, it would be used with all students, and further instructions will be provided.

This assignment may be completed in small groups (with a maximum of 4 members) or individually. All members of a group will receive the same grade. It is designed to give the student a near-real experience designing a program evaluation or a related evaluation research activity. Applying their learning from the course, the individual or group will choose a topic, typically, an existing program, service, practice approach, or situation at their internship agency, work organization, or simply from observation of the community. The topic/program should be one that has not already been evaluated, and the student should be able to specify a unique contribution of his/her evaluation effort in the form of an evaluation rationale.

The evaluation plan will be presented as a 3-panel poster near the end of the semester at a venue on campus where you will answer questions from Dr. Mathiesen, invited students, and other faculty. The questions may be about any part of the presentation:
methods, results, or discussion/recommendations. Poster sessions require the synthesis of large amounts of information into brief bullets. **Poster sections usually include: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion/Recommendations.** However, you will present only the Introduction, Methods and Results sections in the poster; the Discussion/Recommendations section will be submitted as an individually written final assignment (see below under “Individual Written Interpretation of Program Evaluation”). Present your poster in a professional manner that clearly communicates your evaluation plan. Graphics, charts, mock tables, etc. are encouraged.

In addition to a title and author(s), some suggestions for information that may be included in the poster are as follows:

**A. Introduction/Statement of the Problem**; can include:

a. background of the topic or problem
b. rationale for the evaluation, that is, what unique contribution does your evaluation make to the knowledge base (e.g., program not yet evaluated, understudied population, better measure)
c. objectives and description of the evaluation—what type of evaluation do you plan to do (e.g., needs assessment, process, formative, outcome/summative, combination)
d. description of the intervention (if any) and its objectives
e. conceptual framework that shows how the intervention (if any) is expected to achieve its objectives
f. logic model

**B. Methods**

a. evaluation design—describe and graph the program evaluation design, e.g., ABA, SSRD, RCT
b. data collection—what strategies will you use to collect the data (e.g., focus groups, interviews, chart abstraction, surveys, existing agency records).
c. targeted sample size and how you will identify and recruit your sample participants (or obtain existing records)
d. instruments and measures—
   i. e.g., qualitative, quantitative, multimethod, secondary data
   ii. when appropriate, describe the psychometric properties (reliability and validity) of the instruments
   iii. do you have to develop an instrument? If so, how?
e. data analysis plan, e.g., “consult with statistician to assess…”
C. Results
   a. mock up preliminary graphs or tables if desired

D. References, Appendices, and Copies of Instruments
   a. Rather than using poster space, have hard copies available for interested viewers

A Note for those Opting to Complete this Assignment as a Group: All group members are responsible for the content of the poster, and all members are required to participate in its content, creation, writing, and presentation. Students are expected to cooperate in a professional manner and resolve scheduling or workload issues within the entire group. Each member of the group is responsible for everything that the group as a whole produces. All members of the group will receive the same grade. It is expected that group members will attempt to resolve any minor issues within the group by assignment of specific tasks and deadlines. In rare circumstances, this process may not be sufficient. Problems completing the Poster assignment should be addressed as noted below:

(a) Should a group experience problems with members failing to do their share of the assignment, and the group has been unable to resolve the issues, the group should schedule an appointment with the instructor. All members of the group (including the member(s) of concern) should meet together with the instructor to discuss the situation and negotiate a solution.

(b) In the event a verifiable emergency (i.e., severe illness, family emergency) interferes with a group member participating with the rest of the group, the member should immediately contact the instructor to explain the circumstances. The instructor will meet with the student and negotiate an alternative individual assignment with that member. The grade of the other members of the group would not be affected.

INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN INTERPRETATION OF PROGRAM EVALUATION--REQUIRED AS PART OF THE PRESENTATION GRADE (DUE NOVEMBER 25)

Each student will submit a 2-page (maximum) written final assignment that represents the Interpretation, Discussion, and Recommendation section of your evaluation project. This is a required component for completion of the course.

A. Discussion/Recommendations - what conclusions can be drawn based on the type of program evaluation you propose, e.g.,
   o what next research steps, or service/policy changes would you recommend based on the results of your evaluation
   o what are the strengths and limitations of the program evaluation plan
what ‘flies in the ointment’ might you anticipate

“So What?” What are the implications of your evaluation?

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE
The expectation:

- Attending all classes with no unexcused absences,
- Completing all class worksheets, evaluations and/or exercises

The final grade will be based on the student’s performance on the required assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>10-7-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>12-2-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Group Evaluation Project &amp; Indiv. Summary</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Materials due: 11-25-13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100%

V. CLASS POLICIES

Office Hours:
The instructor will maintain office hours as listed on the first page of this syllabus, and may be available at other times by appointment. To make the best use of the office hour time, the instructor encourages students to schedule appointments when possible. The instructor also welcomes questions from students via email or telephone.

1) Students are responsible for reading all assigned readings. Assignments cover all lectures and assigned readings.
2) The NASW Code of Ethics is an academic standard for any student majoring in social work.
3) Students are responsible for collecting their final assignments from the instructor.
4) Students are expected to respect each other and the professor during class. Talking when others are talking, leaving class early or coming late (without a legitimate reason), sleeping in class, browsing the internet, or reading the Daily Aztec during class and the like is unprofessional, unfair to other students and will not be tolerated. (See Student Discipline and Grievance Policy, Section 41301).
5) All assignments must be turned in on time. Late work will only be accepted in the
case of legitimate, verifiable emergencies (illness, accidents, etc.). The instructor may require documentation to support the legitimacy of an emergency. Please note: having multiple assignments due on the same day or computer problems is not a legitimate emergency.

6) **NOTE:** The instructor may choose to have student groups submit their papers through Blackboard, into the Turn-in-in.com system. If this method is used, it would be used with all students, and further instructions will be provided.

7) Please turn off pagers and cellular telephones in class.

8) Please do not bring pets or children to class (animal assistants are allowable). This interferes with the learning environment and is not fair to other students.

Students failing to conform to the above policies may be asked to leave the class, receive a reduced grade in the course, and/or be referred to the department or SDSU officials for disciplinary action.

**VI. GRADUATE GRADING GUIDELINES**

1. Grades of A or A- are reserved for student work that not only demonstrates excellent mastery of content, but also shows that the student has (a) undertaken complex tasks, (b) applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or (c) demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The degree to which the student demonstrates these skills determines whether he/she receives an A or an A-.

2. A grade of B+ is given to work that is judged to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than-satisfactory understanding of the material being tested, and has exceeded expectations in the assignment.

3. A grade of B is given to student work that meets the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done satisfactory work on the assignment and meets the expectations of the course.

4. A grade of B- denotes that a student’s performance was less than satisfactory on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and is below expectations.

5. A grade of C reflects a minimal grasp of the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement.

The instructor will evaluate students’ written work in accordance with the graduate grading guidelines. Completion of all components of a written assignment/presentation would result in a grade of B. As per the guidelines above: “A grade of B is given to student work that meets the basic requirements
of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done satisfactory work on the assignment and meets the basic expectations of the course.”

Grading will begin with the assumption that the student has met the requirements of the assignment, and all papers/presentations will begin with a score of 85%, slightly higher than a mid-range B. Areas of the assignment that are judged to demonstrate more-than- satisfactory understanding of the task will receive additional credit, and marked with a “+” (plus). Areas that are less than satisfactory effort, including omissions or reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations, will have credit deducted, and marked with a “--” (minus).

Grades between C- and F denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in a student’s performance on the assignment.

The course grade is based on grades earned for 2 Exams (35% each=70%), and the Poster Session Presentation (30%), which includes the required written Individual Interpretation, Discussion and Recommendations. The following grading scale will be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-95</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>76-73</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>69-67</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>66-63</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>62-60</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>59 and lower</td>
<td>F</td>
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</table>

Written assignments. Students are expected to write at a graduate level and produce clear, well-organized papers with correct grammar and spelling. Proper citation of source material is required, whether in a written paper or on a visual presentation, such as posters, power points, etc. Written work should be carefully proofread. It is to be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Font size should be a 12-point font, and the print should be clear and legible. Group papers will be returned to the first team member listed on the final paper, and the team is responsible for supplying a self-addressed and stamped return envelope. If no envelope is supplied, the paper may be retrieved from the instructor at the end of the semester after grades have been submitted. Materials will be held for up to one semester following the end of class.

Written assignments should follow the stylistic guidelines suggested by most recent edition of the APA manual. Students should pay particular attention to APA guidelines regarding expression of ideas (i.e., writing style, grammar, and guidelines to reduce bias in language); reference citations in the text; reference list; margins; page numbering and headings.
**Policy on late papers.** All papers are to be submitted on the due dates listed in the syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted unless the student has obtained prior approval from the instructor. Approval will be granted only if the student is able to demonstrate unanticipated/extenuating circumstances that prevent completion of the assignment. (Computer or printer problems will not be accepted as excuses for late papers). To receive credit for a late paper, the student must meet with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the reasons for the lateness and to establish a plan and time frame for completion of the work. A penalty of ½ letter grade (e.g., from A to A-) will be assessed for papers that are late for any reason other than a verifiable emergency (e.g., illness in self or family, death of a family member). If the student still fails to complete the paper within the extended time frame negotiated with the instructor, the penalty for lateness will be increased to one full letter grade (e.g., from A to B). A paper that is more than 2 weeks late will not be accepted, and the student will receive a zero.

**Consequences for plagiarism.** Students who are found plagiarizing the works of others will be subject to standards set forth by the University (see Graduate Bulletin). This may include failing the assignment, failing the class, or expulsion from the University.
Please note: The professor may change dates as needed. Any changes will be announced in class and via Blackboard. It is the student’s responsibility to regularly check the Blackboard site for materials and announcements. Students are responsible for all required readings, whether they are covered in class or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/ Assignments For Next Week (i.e. come to class prepared)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Be sure to come to class with your textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>Review syllabus including Poster Assignment</td>
<td>Royse Ch. 1: Introduction: Why evaluate programs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of Evidence-Based Practice Process</td>
<td>[Review Cournoyer Ch. 1, 2]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating practice effectiveness questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>NO CLASS- LABOR DAY</td>
<td>Royse Ch. 2: Ethical Issues in Program Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Introduction to program evaluation</td>
<td>Royse Ch. 3: Needs Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>Revisit Basic Principles of Conceptualization and Measurement</td>
<td>Tripodi Ch. 1: Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single-subject Design Methodology, Arguments For and Against Single-Subject Design</td>
<td>[Review Cournoyer Ch. 2]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin creating practice effectiveness/ program evaluation questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Needs Assessment; Skill builder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Qualitative Evaluation; Skill builder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Sept. 30</td>
<td>Formative Research and Process Evaluation; Skill builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td><strong>EXAM #1: Covering all material from Aug. 26-Sept. 30</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>Single System Research Designs (SSRDs) Sampling Group Research Designs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Oct. 21</td>
<td>Single system research designs/ client satisfaction assessment skill builder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS MEETING</strong>—CLASS MEETING TIME SHOULD BE USED TO WORK ON GROUP PROGRAM EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>Messy Program Evaluation Data Analysis and Statistical Significance: SPSS Skill Builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS— VETERAN’S DAY</strong> UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Nov. 18</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td><strong>Content of poster and Individual Written Summary/Integration of Program Evaluation assignment due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>EXAM #2: Covering all material from Oct. 7-Nov. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>POSTER PRESENTATIONS SUMMARY &amp; WRAP-UP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congratulations!! Have a great winter break!


Campbell Collaboration. Available at: http://www.campbellcollaboration.org

Cochrane Collaboration. Available at: http://www.cochrane.org/index.htm


Evaluation Center. Available at www.tecathsri.org/


Mullen, E. J., & Bacon, W. F.: Practitioner adoption and implementation of practice
guidelines and issues of quality control (pp. 223-235). Proctor, E. K., & Rosen, A.: The structure and function of social work practice guidelines (pp. 108-127); Gambrill, E.: Evidence-based practice: Implications for knowledge development and use in social work (pp. 37-58).


Revised 2013