

Psychology and Research in Education

PRE 842 - Counseling Practicum

Line # 88280

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Office Hours: By appointment
Schedule: Thursdays – 4:10-7:00 p.m.
Location: 207 Regents Center
Text: DeJong, P., & Berg, I.K. (2001). Interviewing for solutions. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks-Cole.

*****Please begin reading the text as soon as it is available

Other readings as assigned.

NOTE: Students are required to carry professional liability insurance during their enrollment in practicum. (This requirement was stated on your practicum pre-enrollment form.) Evidence of insurance coverage is to be presented to the instructor no later than the second class session. Insurance is available through the APA or ACA to student members. Students will not be permitted to begin seeing clients until proof of insurance coverage is provided. This is for your protection.

Introduction to the course

Welcome! This practicum represents the culmination of your program's formal instructional experience and, for most of you, the beginning of your professional career as a counselor. In this regard, your performance in this course serves as a "benchmark" for the program and for prospective employers or other graduate programs. Equally important, it should also serve as a "benchmark" to you with respect to (a) your ability to retrieve and apply the concepts, rules, and clinical strategies that you have learned in your previous didactic and lab work, and (b) how much more there is to learn.

The primary purpose of the course is for the student to develop individual counseling skills while functioning in a counseling setting. In addition to individual skills, students are also encouraged to participate in group counseling and other counseling related activities within their particular counseling setting.

Course objectives

The department has the following performance expectations for practicum students.

1. To be able to develop and sustain a basic helpful relationship with clients that is characterized by respect, trust, warmth, and regard for the client as a person.
2. To be able to focus and work on the central concerns of the client and not get lost in peripheral issues.
3. To be able to locate and use appropriate sources of information (e.g., test information,

- 3.(con't) occupational/educational information, referral sources) needed to assist the client.
4. To be able to separate your concerns and agendas from those of the client.
5. To be able to establish with clients appropriate and manageable goals.
6. To be able to conceptualize the process and direction single counseling interviews take, as well as, the overall direction of work with a client.
7. To give and receive constructive comments regarding your work, as well as, that of other students in the practicum.
8. To learn to use a variety of strategies in appropriate and purposeful ways.
9. To develop a clear sense of professional and ethical conduct in your work.

Practicum site expectations

The clinical and professional opportunities available to students on site will differ among the various sites. Since this is a counseling practicum, it is expected that the bulk of your time on-site will be spent counseling individuals --primarily in individual sessions, but it may also include counseling in groups and (for students in the school counseling program) classroom guidance activities. However, I also expect and hope that you will become involved in other aspects of your setting including, but not limited to: (a) attending case/staff conference, (b) familiarizing yourself with the assessment tools and practices used in your setting, (b) involving yourself in programs the setting has in progress, (c) participating in organizational and administrative functions, (d) consulting with other personnel, and (e) familiarizing yourself with the setting's referral sources.

The actual number of clients you see, as well as any additional clinical/professional experiences in which you may be asked or required to participate, will be dictated by the setting. As a general rule for this course, however, you are expected to be on-site the equivalent of at least one day (8 hours) per week and to carry an average on-site case load of **4 clients (i.e. 4 one-hour sessions) per week.** (NOTE: Within some settings, counseling sessions must, out of necessity, be more limited in length. In such settings, you should expect to hold a greater number of appointments in order to accrue the necessary client contact hours.) Given the length of the academic term, this works out to **an expectation of approximately 45 hours of direct client contact during the semester. Anything less than this may jeopardize your timely completion of this practicum. It is important that you make this an expectation for yourself and that you share it with your on-site supervisor.** If you anticipate or find yourself having difficulty meeting this expectation, please let me know—IMMEDIATELY.

The expectations we have for school counseling students at practicum sites is different. Since school counselors generally spend less time in individual counseling, the practicum expectation is to work with a minimum of 2 individual clients per week. More time will be spent on classroom guidance activities, teacher and parent consulting, career services, guidance planning activities, assessment activities, and other services that counselors perform within schools.

Students are required to keep an ongoing log of all of their practicum activities. Copies of the program's practicum documentation forms can be found in your student handbook. If you need additional copies, please let me know. Practicum activities are to be recorded on the appropriate Practicum Summary Sheet and signed by you. Please make a copy of these sheets for your records, as the original will be put in your department file.

Supervision

The department expects that your practicum site will provide you with an on-site supervisor who will (a) orient you to the setting, the clientele, the procedures and expectations for professionals operating in that

setting, (b) be available to you on-site to assist you in handling immediate clinical concerns or problems with your clients, and (c) provide at least one hour of individual supervision each week throughout the semester. This person is your formal clinical supervisor - having direct legal and professional responsibility for your work with clients. If anything that gets suggested in class or in our consultations should ever conflict with anything your site supervisor is telling you, it is YOUR responsibility to let me know that at once. None of us can afford for you to be receiving mixed signals about how you are to be handling your cases. The focus in our consultation sessions is on generic skill development, though we are using your cases as a starting point for which skills to work on.

Additionally, it is an expectation that you will be provided with suitable counseling space (e.g. a private room), and permitted to tape record (audio and/or video) your sessions with your clients and that these tapes will be available for review on campus as part of your practicum. (It is not an expectation that the site provide you with recording equipment, however). If any of these expectations cannot be met on-site, please let me know IMMEDIATELY.

Your on-site supervisor and I have very clear dual obligations, and it is important for you to keep both of these obligations in mind as you receive supervisory feedback.

1. We have the obligation to you to provide you (within the constraints of time and resources) with the assistance you need to prepare for your practicum experience and to develop into a competent counselor. Neither of us will expect you to become a “seasoned clinician” by the end of practicum; but each of us will expect you to be inquisitive and open, willing to take reasonable risks, gaining in skill, and developing a sense of professional competence. You, in turn, may expect us to provide you with assistance in developing your professional competencies and identity.
2. We also have an obligation to the clients who come to you for assistance—to assure to the best of our ability that the services that you render are appropriate and helpful. Although we are concerned about your development as a counselor, we must also be intensely concerned about the effects you have on your clients.

Individual Consultation

In addition to on-site service and supervision commitments and class (practicum seminar) expectations, it is a departmental requirement that each student schedule and receive a minimum of one hour of individual consultation with the course instructor or an advanced graduate teaching assistant every other week. However, for students in their initial practicum, weekly individual consultation is considered desirable and will be expected if, in the opinion of the instructor, additional consultation is needed to assure meeting the course requirements and objectives.

On-site supervisors should provide you with regular (e.g. weekly) individual supervision. If additional on-site supervision is available to you, take it!

Practicum Seminar

Our class sessions are intended to be both instructional and consultative in nature.

1) Specifically, you will be expected to present cases for review and discussion. You will be (a) sharing with others the kinds of clients with whom you are working, your style and strategies as a counselor, and the challenges that you experience in your work with your clients; (b) receiving support and assistance in working through problem areas; (c) receiving feedback concerning possible effects you are having on your clients; (d) allowing others to learn from you; (e) reducing the anxiety each of us inevitably feels about presenting our work.

Although much of your case-specific supervision will be provided by your site supervisor, you should **come to each class session prepared to review your cases with the group.** This requires some preparation on your part. In particular, be prepared to provide (a) a summary of each of the cases to date, and (b) your conceptualization of the cases. Be prepared to discuss what you think is going on with your clients and why and what sort of help or assistance you think you need in order to work more effectively (and efficiently) with your clients. Review your counseling tapes and identify those areas/interactions/issues that concern you and about which you want the help of the group; and **be prepared to play those portions of your tapes.**

At this stage in your professional development, each of you should be personally and professionally able to share and receive information, suggestions, and other constructive comments with your professional colleagues; and it is my expectation that each of you will share in the consultation and instruction of each other throughout the semester.

2) Each student is required to make **2 60 minute formal case presentations.** I will provide you with an example. These should be written up and should include:

- (a) a brief introduction to the case—including a description of the client and the circumstances that brought him/her to counseling;
- (b) a summary and conceptualization (theoretical integration) of the case to date—including:
 1. a summary of the psychological, social, medical, etc. factors relevant to the case;
 2. an integrative summary of an assessment information acquired – including profiles/protocols
 3. a summary analysis of what you have done and what you are doing to assist the client with her/his concerns and why (i.e. a case process conceptualization) and
 4. an analysis of the effects of your interventions
- (c) With one of your case presentations, you will provide a **typed transcript of ten minutes** of a counseling session with this particular client. This means that you will type out the client's comments and your responses to them. You will probably want to select a portion of a session which emphasizes some aspect of your presentation/conceptualization.

3) We will try to spend a part of each session discussing some topic central to the practice of counseling. Some of this information will come from me and some from student presentations. The presentation of topics will be the shared responsibility of everyone in the class, **with each student being responsible for one 20 minute presentation.** The presentations should be “applied” in nature and should be of general interest to the entire class. The topic may be an issue, intervention, test or assessment strategy, type of client, etc. You may choose to make a “formal” presentation, lead a discussion, or use some other presentational strategy; you may also assign readings. Regardless of your approach, however, you should be prepared to serve as the “resident expert” on the topic.

Evaluation

Grading for the course is **S-F**. In certain exceptional circumstances, a grade of **I** (incomplete) may be assigned. If you determine that you do not wish to complete the practicum and need to withdraw from the course, it is imperative that you let me know as soon as possible and go through the formal withdrawal procedures for the university.

The previously noted course objectives provide the framework for evaluative judgments concerning students' clinical performance in the course. Clearly judgments concerning students' clinical performance relative to these objectives involve an element of subjective/clinical judgment on the part of instructors/supervisors – this is inherent in any clinical course. In order to try to control for possible “misperceptions” by the instructor or the student, early and on-going evaluation is important; and I will do my best to provide you with this.

Although it is my intent to be supportive and encouraging, evaluation feedback may not always be “positive”. That is, some of the feedback that you receive will require (or at least encourage) you to accommodate and change. Although I am confident that much of what you will be doing will be clinically

“correct”, my expectation is that you will “develop” through your experiences in this course – not that you will stay the same.

In the end, the largest part of your final evaluation will reflect where you are in your development as a counselor/psychologist by considering the course objectives in two ways:

1. How much and what kinds of progress has the student made?
2. Where is the student at the end of the course?

In addition, however, you are expected to:

1. attend each class session – coming prepared to discuss readings, cases, etc.
2. carry an average client load of 4 clients per week (45 contact hrs for the semester)
3. tape record each session with every client
4. do any assigned readings and do outside research appropriate to the clients issues with which you are dealing
5. attend weekly supervision sessions with your site supervisor and with your class consultant
6. keep a log of all practicum activities
7. provide constructive feedback to peers and receive feedback from peers and supervisors/consultants non-defensively
8. behave professionally and adhere to the practice and ethical standards of the profession (ACA) at all times
9. develop a 5 page monograph on your personal theory of counseling and therapy. This is meant as an informal presentation of your ideas about what ACTUALLY happens in counseling and what role you then see yourself playing. I intend this as an aid in focusing your thinking about the activity in which you are engaging. This is due halfway through the semester so we can discuss them in class.
10. **2** case presentations or **1 case and 1 guidance activity** you conducted
11. **20 minute topical presentation** and role playing activities

Course requirements will be weighted as follows:

Individual counseling, on-site activities, and supervision/consultation – 50%

2 Case Presentations or 1 Case Presentation and 1 Guidance Activity – 25%

Monograph – 10%

Class participation (including discussions, feedback, presentations, and role plays) – 15%

You must make satisfactory efforts toward all of the course requirements in order to pass the course.