Assessment Report

SOWK 490 – Social Work Capstone

Spring 2010

The Social Work Capstone course was revised by the BASW Curriculum Committee then the revisions were approved by the faculty of the School of Social Work. Both CPAC and UAC approved the revisions. This assessment was requested by the UAC.

Capstone Project

Generalist social work practice at the BASW level is multifaceted, with graduates applying their EWU education as advocates, case managers and paraprofessional counselors. To prepare students for their careers as generalist practitioners the capstone project was conceptualized as an iterative process requiring a series of writing assignments about professional ethics, integrating theory and practice, integrating social policy and practice, and engaging in evidence based practice, culminating a self reflective essay about their professional identity. These iterative writing assignments are an appropriate capstone project for emerging generalist social work practitioners.

Quantitative Assessment

Figure 1 displays the mean scores for the 74 students in two course sections who completed every capstone writing assignment. As one can see from this figure the highest mean assessment score was for the assignment integrating policy and practice\(^2\) and the lowest was for the evidence based practice assignment\(^3\).

![Mean Assessment Scores Graph](image)

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1 The corresponding author of this report is Ed Byrnes, Ph.D., BASW Program Director, School of Social Work, who can be reached at ebyrnes@ewu.edu.


3 Mean = 8.5, Standard Deviation = 1.69.
Figure 1. Mean Capstone Assignment Scores.

Figure 2 displays the lowest scores for the 74 students in two course sections who completed every capstone writing assignment. As one can see from this figure the lowest overall assessment score, of four points, was for the evidence based practice assignment.

The difference between means was analyzed using Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance and the differences were statistically significant. Although the normality assumption for ANOVA was met the sphericity assumption was violated so the Friedman’s Test, a nonparametric test using relative ranks rather than means, was also conducted with similar findings of statistically significant differences. The estimated effect size of .24 (partial eta squared) indicates a small effect size for differences between assessment scores between assignments, and the findings of statistical significance are at least partially an artifact of the sample size by number of measures interaction. Nonetheless the consistency of both the lowest mean and lowest overall score being for the evidence based practice assignment indicates that this is the topical area warrants nominal improvement in the social work capstone course and perhaps throughout the BASW curriculum.

Appropriateness for General Education

The iterative series of written assignments is appropriate as a capstone project for emerging generalist social work practitioners. Because of the unique practice preparation nature of the BASW Program and the appropriateness of the social work capstone for this purpose it is inappropriate to continue this course as a general education offering.

The BASW Program Director, who is also the corresponding author of this report, after consultation with the School of Social Work Chair, respectfully requests that SOWK 490, Social Work Capstone, be removed from the EWU general education course offerings and only be retained as a departmental senior capstone.

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4 Hotelling’s Trace $F = 7.64$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$, Partial Eta Squared = .24, Power Coefficient = .98.

5 Friedman’s Chi Square = 22.56, $df = 4$, $p < .001$. 