

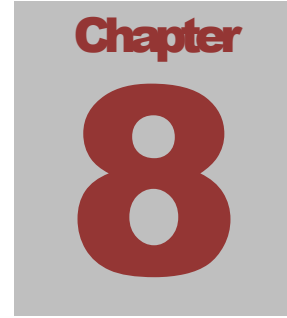
CHAPTER 8: THE SOCIAL WORK PROCESS



Alum Celebration 2007

*Bottom photo: The first cohort of online MSW students
(with Mary Jo Garcia Biggs, far left)*





Context, Engagement, Assessment, Intervention, Evaluation: The Heart of Social Work Practice

The Social Work Process from Beginning to End

“You don’t
understand anything
until you learn it
more than one
way”. –Marvin
Minsky

The School views teaching BSW students to understand, appreciate, and negotiate context as the beginning of the social work process. Students move from that contextual beginning to the process of engaging and assessing the client or client system. Based on context, engagement, and assessment, the student progresses to intervention and finally evaluation of the process. This is the core of social work practice on micro, mezzo and macro levels.

Social work students yearn to facilitate real, positive differences in the lives of their clients. Practice courses satisfy that yearning with more immediacy than studying research, policy, or human behavior. Practice courses, for most students, hold promise for bridging the academic world and the real world. Students, consequently, hold higher expectations for practice courses than for any of their other social work courses. The practice sequence helps students integrate personal identity and professional persona by experiencing both professional theory and application of knowledge, values, and skills. Built on a broad array of liberal arts content, our curriculum incorporates the systems-ecological perspective, a strengths base, an appreciation of diversity, and an integration of values and ethics. The practice curriculum moves along a continuum of increasing skill development, beginning with sensitivity and developing to competence.

Conceptualizing Social Work Practice Processes

Practice is a broad concept, and real-world cases require practitioners to deal with different systems, often at the same time. Therefore, we cover work with

individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, presenting skills appropriate to the students' educational level. Students learn how to play different roles with these various systems, moving from broker and case management to therapeutic intervention. Because our School mission emphasizes public service with the most disadvantaged populations, we always highlight how students can advocate for their clients, developing strategies, resources, and policies leading to more humane services. This broad view of practice, which requires students to develop competence in a number of parallel activities, necessitates creativity and critical thinking in assessing the client's situation and how best to intervene on different levels and in various contexts. The framework that we use to shape our theory-based skill-building approach to practice consists of two overarching theoretical constructs.

- **Systems theory** informs us that there is interdependence among individuals, processes, and structures. Any change within one system generates change in other parts of that system, as well as changes to all other connected systems. Systems theory leads us to rely on the critical roles of relationships, collaboration and systemic approaches to problems.
- **Ecological theory** guides us to examine the person-in-environment. It is a holistic view of the client or client group's biological, psychological, social, relational, and spiritual functioning, surrounded by the cultural, political, economic, ideological, physical, and natural aspects of environment.

Once students understand key aspects of these theories and how they play out in the lives of clients or client groups, the student can embrace a range of theory-based practice techniques. Our approach to practice with all systems involves a core commitment to the client's or system's strengths. We recognize that effective, ethical practice is grounded in an empathic helping relationship, and building those relationships and treatment alliances is consistent with social work's purposes and with an integrative perspective. Students study relationship building, learning a traditional problem-solving approach as well as current intervention methods supported by evidence. Because students learn differently, we vary our presentation techniques, using lecture, labs, web-based and technological teaching, and community projects. We integrate practice with research, pushing students to read, evaluate, and employ research in practice.

Creating a Practice Sequence

Our practice curriculum covers macro, mezzo, and micro level approaches. Students learn to conduct their practice in ways that enhance the well being of clients and client groups. They learn to cooperate with clients and communities to enhance social functioning, while making society more just, and to develop strategies to weaken the destructive hold of poverty and oppression on clients. They learn to use both research and social policy to buttress practice in a culturally diverse society. And they learn to value and fortify the strengths that individuals, groups, agencies, and society present. We require BSW students to take the following practice sequence:

- **1350 Introduction to Social Work**, a pre-practice course, surveys the history, types, functions, and values of social work, examining a variety of settings which deal with different client systems.

A BSW student recently said: "I transferred to Texas State and declared social work as my major. It was one of the best decisions of my life. I thought I would learn a lot, but I have learned way more than I expected about myself and my chosen career."

- **3420 Practice I** highlights generalist social work practice, emphasizing work with individuals, families, and treatment groups and using a 2-hour-per-week lab to provide simulated experiences. It introduces students to data collection, assessment, intervention planning, and evaluation.
- **3425 Practice II** focuses on generalist social work with task groups, community-based agencies, and organizations. Students learn to engage community stakeholders, collect and assess data about organizational or community needs, and plan, implement, and evaluate interventions. Students present the results of their community-based intervention in a professional conference-style format and in a written report.
- **4425 Practice III** teaches students how to develop, refine, and apply interpersonal and communication skills at the micro-, mezzo-, and macro-levels. Students practice skills in simulated, videotaped lab scenarios.
- **4356 Professionalism** shapes students' professional self-presentation, instilling responsibility for personal and professional growth, as well as for appropriate and legal organizational behaviors.

Steve Medel,
Clinical Lecturer,
models how to be
aware of context in
practice. Since 1985
he has worked with
at-risk students in
schools. He trains
students, faculty,
and administrators
using the Three-E
model:
Enthusiasm,
Education,
Empowerment. An
engaging speaker,
he combines stories
with pro-social skills
training, low ropes
training, and
behavioral
incentives. He
specializes in
working with
children of
incarcerated
parents.

Social Justice & Multicultural Practice are woven into these courses specifically through class discussions and case scenarios that demonstrate issues related to access, advocacy, education, and political action. We also address cultural competence through encouraging self-examination, building knowledge about culture and sub-cultures, and applying that knowledge in class lectures, assignments, and group discussions.

In practice courses, we provide students with the theoretical and practice foundation they need to think of themselves as practice leaders, as well as opportunities to see practitioners advocating for just treatment of their clients, modifying policy, and developing new practice technologies or researching practice that helps us refine practice. Most of our practice assignments highlight vulnerable and diverse populations, *and all of our practice courses begin by considering the complex and varied contexts that shape practice.*

Contexts that Shape Practice

Because professional social workers face very complex, demanding practice environments and situations, they must be able to multi-task, dealing with various systems at the same time to accomplish their goals and create more effective, humane services. Consequently, we stress that students need to understand and work within different contexts, which include varying locales, populations, scientific and technological developments and emerging social trends. All of these things affect the client system, and though a student by inclination and training may be more skillful with one system than with others, they still need to understand the basics of working in all systems.

This reality is more pronounced in dealing with those clients usually served by public monies. These often-forgotten people are beset by a range of serious, intertwined difficulties: low income is connected with poor health care; poor health care is associated with low school achievement; low education is associated with criminal activities; and on and on. To address the needs of people served by public monies, professionals must deal with various systems.

It is therefore entirely consistent with our School's mission to teach students to respond to contexts that shape practice.



EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice. Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

The overarching practice behaviors that our practice courses teach in order to achieve Competency 2.1.9 include:

- *discovering, appraising, and attending to changing contexts to provide relevant services;*
- *providing leadership in promoting changes in service delivery and practice to improve service quality.*

These practice behaviors have direct relevance to micro, mezzo and macro levels of social work practice. BSW students must hone the ability to respond to the complex contexts that shape practice.

BSW STRATEGIES FOR APPLYING EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.

BSW students apply this competency by learning about the importance of intra-organizational advocacy for clients and social work practice. They assess the relationship between community organizations and institutionalized societal attitudes. They begin by analyzing macro practice, including values, ethics and law, and then move towards a deeper understanding of community, organizational, family, and group contexts that influence clients. Here are some examples of how the BSW curriculum responds to the various contexts that shape practice:

- **1350 Introduction to Social Work** undergraduate students thoughtfully reflect on professional activities by writing a series of papers that assess social workers' written experiences across settings.
- In **3420 Practice I**, students identify, describe, and respond to unique contextual realities through simulated cases about working within high stress practice environments in lab. In one case, students analyze interaction between a social worker and client within a youth detention setting. Another case students analyze is interaction between a social worker and a client who is seeking to regain custody of her child from the child welfare system. In each instance students assess strengths, but also generate alternate practice strategies that might be more effective.
- Students in **3420 Practice I** conduct interviews with individuals in a range of community settings. Using the information, students complete a comprehensive social history. These experiences simulate variability in contexts within which to collect information. Written case vignettes and videos about family dynamics guide students to complete a family

One BSW student wrote: "The social work faculty has taught me so much about critical thinking. They have challenged me to look deeply at my attitudes and beliefs. And they push me to develop strong practice skills."

Dr. Betsy Wisner, an experienced horse-woman, volunteers at a non-profit agency that provides equine-assisted therapies on a ranch. Along with Dr. Mary Jo Garcia Biggs, Dr. Wisner is working on a grant-funded project to study equine therapies for foster children. She brings insight from her work on the ranch into her practice classes and is working to develop the ranch into a field placement site for students interested in equine-assisted therapy.

assessment, genogram, ecomap, timeline, and a theory-based intervention. One case example highlights contextual influences around intergenerational acculturation dynamics.

- **3425 Practice II** undergraduates assess the strengths of diverse communities, and analyze cases examples of mezzo and macro practice with diverse communities. Two key aspects of students' work highlight the critical role of context. First, students must demonstrate leadership in engaging and initiating change in actual community-based organizations. Second, students must proactively respond to actual variability within community settings while implementing their interventions which are supposed to improve service delivery contexts.
- Students in **4356 Professionalism** attend an actual legal hearing and write a summary. Then students develop and present a mock adversarial hearing.
- **4425 Practice III** undergraduate students use case scenarios that reflect diverse cultural, socioeconomic, ability, and age contexts in labs where they practice assessment and intervention skills. Using these simulated cases, students apply theory and learn how to adapt skills in multifaceted contexts.
- In **4425 Practice III** undergraduate students conduct a multicultural interview with someone different from them to discover how these individuals identify themselves, how they would like to experience social work interventions, and what information they believe is important for social workers to consider.

Engagement, Assessment, Intervention, Evaluation



EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10(A)-(D)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

EPAS 2.1.10 (a)-(d) applies to macro, mezzo, and micro interventions with client systems. Our practice courses are linked with real-world social work, reflecting the skills that our field agencies report they need in employees. We stress action-oriented interventions and task-centered models. These knowledge and skill bases buttress our students' ability in making timely, accurate assessments and planning effective interventions in social work practice.



EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10(A)—ENGAGEMENT

Social workers substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

We encourage students to build strong working relationships and ethical treatment alliances. As a precursor to building those relationships, students must understand their own internal motivations and responses to the client/client group's situation. They must also be cognizant of the boundaries which shape their behavior vis-à-vis the client. Students often hear from social workers in the field who discuss how to relate appropriately with clients, collateral people important to the client's situation, and other professionals.

The overarching practice behaviors which operationalize 2.1.10a include:

- *Substantively and affectively preparing for action at all levels of practice*
- *Using empathy and other interpersonal skills*
- *Developing a mutually agreed-on focus and desired outcomes*

BSW STRATEGIES FOR APPLYING EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10a—Engagement.

Lea completed her BSW at Texas State. Eventually she returned to earn her MSW as well. She completed her Ph.D. while directing a non-profit agency called Back on My Feet in Dallas. This agency worked with the homeless using running as an intervention technique, based on the theory that running builds confidence and strength.

- In **1350 Introduction to Social Work**, students conduct interviews with an individual who is not a social work major to discover the person's view of social work and to share a handout describing social work.
- A variety of video segments and role-play scenarios in **3420 Practice I** introduce students to engagement in the therapeutic social worker-relationship. In role plays, students practice the framing steps of building relationships: basic introductions, confidentiality and informed consent, and how the helping relationship works. They attend to non-verbal communication and minimizing communication barriers. In a second set of role-plays, students learn about engagement dynamics. For example, students may be asked to engage a client with the above framing steps, but this first meeting "is with a recently divorced 55-year-old man who gives off a strong odor of alcohol." In another instance the first meeting is "with a 77 year old widow with a hearing impairment. She can make out most words if spoken clearly, distinctly, and at a low pitch." The importance of empathy in engagement and building rapport also emerge through video and case-examples. Students identify levels of empathy from video examples, demonstrating their own empathy through describing potential feelings and emotions, particularly the duality and temporality of emotion among clients in crisis and stressful situations.
- In **3425 Practice II**, students must engage community stakeholders to gain access to potential settings for their intervention. They must repeatedly identify allies and strengthen stakeholder relationships to define the parameters of their project, and align resources to implement it. They must engage actual service recipients of their intervention, contingent upon the level of actual direct service their project involves.
- **4425 Practice III** students complete a self-assessment of their own biases and begin exploring the affective reactions they have to clients.
- In **4425 Practice III**, students build rapport and trust with a 'mock' client in their skills lab, demonstrating empathy and active listening.



EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10(B)—ASSESSMENT

Social workers collect, organize, and interpret client data; assess client strengths and limitations; develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives; and select appropriate intervention strategies.

Information is vital. How effective a social worker is with a client or client group depends on the quality and quantity of information that social worker has to guide practice. We stress that social workers do not need to know everything about any case; in fact, they will never know as much as the client or client group knows about the situation. However, the social worker needs to know:

- what information he/she needs to effectively work the case;
- what gaps in information he/she needs to fill to be effective;
- how interaction shapes the information that emerges;
- where and how to collect missing necessary information;
- how to identify and weed out superfluous information about the case;
- how to properly synthesize, summarize, and document case information;
- how to look for client strengths in any system.

A dean of a school of social work that is located in the state recently told Dr. Noble: “From time to time we get one of your BSW grads into our MSW program. They are so well-prepared and so solid! When we get an applications from Texas State grads, we are always confident that they will be great MSW students. And they always are.”

Our School teaches that people have great, often untapped, strengths to bring to bear on both personal problems and society’s difficulties. We encourage students to appreciate the inner potential of every person and organization.

The overarching practice behaviors which operationalize competency 2.1.10b:

- *Collect, organize, interpret client data*
- *Assess client strengths and limitations*
- *Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives*
- *Select appropriate intervention strategies*

These strength based assessment practice behaviors can be seen in various examples in our courses:

BSW STRATEGIES FOR APPLYING EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10b—Assessment.

- Beginning in **1350 Introduction to Social Work** and throughout the practice sequence, students learn to process and critically evaluate the quality of information they obtain about cases. Students discuss how to ask questions to get the information they want, and apply this knowledge to their interviews with the general public about social work.
- Students in **3420 Practice I** watch a film and complete an individual assessment on one of the film’s characters, using core elements of a biopsychosocial spiritual assessment. Further, students conduct actual interviews with individuals guided by a biopsychosocial spiritual assessment outline. From this information they construct a comprehensive social history, including a preliminary analysis of information gathered. Students collect this information in intervals and use information from each interval to construct a SOAP note, which has its own concise structure for collecting, organizing and interpreting gathered information. From a sociogram they construct in class, students analyze group interaction, assessing the quality of information they obtain from that interaction.

Jackie was a mature BSW student from rural Texas. As part of her SOWK 3425 class, she worked with a reproductive rights center and became so engaged in the work that she wanted to do something for pregnant teens in her hometown. She did her field placement in her hometown and, with the help of faculty, wrote a grant to develop a pregnant teen program at her placement agency. Jackie got her 501C3 status, secured the grant, and launched the program. It has been in operation for three years and is the first of its kind of service in her rural area.

- In **3420 Practice I**, undergraduate students use classroom video cases and written case examples, identifying and describing both challenges and strengths at the individual and environmental levels. One hands-on exercise pushes students to conduct a disability assessment of their own home, describing areas that are disability-friendly and those that are not.
- **3425 Practice II** students work in small groups with community agencies to develop and implement an intervention that can be completed within the semester. Students gather information and assess the agency needs and capacities through their contact person and through on-site visits.
- **3425 Practice II** students assess diverse communities from the strengths perspective, using an asset-based approach to assessment and planning.
- Students in **4425 Practice III**, through their on-going lab interviews with a “client”, collect information and synthesize it into a psychosocial assessment and intervention plan. They assess family dynamics, organizing that information in a genogram. Students use a time line to help organize the timing and methods for gaining and synthesizing information.
- In **4425 Practice III**, students use the Cowger Model to identify their own strengths and capacities. They then apply the model to case examples. Students also use the strengths perspective in creating SOAP (Subjective, Objective, Assessment Plans) notes about case scenarios, and they practice strengths-based interviewing strategies.
- In **4356 Professionalism**, students study how the information gathering and synthesizing process affects personal stress levels. They develop a personal plan to reduce their own stress. They also map their own ecological environment, examining resources they can tap into from each systems level, and apply this information to assessing their own strengths.



EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10(C)—INTERVENTION

Social workers

- initiate actions to achieve organizational goals;
- implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;
- help clients resolve problems;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
- facilitate transitions and endings.

Our School teaches students to think critically about identifying needs, problems, issues, resources, and assets. We encourage students to think in divergent ways, considering all aspects and determining the most salient points that will lead to effective, humane, ethical interventions. We stress that this thinking process is one that professionals work on all their careers. We also help students to prioritize the essential elements of complex, often conflicting, case situations. The overarching practice behaviors which operationalize competency 2.1.10c include:

- *Initiating actions to achieve organizational goals;*
- *Implementing prevention intervention that enhances client capacities;*
- *Helping clients resolve problems;*
- *Negotiating, mediating, and advocating for clients;*
- *Facilitating transitions and endings.*

Here are some examples of how we help students accomplish these tasks:

BSW STRATEGIES FOR APPLYING EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10c—Intervention.

Amanda, a veteran student, and Lynz, a first-generation college student, presented a paper on combating fear of Islam at the CSWE APM meeting in 2011.

- **1350 Introduction to Social Work** students study case examples that illustrate the major social work themes, and devise and discuss appropriate intervention plans.
- In **3420 Practice I**, students examine, through their lab simulations, how to relate in a self-aware manner, attending to standards of self-disclosure used in those interviews by doing an “I said, she said” process recording which also examines thoughts and feelings.
- Undergraduates in **3420 Practice I** study nonverbal communication and ways to control their nonverbal reactions. They also drill, through lab exercise, on how to communicate clearly and empathically. They review a case involving dual relationships, and they are required to include supervision as part of the plan to resolve the problematic relationship.
- Students consider a series of case studies in **3420 Practice I**. Once students adequately describe their assessment of existing challenges and strengths, they must describe strategies for intervening. The latter portion of the semester includes cases requiring theory-based interventions using psychoanalysis/psychodynamic or cognitive-behavioral strategies.
- Through their interface with agency contacts, **3425 Practice II** students learn to make concise, focused communication to achieve a specific goal. They develop self-confidence in presenting themselves as professionals.
- Students in **4425 Practice III** engage in a skills lab with a ‘mock’ individual client, building rapport and practicing skills such as attending, furthering, and questioning. They do on-going video taping of their work with the ‘client,’ and get written and oral feedback.
- **4425 Practice III** undergraduates evaluate and critique each other’s interviewing skills. They learn to appreciate and respond non-defensively to feedback and to give feedback in a positive manner to each other.
- In **4356 Professionalism**, through assigned readings, class lectures, and guest speakers, undergraduates identify key factors in using supervision.



EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10(D)—EVALUATION

Social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

As part of the School’s reliance on empirically supported practice strategies, we make sure that students grasp techniques and concepts about evaluating practice, particularly their own practice. The overarching practice behaviors, which operationalize competency 2.1.10d, include:

- *Critically analyzing, monitoring, and evaluating interventions.*

Here are some ways we do this:

BSW STRATEGIES FOR APPLYING EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2.1.10d—Evaluation.

BSW students are always interested in learning how to pass their licensure test. SOWK 4356 Professionalism specifically deals with the licensing exam process. Faculty relate this to how students view themselves as professionals and how they aim for providing the best services at the highest level.

Dr. Catherine Hawkins brings insight about international social work into her classes. She also educates students about human rights and spirituality in social work. Soon she will teach an Honors course on LGBT issues.

- **3420 Practice I** students practice using beginning methods of measuring progress toward goals, and their individual and family assessment assignments include measurement components.
- Students in **3425 Practice II** learn methods of evaluation and select appropriate methods that they apply to their agency intervention. They collect data after their intervention, presenting it in writing and verbally.
- Students in **4425 Practice III** do reflective and self-evaluative workbook exercises and learn methods of documentation that facilitate evaluation.
- Students in **4425 Practice III** also complete an evaluation plan for their 'mock' client that includes scaling the client, providing the client with feedback, and helping the client assess his or her own progress.
- **4356 Professionalism** students examine cases involving people who were denied access to services or denied basic human rights, paying attention to legal precedents established for effective outcomes.

Empirical Knowledge and Technology

Our faculty instill a respect for evaluating interventions empirically, and for investigating whether intervention techniques are supported by empirical efforts. While we recognize that professionals must approach practice in a flexible, individualized, creative way, we emphasize that this flexibility and creativity must be tethered to proven technologies. Completely new technologies must be tested before professionals engage in them widely.

This admonition is balanced by the caveat that, unfortunately, empirical research of human service technologies is somewhat limited because of lack of public interest and funding for such research, as well as the inherent difficulties of applying empirical methods to human subjects. So social workers should seek to study interventions in ways that protect human subjects.

Having said that, we recognize that there is more empirical evidence on interventions than most professionals can digest in their careers. So we start students on a diet of reading and analyzing journal articles that address empirical evidence on various interventions. We encourage them to think of intervention in terms of theoretical constructs that allow for individualization and flexibility. Building on their growing skills in identifying theories and understanding empirical implications, we encourage them to adapt theories and empirical methods to their own practice. Throughout this process, we encourage students to be creative in devising and implementing interventions.

We encourage students to take advantage of the technological assistance available to them to improve their learning and humanize services. Faculty use TRACS extensively, which forces students to become comfortable with using the Internet for learning. Increasingly, students come to us as computer-savvy learners, but we build on that. For students who are computer-challenged, we match them up with University-sponsored training in computer labs.

Here are some examples of how we address empirical knowledge and technological means throughout our entire BSW curriculum:

Katherine, the daughter of a licensed clinical social worker, entered Texas State as a psychology major. She found the psychology course work dissatisfying, however. Katherine's mother encouraged her to talk to the BSW Coordinator, who arranged for her to sit in on a BSW class. She is now a BSW major and says she couldn't be happier. "I usually do the opposite of what my mother says, but this time, she was right", Katherine said. "I'm proud to become a social worker like my mother."

- Beginning with **1350 Introduction to Social Work**, undergraduates learn to use TRACS on the Internet, establishing an email account and following discussion threads. Students follow this routine in School classes, since faculty post syllabi and assignments on TRACS.
- In **3420 Practice I**, we push students to view case studies theoretically, looking for practice themes and commonalities. Undergraduates discuss components of sound theory and limits of different practice theories. Students also read about and discuss ethical use of technological advances, such as email, faxes, cell phones.
- Undergraduates in **3425 Practice II** learn to effectively use technology to communicate within and between communities, presenting empirical knowledge as part of advocacy through social media and websites.
- Undergraduates in **4425 Practice III** and **4356 Professionalism**, as in all our practice courses, develop critical thinking skills by digesting current literature on practice theories and empirical practice research. They write papers synthesizing and presenting this information. 4425 gives students hands-on experience with videotaping and analyzing the videotape results, so students learn to apply technology and empirical knowledge to practice.
- In **4356 Professionalism**, students research a topic on the Internet and present it to the class, sharing specific useful Internet sites.

Integrating Coursework and Field

Students in our BSW program receive hands-on learning throughout the curriculum to prepare them for real-world experiential learning in agencies during field internships. Field is the signature pedagogy, where students gain actual experience in social work. Because ours is a professional program, it is our ethical obligation to make sure that students are adequately prepared to put their practice skills into practice, and to create intentional course experiences that promote behavioral competencies. In this way, our practice coursework and our field program are highly integrated. While this entire chapter has provided salient examples of this, here are some other examples of how we prepare our students for field:

- In **1350 Introduction to Social Work**, undergraduate students begin to develop communication, empathy, and rapport-building skills for social work through practicing in groups around case scenarios.
- Students in **3425 Practice II** interact with community agencies and begin to learn the nuts and bolts of agencies: staffing, resources, client issues, and community needs.
- In **4425 Practice III** students continue to hone their skills and prepare for field work by practicing engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation through simulating interviews with a client from a case scenario. Students learn documentation and record keeping skills by turning in SOAP notes and creating a case file for this assignment.
- Students in **4356 Professionalism** listen to guest speakers who are social workers practicing in a variety of areas. Students learn what is expected from field supervisors and what really goes on in various agency settings.