Title: Holistic Assessment of Competencies: Integrated Evaluation in Field, Research Methods, and Capstone
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Overview of Capstone Leadership Project:

The Capstone Leadership Project, completed in the specialization year, utilizes project-based pedagogy linked directly to field placement in real time, enabling students to engage in a comprehensive field experience which ultimately involves micro and macro experiences and skills. The project provides opportunities for students to demonstrate advanced social work competencies, to practice leadership at their field placement sites, and enhance self- awareness of individual leadership styles and skills. The Capstone project requires students, in conjunction with their field instructors and faculty to utilize best practices to identify an existing need at the field site; create a sustainable Capstone project; assume significant leadership for addressing and/or meeting the need; engage in self-assessment and self-reflection related to professional identity, practice and leadership roles; utilize best practices to evaluate intended outcomes of the selected intervention; and provide the organization with deliverables.

The Capstone Leadership Process. A key assignment in the fall Research Methods course establishes the project proposal framework which will be used to assess and measuring key competencies from a holistic perspective throughout the academic year. This assignment, anchored in the field placement site, requires students to develop a formal project proposal which is then implemented during the Capstone Leadership course during the spring semester. Students utilize multiple competency domains in an integrated and holistic manner, including but not limited to: knowledge, values, skills, problem solving, critical thinking, and professional communication. The process entails assessment of a need within the organization, engaging discussions with key stakeholders, conducting a literature review to inform best practice, project design and implementation, and evaluation. Faculty approval of the project is contingent upon demonstration of critical thinking, professional writing, needs assessment, consultation, observation of organizational culture, organizational policy awareness, advocacy, and visioning sustainability.

Similar to the Research Methods course, the pedagogical approach of the Capstone Leadership course is project-based learning.   The Capstone Leadership course begins with the implementation of the approved project in their field agency. Throughout the semester, students must engage in individual consultations with faculty, accountability/consultation groups, and twice a month classroom meetings while they navigate and negotiate the completion of their stated project. Projects must meet the following criteria: 1) engages a best-practices needs assessment process, 2) engages an intervention process that is informed by the literature, 3) establishes clear outcomes that demonstrate change in client, organizational, community, or policy systems, 4) engages a best practices evaluation of outcomes process, 5) demonstrates sustainable change, and finally, 6) a professional presentation to a faculty panel, followed by a presentation to the University community and colleagues. The integrated nature of the course design allows for identification of benchmark behaviors, systematic gathering of data, assessment of student competency, and improvement of the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Competencies Assessed in the Capstone Leadership Project (Community Specialization):

Competency 1- Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
Competency 4- Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice
Competency 6- Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
Competency 7- Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
Competency 8- Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
Competency 9- Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Note: Competencies 2, 3, and 5 are assessed elsewhere in the curriculum. All competencies are also assessed in the field evaluation process.

Integrative Application

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        Knowledge


cognitive
and                    Values
affective
processes


         Skills
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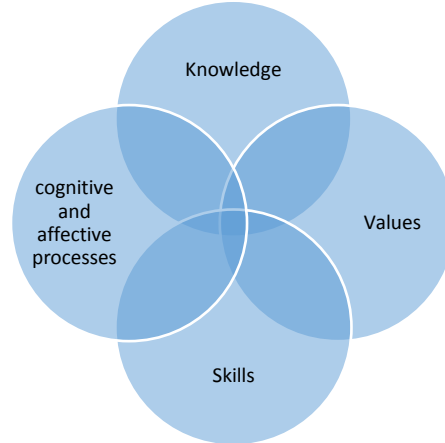
MSW Capstone Leadership Projects- Sampling of Titles

- Enhancing the Performance of MSW Interns and New Social Services Staff Through a Department Specific Training Manual

- Women's Empowerment Group: Building Self Esteem Through Group Therapy

- Ready or Not? Development of an Organizational Readiness Assessment Tool for the Scaling of Person-Centered Care

- S.M.A.R.T.: Science and Medicine Aligning Roads for Teens

- Promoting Social Work Competence Through Client Feedback in a Hospice

- Development of a Mental Health Awareness Campaign Targeting Latino Communities
- Establishing Protocol to Ensure Timely Physicals for Youth Entering Residential Placement

- Palliative Care: Elements of Patient Satisfaction

- Tools to Enhance Awareness, Satisfaction, and Promotion of Child and Family Teaming (CFT) to Children Social Workers

- Utilizing a Wellness and Recovery Group to Improve Treatment Outcomes for Consumers with Persistent Mental Illnesses

- Intranet System Development: Increasing Unity, Engagement, and Efficiency in a Nonprofit Setting
- Improving Legal Practice: Cross-Cultural Competence Training

- Development of an Evidence Based Group Activity Manual in an Inpatient Setting

- Evaluating the Impact of Training *Promotoras* in Stress Management and Wellness Practices
- Implementation of Online Training for Recertification of Foster Parents

- Evaluation of an Early Head Start Health and Nutrition Program