

# Evaluation in Social Work Field Practicum

## An Annotated Bibliography 2021



Transforming the Field  
Education Landscape

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's (SSHRC) partnership grant program, aims to better prepare the next generation of social workers in Canada by creating training and mentoring opportunities for students, developing and mobilizing innovative and promising field education practices, and improving the integration of research and practice in field education.

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## METHODS

The purpose of this annotated bibliography is to learn about evaluation in social work practice and field education. The University of Calgary online system was used for this literature search. Nineteen articles were deemed relevant after reading titles and abstracts from the search results.

### Database Search, Keywords and Modifications

Database	Keywords	Search Modifications
Academic Search Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Evaluation or assessment” AND “social work” AND “field”</li> <li>• “Evaluation or assessment” AND “social work practice”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English language</li> <li>• Peer reviewed</li> </ul>
CINAHL Plus with Full Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Evaluation or assessment” AND “social work” AND “field education or field placement”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English language</li> <li>• Peer reviewed</li> </ul>
Google Scholar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Evaluation and social work field education”</li> <li>• "Evaluation on social work field education"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1999-2021</li> <li>• 2011-2021</li> </ul>
Social Work Abstracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Evaluation” AND “social work” AND “field education”</li> <li>• “Evaluation” AND “social work*” AND “field education or practicum or placement”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English language</li> <li>• Peer reviewed</li> </ul>
SocINDEX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Evaluation” AND “social work education” AND “students”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English language</li> <li>• Peer reviewed</li> </ul>
University of Calgary Quick Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Evaluation” AND “social work” AND “field education”</li> <li>• “Evaluation” AND “social work*” AND “field education or practicum or placement”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011-2021</li> <li>• English language</li> <li>• Peer reviewed</li> </ul>

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bentley, K. J. (2013). Toward an evaluation framework for doctoral education in social work: A 10-year retrospective of one PhD program's assessment experiences. *Journal of Social Work Education, 49*(1), 30–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2013.755089>

This article presents a framework for evaluation in social work doctoral education and details 10 years of successes and challenges in one PhD program's use of the framework, including planning and implementing specific assessment activities around student learning outcomes and larger program goals. The article argues that a range of innovative and traditional internal and external assessment strategies can be tailored to the needs and resources of other programs. Easily adaptable exemplars, rubrics and rating forms, measurement devices, and assessment reports are provided. The article ends by highlighting the ways used to build student, faculty, and alumni participation in evaluative activities and by proposing ideas for related research assessment.

Bogo, M., Regehr, C., Logie, C., Katz, E., Mylopoulos, M., & Regehr, G. (2011). Adapting objective structured clinical examinations to assess social work students' performance and reflections. *Journal of Social Work Education, 47*(1), 5–18. <https://doi.org/10.5175/JSWE.2011.200900036>

The development of standardized, valid, and reliable methods for assessment of students' practice competence continues to be a challenge for social work educators. In this study, the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), originally used in medicine to assess performance through simulated interviews, was adapted for social work to include a reflective dialogue that focused on the ability to conceptualize practice. Participants included current MSW students, recent graduates, and experienced social workers. The study demonstrated promising reliability for the method and the rating tools developed. Correlations between performance and reflection scores demonstrated that they are related, yet different, aspects

of competence. The method demonstrated construct validity in that it differentiated between social workers in training and experienced workers.

Carpenter, J. (2011). Evaluating social work education: A review of outcomes, measures, research designs and practicalities. *Social Work Education, 30*(2), 122–140.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2011.540375>

This review considers how the outcomes of social work education can be identified with reference to Kirkpatrick's framework of levels of outcomes and Kraiger *et al.*'s general model of learning outcomes. It presents examples of different approaches to the measurement of outcomes and to the use of research designs in social work education and interprofessional education involving social workers and social work students. These examples are drawn from a search of the English language literature (1997–2010). Three-quarters of the studies (23 out of 31) found measured changes in attitudes and/or knowledge and skills only. Seven measured changes in social workers' behaviour and only one measured the impact on service users' lives. Three-quarters employed pre–post one group designs. The advantages and disadvantages of alternative research designs are discussed. Finally, some practicalities regarding the development of an outcomes-based culture in university-based education are considered.

Chow, E. O., Cheung, C.-K., & Chan, G. H. (2018). Calibrating field practicum assessment in social work education with a competency-based evaluation tool in Hong Kong. *International Social Work, 61*(2), 260–273. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872815620262>

As social work is an international profession, it is necessary to establish the validity of assessment of the field practicum of students for the purpose of professional accreditation. This study calibrates an indigenous assessment tool, the Social Work Practicum Assessment (SWPA), developed in Hong Kong with a competency-based evaluation (CBE) tool popularized

in North America, using data collected from 171 social work final-year undergraduates. The results demonstrate convergence between the SWPA and CBE when rated by field instructors and were greater when the student-assessed CBE was higher. Alternatively, the student-assessed CBE displayed greater convergence with the instructor-rated CBE when the indigenous assessment was higher. The positive results imply the generalizability of the assessments across places.

Cleak, H., Hawkins, L., Laughton, J., & Williams, J. (2015). Creating a standardised teaching and learning framework for social work field placements. *Australian Social Work, 68*(1), 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2014.93240>

Mapping and evaluating a student's progress on placement is a core element of social work education but there has been scant attention to indicate how to effectively create and assess student learning and performance. This paper outlines a project undertaken by the Combined Schools of Social Work to develop a common learning and assessment tool that is being used by all social work schools in Victoria. The paper describes how the Common Assessment Tool (CAT) was developed, drawing on the Australian Association of Social Work Practice Standards, leading to seven key learning areas that form the basis of the assessment of a student's readiness for practice. An evaluation of the usefulness of the CAT was completed by field educators, liaison staff, and students, which confirmed that the CAT was a useful framework for evaluating students' learning goals. The feedback also identified a number of problematic features that were addressed in a revised CAT and rating scale.

Fengler, J., & Taylor, B. J. (2018). Effective assessment: A key knowledge and skill for a sustainable profession. *Social Work Education, 38*(3), 392–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2018.1538333>

Assessment is an essential element of social work practice. However, by trying to realize the so-called triple-mandate of social work, professionals and students on qualifying training sometimes struggle to consider simultaneously client and organizational aspects, and to embrace both outcome-orientation and process orientation. Societal requirements focus on outcomes and standardized procedures whereas client's needs require individualized and situationally appropriate consideration. The tensions are more acute with demands for rigorous professional decision making based on evidence, with increased attention to risks. Multi-professional working has many benefits for clients, but places new demands on social work assessment. Current models are limited in embracing these tensions, and more integrated models are required. Established frameworks together with practice and teaching experience are applied in this paper to extend the traditional Taylor and Devine model to address these contemporary challenges. Elements of a new model (ALOHA) have been trialled on professionals as well as students on qualifying social work training. Such robust assessment models synthesized from theory, research, and best practice are essential to meet contemporary practice challenges, maintain public credibility, and sustain social work internationally.

Holbrook, A. M., & Chen, W. Y. (2017). Learning by doing: An experiential approach to program evaluation. *Social Work Education, 36*(1), 62-74.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2016.1266322>

Despite the increased importance of producing social workers who are prepared to evaluate practice, there is a paucity of literature addressing the pedagogical challenges of program evaluation courses. The present study evaluates the structure and pedagogical approach of a newly implemented program evaluation course. The course took a team-based, experiential learning approach to designing a program evaluation plan for students' field placement

agencies. Five student-led focus groups ( $N = 44$ ) were conducted at the conclusion of the course to address two aims: to assess student perceptions of the content, structure, and delivery of the course; and to assess student attitudes toward applied research. Data were collected between November and December 2014 in a public university's graduate social work program in the northeastern United States. The steps of grounded theory data analysis were implemented to elicit major themes from student feedback. Results suggest that perceptions of applicability play a central role in shaping student attitudes toward program evaluation. Experiential and team-based pedagogical approaches appear to increase accessibility of course content for students. Suggestions for enhancing student learning in program evaluation courses are discussed.

Karpetis, G. (2019). In-depth learning in field education: Evaluating the effectiveness of process recording. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 33*(1), 95–107.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2017.1400956>

Process recording is the anamnestic recollection of narratives and behaviours of the participants in client interviews. Through critical incidents of teaching, this study explores how the process recording teaching and learning activity was operationalised in a field education seminar for postgraduate social work students, at an Australian University. Further, the study evaluates the student satisfaction aspect of the effectiveness of the activity. Assuming the practitioner/lecturer researcher role, the author adopted a psychodynamic theoretical framework to identify relational roots in client problems, support students to carry out holistic bio-psychosocial assessments, correct practice mistakes and separate facts from thoughts—conceptualised as theories of practice—and emotions. An anonymous mixed-method questionnaire evaluated the satisfaction of students with the activity. The clear majority

evaluated process recording as very beneficial for their learning and rated the reflections of the lecturer on the process recorded material as highly satisfactory.

Lu, Y. E., Ain, E., Chamorro, C., Chang, C. Y., Feng, J. Y., Fong, R., Garcia, B., Leibson Hawkins, R., & Yu, M. (2011). A new methodology for assessing social work practice: The adaptation of the objective structured clinical evaluation (SW-OSCE). *Social Work Education, 30*(2), 170–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2011.540385>

The Objective Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE) methodology was originally developed to assess medical students. OSCE is a carefully scripted, standardized, simulated interview, in which students' interactional skills are observed and assessed. Here it is examined for its potential use in assessing social work practice skills. The development of the Social Work OSCE (SW-OSCE) and the Clinical Competence-based Behavioural Checklist (CCBC) are described. Findings from a pilot study assessing MSW students' clinical skills with explicit observable criteria of the CCBC are presented. A quantitative and qualitative mixed-methods data analysis was applied. The CCBC had high internal reliability, for both the overall sample and for the different case scenarios, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.888 to 0.965. The validity of the instrument was also examined: qualitative content analysis of the taped interviews indicated that clinical skills and cultural empathy are not synonymous. The racial/ethnic match between the student and the 'client' did not predict better rapport or more cultural empathy. Examination grades are not necessarily consistent with actual performance in either clinical competence or cultural empathy or vice versa. Nevertheless, the results provide some support for the use of the SW-OSCE as a tool for assessing performance in social work practice. They also indicate its potential for evaluating the outcomes of educational programmes.

Pack, M. (2018). Evaluating the field practicum experience in social work fieldwork programs using an online survey approach: Student and supervisor responses. *Social Work & Society*, 16(1).

<https://ejournals.bib.uni-wuppertal.de/index.php/sws/index>

A key issue for busy education managers is how to design evaluative research to obtain quality and reliable data to enhance fieldwork programme development. This article provides a report of a small study conducted at one university in Australia which aims to explore the satisfaction of field supervisors and students with various aspects of the field education program. The author's main objective was to evaluate the operation of program to improve the day-to-day experience of the fieldwork program for students and their field supervisors. A secondary aim was to determine if students and field supervisors would engage and participate fully in an online survey approach to the evaluation, for the purposes of eliciting ideas and suggestions for improvement to be implemented by the program co-ordinators. Using an online questionnaire built through the Qualtrix software, students and their fieldwork supervisors were asked individually about their experiences of the placement, communication with the University, preparation, and assessment. A low response rate was found, making generalisation across the student and fieldwork educators' cohorts problematic. The results from participants suggest that the social work field supervisors need more support when supervising a student practicum, due to the changes occurring in their workplaces. Specifically, restructuring in the social services was reported as making it difficult to take on the additional responsibilities encompassed in the fieldwork supervision role. Whilst the feedback from students indicates they are generally pleased with the field supervisors' input, the field supervisors who responded state that they lack the time and resources to provide the requirements of student learning.

Pérez-Eransas, B., & Martínez-Virto, L. (2020). Social work education in Spain: Evaluation and challenges for a new generation of social workers. *Social Work Education, 39*(6), 750–764.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2020.1724931>

The European social integration model was built on two main pillars: employment and access to the welfare state. European social work education was mainly oriented to training professionals in order to promote this inclusion through case management and the provision of benefits. This influence was very intense in the curricular content of Spanish social work programs. The new social risks and the European convergence in higher education have promoted curricular changes, but is it enough? This paper aims to identify the content and limits of current social work education in Spain. To this end, a comparative analysis of social work education in public universities of Spain was performed. This information has been contrasted with professionals, teachers and social work students. The results evidence the gap of these contents with the real professional needs. This paper proposes several alternatives and approaches in new intergenerational methodologies and technological tools to train a new generation of social workers

Regehr, C., Bogo, M., & Regehr, G. (2011). The development of an online practice-based evaluation tool for social work. *Research on Social Work Practice, 21*(4), 469-475.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731510395948>

This paper describes the development of a practice-based evaluation (PBE) tool that allows instructors to represent their student's clinical performance in a way that is sufficiently authentic to resonate with both instructors and students, is psychometrically sound, and is feasible in the context of real practice. A new online evaluation tool was designed to address several of the problems associated with previous methods of evaluation and was tested on 190 field instructors—student pairs. Results demonstrated feasibility of the tool, high

acceptability from students and faculty, high internal consistency, and clearly reduced ceiling effect, when compared with a traditional competency-based evaluation (CBE) tool. It did, however, continue to result in a strong skew toward positive evaluation and did not increase the identification of students at risk. The online PBE tool demonstrates promise in redressing some of the evaluation issues posed by the previous CBE model of evaluation.

Rehn, M., & Kalman, H. (2018). Social work students' reflections on challenges during field education. *Journal of Social Work, 18*(4), 451–467.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017316654362>

Field education is a key curriculum component in social work programmes. Students as well as researchers have identified this learning experience as central to the students' transition to practice. This article reports on a qualitative study with the aim of analysing social work students' narratives of their experiences during field education in order to elucidate their reasoning with regard to the challenges presented by unique clients and their contexts, along with their objectives set in the service user situation. The narratives of 23 social work students in Sweden describing a sum total of 46 problematic and unproblematic situations during field education were analysed, revealing circumstances that according to the students had either aggravated or facilitated professional action. Findings: The experiences of being overwhelmed by emotions and of having too much latitude in the interpretation of principles and guidelines were experienced as aggravating circumstances, whereas having knowledge of legislation and clear guidelines to follow was experienced as facilitating client interaction and as providing a sense of security with the professional role. The analysis also revealed differing levels and scope of ambition with regard to the objectives set in the service user situation. Applications: Our results demonstrate the importance of furthering students' articulation of and active reflection on their interpretation of guidelines and legislation, and on their own setting of

objectives specific to the individual cases and on how these objectives relate to the value base of social work.

Scourfield, J., Maxwell, N., Zhang, M. L., de Villiers, T., Pithouse, A., Kinnersley, P., Metcalf, E., & Tayyaba, S. (2019). Evaluation of a fast-track postgraduate social work program in England using simulated practice. *Research on Social Work Practice, 29*(4), 363–374.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731517735575>

Using data from our evaluation of the Frontline fast-track social work training program, introduced by the Government in England, we compare the performance of the first cohort of Frontline trainees with students from regular social work programs using simulated practice. Method: Forty-nine Frontline trainees were compared with 36 postgraduate students in high-tariff universities and 30 students from a range of other regular programs. Kruskal–Wallis tests were used to compare the performance of the three groups in interviews and written reflections. Frontline trainees were rated significantly higher than comparison groups for the quality of their interviewing and written reflection. Despite these higher ratings for practice quality, the Frontline trainees' rating of their own confidence in their abilities was lower than their counterparts on regular programs. The practice quality of Frontline graduates is promising. Longitudinal research is needed in real practice settings.

Shaw, I., & Lishman, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Evaluation and social work practice*. Sage.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446218075>

Evaluation and Social Work Practice offers a comprehensive treatment of the central issues confronting evaluation in social work that links theory and method to practical applications. Evaluation is an integral part of social work and social care provision, for both practice and service delivery. Evaluation can improve effectiveness and increase accountability and help develop new models of practice and service delivery. The authors argue that evaluation

should not just be applied to practice but should be a direct dimension of practice. Appealing to the student, researcher and practitioner, *Evaluation and Social Work Practice* will become the standard reference source on evaluation.

Shaw, J. (2019). Teaching note-A call for including theories of evaluation in program evaluation courses taught in schools of social work. *Journal of Social Work Education, 55*(3), 596–601. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2019.1567417>

Many schools of social work offer courses on program evaluation. However, one component of program evaluation—theories of evaluation—may all too often be left out of the curriculum. This Teaching Note defines and describes evaluation theory and the benefits of including it in a program evaluation curriculum in schools of social work. Specific ideas for incorporating this content into MSW and doctoral courses in schools of social work are provided.

Stone, Clare. (2018). Transparency of assessment in practice education: the TAPE model. *Social Work Education, 37*(8), 977–994. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2018.1475556>

This article draws upon empirical research which explored how undergraduate and postgraduate social work students, at one university in England, experienced working alongside practice educators. In-depth interviews with eight participants enabled them to explore their placement experiences and in relation to assessment, social work students predominantly focused on the direct observations of their practice and written work. The findings suggest that students were less clear about the range of assessment methods employed and how stakeholders contribute toward formative and summative assessment.

This article presents the Transparency of Assessment in Practice Education: the TAPE Model, which is designed to make the elements of assessment explicit. This model outlines six Ws which comprise the measurement of assessment. It is suitable to use with social work

students, newly qualified social workers undertaking their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment, and can bring transparency to other assessment situations in the workplace or classroom.

Tapp, K., Macke, C., & McLendon, T. (2012). Assessing student performance in field education. *Field Educator Journal*, 2(2), 1-14. <http://fielddeducator.simmons.edu/>

As the signature pedagogy of social work education, assessing student performance is a critical component of individual field student and program assessment. A central question is how to measure students' practice competence. Student performance in field education has been evaluated by measuring students' interpersonal skills and practice skills. In addition, the effectiveness of field has been measured through self-efficacy scales, student satisfaction scores, client satisfaction scores, and competency-based evaluation tools. Each of these different methods of evaluation will be discussed. The CSWE 2008 competencies integrated into student learning contracts and field assessments, surveys, quantitative research, and qualitative research are offered for social work programs' consideration.

Wang, Y., & Chui, E. (2016). An exploratory path model of social work students' satisfaction with field education experience in China. *Social Work Research*, 40(3), 135–145.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svw010>

The present study explores a path model of the associations between social work students' field education experience and their satisfaction. Based on Herzberg's two-factor theory, the postulated model investigates the relationship between students' achievement motivation, preparedness, relationships with others, and satisfaction. The model also explores the mediation effect of students' evaluation of supervision quality and school supervisors' supportive behaviors, and the moderation effect of social work programs and university location. The results of an online survey administered to 291 social work students and

assessing their field experience are presented and discussed. The results indicate that the model has a good fit with the data (comparative fit index = .989, root mean square error of approximation = .057,  $p = .101$ ). Limitations related to satisfaction, such as intermediate learning outcomes, memory bias, and cross-sectional design, are considered, and recommendations are made for increasing students' preparedness and for training school supervisors and field supervisors in China.

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731517735575>

Shaw, I., & Lishman, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Evaluation and social work practice*. Sage.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446218075>

Shaw, J. (2019). Teaching note-A call for including theories of evaluation in program evaluation courses taught in schools of social work. *Journal of Social Work Education, 55*(3), 596–601.

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Stone, Clare. (2018). Transparency of assessment in practice education: The TAPE model. *Social Work Education, 37*(8), 977–994. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2018.1475556>

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