

SCHOOL-BASED PRACTICUM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY
PSYCHOLOGY 778
Fall, 2005

Instructor: Dr. Bill Ernst

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Office Hours: Available by appointment

Class Meeting: Wednesday 10:00-Noon, Johnston Hall Room 204

Process Group: Tuesdays 4:30 to 5:30, Taylor 303 (Beginning 9/20)

Lab Fees: \$15.00, payable to JMU via Mirtha Mohajeri

Course Overview:

This seminar is intended to provide structure and support for your practicum field experiences in school psychology. This practicum is distinct from the internship and is designated as a field-based orientation to school psychology. It serves to acclimate students to the culture of the public schools, to regular and special education, and the specific role and function of the school psychologist in the delivery of psychological services.

Students will be assigned to a school system and field-based supervisor by the course instructor. It is expected that these placements will remain constant over two semesters so that students can fully integrate experiences during one academic year.

Expected Student Outcomes:

1. The student will demonstrate basic knowledge of the policy and procedures of the site with regard to: contacting parents and professionals, obtaining necessary case background/history and information, conducting the evaluation or intervention, participating in pre-referral/child study/eligibility meetings, and providing required oral and written reports.
2. The student will demonstrate ethical behavior, interpersonal skill, sensitivity to human diversity, and professionalism in providing supervised psychological services as indicated by the site supervisor's evaluation.
3. The student will demonstrate critical thinking in written reports and oral presentations that integrates knowledge from the professional literature with regard to assessment and intervention.

Course Requirements:

1. A minimum of 120 hours is required for the school-based practicum each semester. The majority of these hours will be logged at the assigned site. However, some hours

will be in other community and school-related sites (e.g., Head Start classrooms, Child Development Center) as well as group and individual supervision with practicum instructors. Students will conduct comprehensive psycho-educational evaluations on at least **4 cases per semester** for a total of **9** evaluations. Students will provide individual interventions, including consultation, counseling, and other interventions as assigned. Requirements from other courses should be integrated into this practicum experience (Consultation, Personality Assessment). The practicum work will follow the calendar year of the assigned school site and not necessarily JMU's schedule of holidays.

This first semester school-based practicum experience will include:

- Comprehensive assessments, including personality components on at least two, and DSM-IV diagnosis and recommendations on **all** reports
- one documented consultation with parents, teachers or other school personnel
- 4 to 6 individual sessions with a child in the schools in a monitoring, supportive, or mentoring role
- Attendance at **one** CLS Triage and Case Planning meeting, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 3:30-5, Blue Ridge Hall Room 325
- Participation in weekly process group meetings for 6 weeks
- Participation in various field trips organized by the course instructors.

The second semester practicum experience will include:

- Comprehensive assessments
 - One functional behavior assessment (FBA)
 - One individual counseling case
 - One group counseling experience (co-lead a group)
 - Follow-up summer CDC case documenting positive impact
 - Participation in various field trips organized by the course instructors
 - Required attendance at the Spring Psychology Symposium, April 21
 - Other experiences not completed in the fall
2. Students are required to attend weekly on-campus practicum meetings. Class participation in discussions and case presentations is expected.
 3. During this practicum, students will participate in supervision in varying formats. It is important to highlight one of the most critical requirements of this course- the willingness and ability of each student to acknowledge, analyze, and remediate weaknesses that may interfere with competent clinical care. Therefore, it is crucial for students to let supervisors know of areas of individual or group needs. It is not possible that supervisors will automatically know your unique strengths and weaknesses. It is expected that you ask for assistance so please do so. Take full advantage of this opportunity for professional growth.

4. Students are required to participate in a process group for the semester with a facilitator who is not program-affiliated. One of the important values of an effective mental health professional is a commitment to personal growth and self-awareness. As an integral part of your practicum experience, you will participate in a process group that meets for one hour a week for at least 6 weeks during the fall semester. The group will provide you with a forum for discussing personal, professional, and ethical issues that arise during your practicum.

The process group will focus upon professional development and the personal concerns that arise in that context. As such, the group is designed to be non-evaluative and provide a safe environment to explore these issues in greater depth than possible in other training settings.

Because the practicum involves working closely with and at times counseling clients, it is often an intense experience. The process group is an opportunity for you to understand the influence of your personal issues that emerge in relating to clients and colleagues; for example, counter-transference with clients and effective collaboration with colleagues. Keep in mind that the process group is not supervision, group therapy or case consultation. While this is not a therapy group, the process group leaders will follow the same guidelines of confidentiality. Therefore, they will not be sharing any information about you with faculty members. Of course, you are also expected to maintain confidentiality. Program faculty invite you to take full advantage of this opportunity by taking risks, participating fully in the experience of sharing, listening, and contributing to the group.

5. At the end of each semester, students must submit to the on-site supervisor and the course instructor a complete log of practicum activities categorized by day and type of activity using a program such as EXCEL (e.g., assessment/direct service, preparation, report writing, supervision, observation, counseling, consultation). The on-site supervisor and the course instructor must sign the log. Students may only log **four hours** for report writing for each assessment case. Class seminars and group supervision should be included as practicum hours.
6. All students must be satisfactorily evaluated by their on-site supervisor and the course instructor based on the evaluation criteria listed in the Practicum Evaluation Form to receive a “Satisfactory” in the course. The course instructor and the student will review the student’s progress and performance mid semester and develop a remediation plan if necessary.
7. All protocols must be scored accurately and **must be peer checked!** Because these results will be used for major decisions regarding program placement, diagnosis and intervention, careful attention to scoring and standard administration is essential.
8. Students are expected to maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding assessment, intervention and consultation cases. Students are expected to adhere to professional and ethical guidelines outlined by NASP and APA.

Guidelines for a successful experience:

1. Bring your portfolio and a list of your coursework taken to date to the first meeting with your on-site supervisor.
2. Obtain the school district's eligibility guidelines and procedures for Special Education.
3. Become familiar with the school district's policies on crisis intervention. Take advantage of opportunities to learn about crisis management.
4. Learn the resources available to children and families in the school and the community.
5. Recognize the boundaries of your competence; maintain good communication with your supervisor.
6. Develop and maintain good rapport with all professional and staff personnel.
7. Maintain professional demeanor; dress appropriately, and leave the backpack in the car!
8. Demonstrate initiative, resourcefulness, and conscientiousness.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated for satisfactory performance by both the on-site supervisor and the course instructor. The course instructor maintains final responsibility for grade determination. Students are expected to self-evaluate and set goals for performance in consultation with their supervisor and course instructor. Remediation plans may be generated for specific areas of weaknesses before students may advance to the next practicum or internship experience.

Textbooks:

NASP Best Practices IV

McCarney, S. B. (1988) Pre-referral Interventions Manual. Hawthorne Educational Services.

Baird, B. N. (2002). The Internship, Practicum, and Field Placement Handbook: A guide for the helping professions, Third Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Additional References:

DSM-IV- TR

Ethical Guidelines from NASP and APA

Virginia Department of Education Special Education Regulations

School district policy manuals and procedures

Class time will consist of a combination of class discussion/seminars, small group supervision, individual supervision and field trips/observations. Please plan your school-based activities using the schedule below. The course instructors will notify you of changes to this schedule

Date		Readings
August 31	Class Seminar Introduction to Practicum/Supervision	
Sept. 7	Small group Supervision (office)	Baird, Chap. 2; Exercises p. 19 and p.57
Sept. 14	Class seminar	Baird Chap. 5; Exercises p. 70, 75 and 76
Sept. 21	Class seminar	Review site policies and procedures: Crisis intervention
Sept. 28	Class Seminar	Crisis Intervention
Oct. 5	Class Seminar	Suicide Prevention and Intervention
Oct. 12	Class Seminar: “Our Fight: Parents tell it like it is” no. 6686	Collaborating with parents and families
Oct. 19	Class Seminar	Low-incidence Disabilities (student-led discussion)
Oct. 26	Attend VPA Conference, Richmond	Mid-semester Evaluations Due
Nov. 2	Class seminar	Low incidence Disabilities
Nov. 9	Individual Supervision (office)	
Nov. 16	Small Group Supervision (office)	
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving Holiday	
Nov. 30	Small Group Supervision/Wrap up (office)	
Dec. 7	Final reports and logs due to instructor	End of semester Evaluation Due from supervisor