DEVELOPING THE LEARNING CONTRACT
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
PURPOSE OF THE LEARNING CONTRACT

- Establishes objectives for the students
  - Feasible
  - Attainable
- Serves as a tool to identify
  - What the student will learn
  - What activities will be a part of the placement experience
Purpose...

- Collaborative effort between the student, agency field instructor, and faculty field liaison
- To be considered a working document and guide for supervision throughout the academic year
- Made up of three components:
  - Learning goals – where they are going
  - Learning tasks – how they will get there
  - Timeframe for accomplishing the tasks – which semester (fall, spring, or both) do you want the student to complete the task
HOW TO BEGIN

- Planning should begin during the first 2 weeks of the placement
- Things to consider:
  - Student's goals
  - Student's experience level (employment, volunteering)
  - Student's learning style
  - Student's strengths, limitations, motivations, and interests
LEARNING CONTRACT PROCESS

- Student drafts the initial contract, consideration should be given to trying to tie class assignments into the learning tasks as appropriate (for example: research a specific service delivery model, legislation that has impacted service delivery, etc.)
- Agency field instructor (AFI) reviews the draft, makes changes, additions
- Student submits draft learning contract to faculty field liaison, makes changes, additions
- Student enters final version of learning contract into online field placement system CalState S4
Each student is expected to formulate specific goals in 9 competency areas (within each area consider 3-5 learning tasks that address three areas)

- Agency Services
- Personal Development
- Professional Development

Within each competency area, the student is expected to list specific goals and ways to achieve them

- Agency Services
This area pertains to the nature of the fieldwork agency in which the student is based.

Consideration should be given to tasks that help the student learn the following:

- Services and programs the agency provides
- Agency history, philosophy, structure, and funding
- Nature of the client population
- Agency policies and procedures
- Application of the generalist method to specific cases/assignments (micro, mezzo, macro)
- Agency decision-making processes
PERSONAL LEARNING GOALS

- Pertains to the student's uniqueness as an individual and changes they would like to make to help them in the role of a practicing social worker
- Considerations should be given to tasks that will help students identify the following:
  - The differences between personal and professional boundaries
  - Personal blocks to effective social work practice
  - Self-awareness in relation to human diversity (cultural and lifestyle differences, disadvantaged groups, women’s issues, etc.)
  - Personal values that help or may hinder effective practice
  - Assessing and recognizing impact of secondary trauma
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GOALS

- Pertain to theory, methods, and skills common to the work of a professional social worker that may be learned in the current placement but applicable in other social work agencies as well

- Considerations should be given to the following:
  - Development of skills and knowledge bases necessary to perform the role of a social worker in your agency
  - Accountability to client systems (maintaining confidentiality, keeping appointments, following through on plans, etc.)
  - Learning to work as part of a Team with agency staff
  - Identification of client concerns/problems
  - Communication and interviewing skills
  - Problem-solving process
  - Diversity
  - Community resources and making referrals
  - Social work practice methods (establishing relationships, collecting data, making assessments, intervention, evaluation, and termination)
  - Integrating and applying academic knowledge and theory to actual social work situations
It is acknowledged that each agency varies in its ability to provide the student with equal experiences with all client systems.

Example of each:

- Micro
  - Case Management
  - Individual Counseling
  - Advocacy/brokering

- Mezzo
  - Attend team or multidisciplinary meetings
  - Attend support, educational or recreational/socialization groups
  - Make home visits and participate in family interviews

- Macro
  - Identify specific techniques or agency’s administrative decision making
  - Write a letter to the editor regarding an issue
  - Attend a board meeting
Please note – it may be appropriate for certain strategies and evidence of accomplishments to fit in more than one goal.

- The Learning Contract worksheet is located in Blackboard and the final Learning Contract form is located in CalState S4.

CSU, Chico School of Social Work wants to thank Salisbury University for their contributions to the development of this power point.