Social Work Methods and Practice (2015)
Meso Practice (Group work)

COURSE CODE: SOCW 2006
LECTURER: Roshini Pillay
TERM: Quarter 1 (21 lectures)
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CONSULTATION TIMES: Tuesdays 12H30 – 13H30
Twitter: RP1005

"Just Do You"
India Arie

I heard a voice that told me I'm essential
How all my fears are limiting my potential
Said it's time to step into the light and
Use every bit of the power I have inside

So what'chu waiting on
Who You waiting for
If You don't take a chance You'll never
Welcome to the course of working with groups

Let us begin this journey

So what'chu waiting on
Who You waiting for
If You don't take a chance You'll never know what's in store

In this course of 11 double lectures we will explore this ‘incredible positive and affirming way of working with people’ (Kurland, Salmon, Bitel, Goodman, Ludwig, Newmann, & Sullivan, 2004, p3) called meso practice or group work. This is an essential intervention for students of social work to master as meso practice is indeed a powerful and effective intervention that provides opportunities for mutual aid (Shulman, 2006). Whilst, group work or meso practice maybe regarded by some as declining or waning a South African author on meso practice describes groups as, “the space where people can meet, interact, connect to others, be empowered and healed and are becoming more utilized in various diverse communities and populations in South Africa” (Becker, 2005, p. 1).

My teaching Philosophy:

And if you just be You
There is no way you can lose

I believe that learning is an on-going process and use elements of authentic learning the real world is very essential. Together we will learn about the skills, knowledge and values required to conduct a group in the next block. I encourage communication and I am aware that your input is critical to this class group work. I will strive to ensure that the learning environment is open and transparent, horizontal rather than hierarchical and to be sensitive to diversity and dynamics in class. The meso practice course has both theoretical and applied (field instruction/internship) components that students need to explore beyond this the education process and the classroom. I will use the Sakai learning management system as a tool for learning. I will attempt to assist you to develop skills required in the world of work, as facilitated by the teacher, needs to enable students to acquire three fundamental skills: critical thinking; life-long learning abilities and problem-solving strategies. To this end I will build on the platform of shared-knowledge, experience, skills and attitudes encouraged through cooperation, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Teaching methods: In designing the course I will stress the importance the application and integration of knowledge and skills acquired in meso practice. I would also encourage students to engage in reflection on the content and process of this course. Methods used to encourage these outcomes will include active engagement in face-to-face and online discussion, short written exercises, extensive reading and role-play in classroom simulations. Assessment of student understanding will be on-going and conducted at various points in the course.

Prescribed Text books
If you create the game, then you create the rules

Corey, Corey and Corey

Toseland and Rivas

The writers of one of the prescribed textbooks for this course, Toseland and Rivas, notes that group work is a, “goal directed activity with small treatment and task groups aimed at meeting the socio-emotional needs and accomplishing tasks” (2009, p. 2). The tasks and activities in meso practice are directed both at individual members of a group and to the group as a whole within a system of service delivery. These definitions illustrate the value of the social work method.

The course provides an introduction to the theories, skills and concepts in meso practice. An outcome of the course is for the student to have expanded and developed knowledge and skills on how groups are initiated, implemented, evaluated and terminated. The roles of the social worker in meso practice will be explored comprehensively as well as the concepts of power and leadership in small groups. The course is closely aligned with the aim for study in social work, which is “to develop knowledge and competence in social work methods and practice, within a social justice value base” (SACCSP, 2011, p3). Some aspects included in the course are: definitions of the social group work method; group work process; group dynamics; intervention skills; roles and expectations of group members; planning, recording; common problems in group work and termination. In this course student are expected to self-regulate their learning, reflect and work collaboratively in multiple spaces.

1. COURSE STRUCTURE

2.1 Dates
The course will be taught during a double slot on Mondays during the first and second teaching block [see table 1 and 2].

Table 1: Breakdown of Learning Time
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No of hours</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face contact with lecturer</td>
<td>21 hours</td>
<td>Attendance of lectures 2 per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorials</td>
<td>4 hour</td>
<td>1 group assignment and individual tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment and Tasks</td>
<td>25 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-study</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
<td>1 post on Sakai</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 reflection report</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>120 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods of student assessment
Continuous assessment 50%
Final Assessment 50%

2.2 Type and Principles of Learning
This course is structured to provide a collaborative and interactive learning environment for students using Participatory Learning Activities, the SAKAI Learning Management System and face-to-face interaction. There will be synergies created between the field instruction course and this course. Students’ experience and existing knowledge will be acknowledged and utilized where possible. The medium of teaching and learning will be lectures, class discussions, synchronous and asynchronous discussions and presentations. The course will make use of technology enhanced learning using the Sakai platform for discussion forums, YouTube videos and links to relevant sites. Students are requested to make use of the discussion forums and links to the internet. Discussion forum posts are expected to include insightful comments, personal views and references around issues that are relevant. It is recommended that when posting comments, consideration is given to two other posts made by other class members.

Students will be expected to:
- attend all lectures;
- be responsible for their own learning;
- read beyond the contents within the reading pack;
- engage in the discussion forums and online activities;
- participate fully in class through small group discussions and presentations;
- apply theoretical content presented to practice within a South African context;
- adhere to norms of punctuality
- show respect for classmates and teacher alike;
- ensure that posts on social media platforms conform to the principles and ethics of social work;
- manage conflict constructively;
- demand work from group members;
- show creative and original engagement in tasks and activities;
- work collaboratively with group members’ and
- consult with course teacher on a regular basis

2.3 Assessment
The course will be examined in June 2015 as part of the mid-year examination. See table 1 for more information.

1.3.1 Course weighting
On-going assessment will comprise of engagement in the on-line discussion forums on Sakai which is part of the group assignment, class-role play, and a class test towards the end of the course. The weighting of the assignment is 4.5% and the test is 4%. The total weighting of the course is 8.5%.

1.3.2 Assignment : Evaluation of Small Group Experience Assignment
This is a group assignment. Group members need to jointly allocate tasks to members, and individual members need to sign to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the tasks. The task schedule needs to be included in the final submission as well as weekly progress reports. Group members have to develop and sign a group contract to ensure compliance. Furthermore, all group members have to be allocated as least one task that will comprise 50% of their final mark allocated to them. When completing the assignment use must be made of relevant theory and reflections on the “small group experience in class and out-side” to assess the group functioning based on the following aspects:

1. the social condition the group was set up around;
2. the group dynamics and collaboration of members in class;
3. the behavior of functional and dysfunctional members without using names;
4. the manner in which conflict was managed;
5. the use of activities and ice-breakers;
6. the use of reflective diary entries;
7. the use of on-line group discussions;
8. the challenges and successes experienced; and
9. the recommendations and learning for future students taking this course

Include as an annexure the following:

- Group attendance register with letters from members regarding absence
- The group contract, weekly evaluation reports and task schedule
- Ten discussion forums posts that are best represent the activity of the group
- A group assessment rating of individual members based on criteria developed by the group Rating score 5 - excellent -1 -poor
- PowerPoint slides of your group
- A photograph of the group poster
- A activity log and
- The contents of a bag of tools for meso practice
- Make use of headings and sub-headings
- River of Life
- Photovoice

The assignment should have an introduction, body and conclusion. The use an academic writing style in which reference is made to theory and real life examples to substantiate your points of view is essential. You will be allowed to submit one draft on 23 March 2014 for feedback. Feedback will be provided 20 April 2015

DATE DUE: 4 May 2015 TIME: 12h00
LENGTH: 20 pages double spacing font size 12 Times New Roman (does not included the annexures); number your pages at bottom right hand corner, stable
GENERAL: APA referencing and cover page.
Marks: 100
Each person will receive an individual mark comprised of 50% - task conducted, 20% discussion forum posts submitted, 10% group project mark10% reflection diary comments 10% poster and presentation mark
2.4 Themes

This course will comprise of 21 lectures that will be broken up into the following six areas:

1.1. Principles and purposes of meso practice
1.2. Programme planning
1.3. Skills and techniques of facilitation
1.4. Meso processes and dynamics
1.5. Group roles
1.6. Stages of meso practice development

2. COURSE AIM

By the end of this course students should be able to make connections between ideas, content and values in meso practice and be able to communicate their understanding through engagement in class and online discussions, class room simulation activities, polls, written work and a presentation. In addition the student should be developed an extended understanding of knowledge, skills and values in meso practice

2.1 Knowledge

In terms of knowledge, the course aims to develop and extend the students understanding in order to:

- Describe the theory underpinning meso practice
- Demonstrate the skills to plan a group
- Demonstrate basic skills in group facilitation
- Recognise group processes and dynamics
- Understand the roles of the group worker
- Analyse the various phases in group development
- Produce a group assignment on an analysis of the small groups run during the course
- Understand the use of the self as an important instrument of intervention

2.2 Skills

In terms of skills the course aims to develop and extend the student’s understanding in order to:
• Plan and start a promotive or preventative group.
• Assess both individual and group functioning
• Facilitate the identification of individual and group goals.
• Develop skills on the recruitment of group members
• Apply skills needed to contract with group members
• Plan and execute group activities based on the nature and stage of the group
• Work collaboratively and cooperatively in members in the course group
• Ability to write coherent, logical, grammatically correct and well considered reports/memos whether for internal or external use
• Recognise humans as bio-psycho-social (BPS) beings, as the biological, psychological and social (including the spiritual) dimensions of life are inter-connected and mutually reinforcing

2.3 Values

In terms of values the course aims to develop and extend the student understanding to:
✓ Display social work values and principles when conducting meso practice.
✓ Apply the principles of social justice
✓ Show respect for human diversity
✓ Show respecting for the rights of people to inclusion in decision-making and in the planning and use of services;
✓ Respect the right to self-determination (with due consideration to potential structural constraints) and confidentiality, within legislative constraints.
✓ Recognise the inter-relatedness between the moral impulse and codes of ethics;
✓ Demonstrate an understanding that every person has the ability to solve their problems, understand the mutual inter-dependence among human beings and other living entities
✓ Develop a commitment to inter-generational equity and continuity (third generation rights) as advocated by ‘green’ social work

By the end of this course, students will be expected to be able to:
✓ have the skills to conduct a promotive and preventative group
✓ have the knowledge to plan, implement, assess and evaluate the group dynamics
✓ be aware of the basic values that are required to conduct a promotive and preventative group
✓ to produce a group assignment on the class-room conducted during the course
✓ produce an assignment that will include:
✓ conduct a critical assessment of the skills used
✓ the integration of theory and practice
✓ develop a number of reflections of the course learning’s and group dynamics
✓ conduct a critical assessment of the stages in a group
✓ conduct a critical assessment of leadership and power with a group

The Course Map
Lecture 1 & 2

Date: 16 Feb 2015

Said it’s time to step into the light and use every bit of the power I have inside

1. Introduction: Overview of the module - course outline
   i. Breaking up into class groups
   ii. Ice-breaker: The River of life - Participatory Learning Activities and reflection
      a. Draw your own river of life showing how did you come to be a student at this university
      b. Suggestions to include in your drawing are
         i. What are the things that have assisted you in your journey to being here
         ii. What are the things that have hindered the process
         iii. What are the important experiences that have assisted you in your journey to get here
   iii. Questionnaire – expectations of the course via survey monkey
   iv. History of group work
      a. Global
      b. South African
   v. Theoretical underpinnings of group work
      a. Systems theory [p. 56]
      b. Person-in the- environment [p. 58]
      c. Learning theory [p. 59]

Homework:
1. Complete your River of life
2. Take a picture and upload on the group discussion forum and add a 3 line reflection entry on this activity
3. Choose a name for your group
4. Choose a social condition
5. Develop a group leader roster
   a. The task of the group leader is to conduct an ice – breaker and discuss the river-of-life activity
   b. Keep a register
   c. Develop a report on the meso practice session and post on Sakai

Readings

Self study:
Each member to post one academic article relevant to the social condition chosen by the group

Text book readings:
Meso practice explored
1. Ice breaker and discussion of the River of life drawings
2. Definition and terms
3. Purpose of group work
4. Group work within the South African Context
5. Advantages and disadvantages of group work
6. Principles of group work
7. Values and ethics in group work
8. Models of group work

Lecture 5-6  Date: 2 March 2015
Types of groups
a. Task groups
b. Psycho-educational groups
c. Counselling groups
d. Psych-therapy
e. Brief groups (Corey & Corey, 2006, pp. 9-15)
   • Phases in group work
   • Establishing the group purpose
   • Recruiting and screening members
   • Practical considerations
   • Contracting and orientation
   • Identifying individual and group goals
   • Skills and techniques of facilitation
   • Group Processes and Dynamics
   • Group Roles

Home work
Group leader same as in session one
Members – post on the roles you see members playing in the group
Forming a group pp.147-165
Initial Stage pp.167-211

Lecture 7-8  Date: 9 March 2015
Every mountain needs someone to climb it

Stages of Group Development
a. Models and Stages
   i. Tuckman Model
   ii. Northen and Kurland Model
   iii. Corey and Corey Model
i. Forming a group
   a. What happens before groups begin
   b. Task and possible problems
   c. Role of the facilitator
ii. Initial stage
   a. Characteristics of this stage
   b. Task and possible problems
c. Role of the facilitator

d. Skills required

Homework:
Take the poll and see how much of the information covered you have remembered.
The Working Stage—pp.265-300

Lecture 9-10
Date:16 March 2015

Every ocean needs someone to dive in

Transition Stage
- Ice breaker
- Transition Stage
- Characteristics of this stage
- Task and possible problems
- Role of the facilitator
- Skills required
- Class test – Roles and planning a group

Lecture 11-12
Date: 23 March 2015

Working Stage
- Characteristics of this stage
- Task and possible problems
- Role of the facilitator
- Skills required

Homework

Lecture 13-14
Date: 13 April 2015

Every dream needs someone to wish it

Termination/Final Stage
Ice breaker—photovoice
Discussion on the pictures uploaded
  e. Reasons for ending
  f. Tasks and possible problems
g. Role of the facilitator  
h. Skills required  
i. Skills recommended by Schulman

Lecture 15-16  
Date: 20 April 2015  
Somebody’s got to be a star

The class presentation

Lecture: 17-18  
Date: 4 May 2015  
Said it is time to step into the light

Feedback on presentations Recap and summary Questionnaire completion  
TEST

Lecture: 19-20  
Date: 11 May 2015  
Photovoice exhibition

Lecture 21  
Date: 18 May 2015  
Closure

3. EXIT LEVEL OUTCOMES (ELO)
### 5.2 Category 2: Intervention: ELO 2 Assess client system’s social functioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Teaching &amp; Learning activities</th>
<th>Assessment tasks</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Assessments reflect the ability to undertake a comprehensive analysis of client system’s needs and strengths.</td>
<td>Reading Toseland and Rivas (2009, p.p 216-244) and Becker (2005) on assessment. Lectures and role play. Students demonstrate the use of socio-grams as tool in assessment. Online discussion forum posts Reflective diary entries that students will share with each other</td>
<td>Class test, response to discussion groups and an assignment will to evaluate understanding regarding the assessment process during that various group stages. The ELO will be assessed in the June and November exam</td>
<td>Collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Analyses of client systems’ needs and strengths reflect the application of appropriate theoretical frameworks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The student should be able to demonstrate through their written work and verbal discussions in class :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Assessments demonstrate the use of appropriate social work tools and data.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• a commitment to ethical practice in relation to clients, colleagues, practice settings, professional of social work and the broader community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Assessments clearly reflect the influence and impact of social circumstances and social systems on client systems’ functioning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• a commitment to culturally sensitive practice and respect for human diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Assessments result in, as far as is reasonable and possible, mutually agreed upon goals.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.7 Assessment processes and conclusions are recorded clearly, systematically and accurately.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 Exit Level Outcomes: ELO 3: Plan and implement appropriate social work intervention strategies and techniques at micro, meso and macro levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Teaching &amp; Learning activities</th>
<th>Assessment tasks</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Intervention plans take into account social systems impacting on</td>
<td>Reading Toseland and Rivas (2009) (p.p. 251-377)</td>
<td>Class test and assignment regarding the intervention of</td>
<td>Identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The student should be able to demonstrate through their written work and verbal discussions in class :</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
client systems’ functioning.
3.2 Intervention plans are based on assessment and the appropriate use of strategies and techniques to achieve identified goals.
3.3 Intervention strategies, models and techniques are based on comprehensive assessment of client systems.
3.4 Intervention strategies and techniques are purposefully aimed at the achievement of identified goals.
3.5 Interventions reflect the appropriate application of a range of skills (Range of skills includes, for example communication, problem-solving, networking, negotiation, mediation, advocacy and interviewing skills).
3.6 Intervention strategies and techniques are appropriately implemented in accordance with corresponding theoretical assumptions.
3.7 Interventions include the appropriate use of social work tools and data.

| and Corey and Corey (2006) on group process. (p. p103-287) Lectures and role play. Online discussion forum posts Reflective diary entries that students will share with each other | the group worker during that various group stages. Group presentation The ELOs will be assessed in the June and November exam. | Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation and community. Collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information. Demonstrate ethical and professional behaviour. |

5.3 Exit Level Outcomes: *ELO 7: Terminate social work intervention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Teaching &amp; Learning activities</th>
<th>Assessment tasks</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Cross-field Outcomes</td>
<td>Purpose (Knowledge, Skills and Values)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- a commitment to ethical practice in relation to clients, colleagues, practice settings, professional of social work and the broader community.
- a commitment to culturally sensitive practice and respect for human diversity
7.1 Wherever feasible, termination of services is mutually agreed to by the relevant parties and occurs in accordance with social work principles. 
7.2 Preparation of client systems for termination of services is timeous and realistic. 
7.3 Termination is based, as far as is reasonable and possible, on the achievement of goals and the client systems’ ability to function independently. 
7.4 All administrative aspects of termination are completed in accordance with professional requirements.

Reading Toseland and Rivas (2009) (p.p 377-422) and Corey and Corey (2006) on group process. (p. p267-285) Lectures and role play. Online discussion forum posts Reflective diary entries that students will share with each other

Class test and assignment regarding the termination stage. Group presentation The ELOs will be assessed in the June exam

Identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking. Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation and community. Collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information. Demonstrate ethical and professional behaviour.

The student should be able to demonstrate through their written work and verbal discussions in class:
  • a commitment to ethical practice in relation to clients, colleagues, practice settings, professional of social work and the broader community.
  • a commitment to culturally sensitive practice and respect for human diversity

4. TEACHING METHODS AND EXPECTATIONS

a. The medium of teaching and learning will be face to face lectures, technology enhanced learning using the Sakai learning management system, class discussions and role playing

b. See section 2.2. This course is structured to provide a co-operative learning environment for students in which reflection, connections and construction of knowledge is encouraged.

5. COURSE STRUCTURE AND OUTLINE

Table 2: Lecture dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>06/02/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>23/02/15</td>
<td>10-15-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Programme Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>02/03/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00 Skills and techniques of facilitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>09/03/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00 Group Processes and Dynamics</td>
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<td>9-10</td>
<td>16/03/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00 Group roles and Stages (Pre-group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>23/03/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00 Transition Stage I&quot; draft of assignment for feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>13/04/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00 Working Stage</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>20/04/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00 Termination Stage</td>
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<td>17-18</td>
<td>04/05/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00 TEST</td>
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<td>19-20</td>
<td>11/05/15</td>
<td>10-15-12-00 Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>18/05/15</td>
<td>10-15-11-00 Recap and exam prep</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The course will be offered mainly during a double lecture slot on Mondays (10h15-12h00) in the first and second teaching block. Thus, it will run from the 14th of February to the 12th of May. Tutorials on this course will be held on the dates discussed in class.

6. **ASSESSMENT**

The course will be examined in June 2015 as part of the Social Work Methods and Practice module (SOCW2004). Students will be required to write a test on **22/04/14**. The test, the group assignment and the discussion forum posts will make up **15% of** your year mark for the module. This course will also be examined in November as part of the Field Instruction in Social Work Practice II (SOCW 2001) exam.

7. **CONSULTATION**

Consultation times can be arranged by appointment. You can also send your inquiries to my email **Roshini.pillay@wits.ac.za**

8. **PRESCRIBED BOOKS**


9. **RECOMMENDED READING**


**NB:** The leader can never close the gap between him and the group. If he does, he is no longer what he must be. He must walk a tightrope between the consent he must win and the control he must exert.

*Vince Lombardi*

R. Pillay - January 2015

**Annexures**

1. Group Process Evaluation Form 2015
2. Work sheet on meso practice activities
3. Rubric for a discussion post
4. Rubric for the PowerPoint presentation
5. Jazz role play ice breaker