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SOCW 3306  
ALE Reflection

The Applied Learning Experience (ALE) allowed me to apply knowledge from within my discipline, in areas of Service Learning, Methods and Skills of Interviewing, and Policy. Service Learning I obtained skills combining academic knowledge with real world experience along with methods of working in a group. Therefore I was able to work productively with my group towards an agreed upon goals, and to effectively make changes whenever situations arose. I was able to communicate with our community partner when interviewing her about changes in policy through the skills I learned in Methods and Skills of Interviewing. Being genuine and knowledgeable in the interview created an atmosphere of cooperation. I became aware in Policy that policies drive changes that help to create resources, programs and influence the rights of the population we are involved with. Which allowed us to communicate with legislators in a policy change for Teen Court.

The Policy Analysis project required our group to identify and analyze a policy change within our agency, meet with legislators, and create a rally supporting this change. Knowledge acquired outside my discipline that I applied were BCIS, Special Problems of Youth, and Speech. The computer skills I gained through BCIS assisted my research for Teen Court policies and finding the appropriate legislators. Special Problems of Youth allowed me to gain insight about the population our group was involved with. Speech played an important role when addressing the different social work groups at Social Work Advocacy Day in Austin. The techniques I learned were beneficial during our rally presentation, remaining focused and effectively conveying our purpose.

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Extracurricular activities such as the volunteer work done in nursing homes where I help to coordinate activities with our church and the homes activities director has supported my efforts in organizing events for our rally and meeting with legislators. During my volunteer service at a recovery resource agency I gained knowledge in examining resources that were available for clients also what policies were in place that generated them. This gave me a better understanding how policies, programs, and the population are connected. Thus our population teens participating in the Teen Court program and how the policies benefit or hinder their progress.

The learning experience academically in policy through the Project Analysis Project, was broad in that it encompassed so many aspects of all the other disciplines. I was able to draw on the knowledge and skills from those courses and implement them in real life situations. Politically, even if as social workers we are inclined to work at the micro level, I understand that in order to best assist our clients we need to be aware of how policies influence the programs and resources that effect them. Globally, all things connect, and the work we do in one area can influence other areas. Change is brought about by research, advocacy, intervention, and education, all of these are included in the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of social work.

ALE Final Reflection Assignment

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Tarleton State University

### ALE Final Reflection Assignment

My Social Work Policy class this semester has provided me with a strong foundation with the knowledge of the history of social welfare and a real world experience. The use of classroom knowledge from major curriculum courses, community partner support, and a very informational student trip to Austin, Texas, allowed me to view the impact of current policy on the well-being of individuals and communities, within a social justice context.

This course developed the framework for my understanding of social welfare policies and programs and forces that have shaped their development within my community and the state of Texas. I was able to examine definitive issues of social policy and planning and social service program planning and delivery. The trip to Austin enabled me to see social action and advocacy first-hand and see the importance of it in the role of a Social Worker.

My Practice class benefited me in two primary social service areas. The first area is interviewing strategies. We discussed interviewing skills with application to different size client systems, with different populations, and with different cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender client populations. The second important area we focused on was the development of interpersonal practice skills especially those which empower others, the use of interventions, theories, and recording skills which are needed to work with individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations.

In my Working with at Risk Youth class and Human Behavior II classes I was exposed to number of interventions and the criteria necessary for choosing appropriate social work practice interventions. I was presented with the opportunity to identify and analyze my own individual style of working with different client populations. The importance of ethnic sensitive practice,

and working with diverse populations was explored through the use of group community projects and intervention trainings videos.

This semester has provided me with the ability to reflect on the importance of team collaboration and advocating within the community. I have an increased awareness of the world. I have witnessed how common it is for human issues that are basic to the quality of human life are often overlooked or ignored. As a Social Worker I will need to be able to provide services not only from the micro level but the macro level as well and working with my community partner has helped me identify the lack of equal opportunities to all populations and its impact on the disparity between populations. Social Work is a profession that advocates for social change and social justice. The central purpose of social work is to improve the social functioning of individuals. This all begins by advocating for social changes.

ALE Requirements

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In the policy class there was many new things that I learned about policies in the United States, this class change my view on how I view policy. A great experience was when we head to Austin and spoke with a representative or congressman. Our group spoke with Chief of Staff Michael Ramesy on behave of State Representative Ramon Romero. Our topic was about the lake of attends at town hall meetings and what he would recommend we do in order to attract the community to participate. He said that even for their event or meetings is hard to get people to attend but, he recommended to just call the household a couple weeks in advance and call the day before and call on the day of the meeting as a reminder. On top of giving advice on how to improve attends at the town hall meeting he taught a little on how policies are pass. Basically they make decision whether a policy passes or not all within a day they spend all day and night voting on policies. He wishes that they would have more time to analyze the policy and have a better understanding how new policies are going to affect certain people but that is time that they are not given. He said, that it's very important to the people to speak up and let their representative know how new policies are going affect them personally or affect their community and base on what the people say and how they will vote but if no one speaks up then they are just to vote on what they thing is right.

Based on what Mr. Ramesy told us made me realize that the voice of the people is powerful and important but many people do not think that way people think that their voice is not important nor will anyone will listen, which is basically the same mindset that I had. Having this conversation with him change my views about representatives and policies. Now I know that my voice does count and that advocating has power to make changes, advocating is something that as a future social worker I will be doing contently. Having this experiences will help me in my profession because now I have a better understand on how policies are pass and why policies



are need and it will help to better encourage people to speak up as well me speak up for them if needed.

ALE Reflection: Social Policy Class

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### ALE Reflection: Social Policy Class

Social Policy class primarily involved the student learning and effectively applying policy change at the macro level of state and local government not only in the classroom, but in the actual real life community setting. The student and other team members working in collaboration with their assigned community partner were required to research and address a particular policy issue affecting the population within the realm of their community partner. The current policy issue was centered and built upon the problem found and addressed during Service Learning in the previous fall semester. While researching for an effective way to improve by changing or adding to the existing policy, the student team members were expected to contact and arrange a meeting with their state officials and or legislators to meet and discuss the issue around the current policy.

The social work students traveled to Austin to meet with their state officials and or legislators to discuss the policy. For those students who were unable to meet with anyone that day in Austin were given the opportunity to sit in and listen to the conversation between the other team members and their chosen state officials. Also, during the Austin trip the students had the opportunity to stand up and speak about their policy at a student rally on the south steps of the capital building.

The social work students were also required to conduct a rally on campus with a guest speaker from their community centered on the policy they were researching. Students were required to gather signatures on a petition for support of the policy issue. Also, students conducted an in class debate over several issues in order to learn how to argue and advocate effectively for the issue at hand.

In summary, much was learned and gained in social policy class regarding how to research and advocate especially at the different levels of micro, mezzo, and macro levels but especially at the macro level in how effective policy change can better improve the quality and lives of all those involved in the community.

ALE SOCW 3306-10

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Tarleton State University

## ALE SOCW 3306-10

This paper will answer questions about social work experience as it relates to the major and minor curriculum of Tarleton State University Social Work Program and evaluate applied learning on an academic, political, social, cultural, and or economic environments.

### **Real world Experience**

When you think of real world experience, I think of actually being in the workforce until I took this class there is so much I have learned in practice 1 class I learned how to do a process recording which will assist me when I am out in the field and assisting clients, it made me understand how to accurately document interviews and keep in mind how you approach a client,

Social work policy class helped me to understand how to think outside the box when debating and trying to correct or conceive a policy in the social work field. When we participated in the rally and had to get signatures on the petition I assumed it was going to be easy, but that was not the case, I realized that some issues you want to advocate for are not really that important to others unless it affects them, people can't seem to look at the big picture when they write policy or propose a law or regulation.

When I attended the classes for human behavior one it reminded me of general psychology, but getting further involved with the class as well as the teacher who was in the real workforce you get a different opinion of what to do and what not to do. I have had some experience dealing with the general public as a and I can see that has prepared me to use the skills I know along with the skills I have learned to make it a little easier when I start my practicum next fall.

Another class that I attended helped me brush up on my interviewing skills and the teacher was very efficient in letting the class role play about doing an interview on a real person and as a result some real issues were addressed and discussed, when a good discussion and answers come out of a simple class assignment and you apply that to real life it helped me understand a little more about the field I am going into.

### **Applied Learning**

My views on culture were realized when I took the class social diversity, the first question the teacher asked was do you see color, I did not really get what she was saying at first then I began to understand that she was talking about how I see others and I began to see that I have some bias, that was a little unnerving because I consciously don't pay attention to others in that way but I see now it is my norm and because I know recognize this I can work to change my way of thinking, if I don't I will not be able to effectively help the clients I am entrusted with get the assistance they need.

Politics go hand in hand with bias and as we can see during this political race that certain policies and organizations will probably change and not necessarily for the better because of the assumptions of others when it comes to medical insurance and other government programs.

My concern was satisfied when we went to visit the state capitol in Austin Texas, the place where Texas politicians meet and write laws and bills to make programs available, there are so many politicians on both sides that seem to advocate for these programs.

I had an awesome time and I realized that even though I want to be a social worker I would not mind getting into presenting some of my thoughts and ideas on certain policies as an advocate, after all I am in these classes so I can make a difference.



Applied Learning Experience Reflection

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Social Welfare Policy class was an experience that I will apply to my social work career. Being in this class has enabled me to help to change things on a different level for people that cannot change things for themselves. Social work is about speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves for whatever reasons. My learning experience in Social Welfare Policy has opened doors to opportunities that I did not know exist. I have heard and seen people marching for causes and being radical for social change, but never had I seen it on this level. Having the hands on experience for me was just the beginning of greater things to come as I go through my journey assisting others to make their lives better than it was before they met me or before I decided to take on a social problem.

I was one of the many students that went to the state capital this semester; that was such a great eye opener for me. It showed me that I can do anything that I put my mind to with a guidance from my professor. Before this, I had never done anything like this to that extent. However, it changed me to the point of no return, meaning I cannot hide what I know now. I have been working on some policy changes that I want to see done soon for a target group of my passion and now that I have seen what it is and how policy works, I have been diligently researching the policies at hand. I will soon be in touch with the proper officials for a meeting for introduction and hopeful change. Had it not been for this class, I would not be thinking of changing things for my target group on this level. Despite the challenge, I look forward to my next policy class.

ALE: Policy SOCW 3306

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Tarleton State University

## ALE: Policy

Policy class was more proactive than originally expected. Originally, I thought of policy class as more academic, meaning that it would center more on the meaning of policy, perhaps debating about faux policies. The fact that we actually had to analyze a real policy that was associated with the paper from service learning and then go to the state capitol to speak with an actual representative, was an experience. The rallies we attended of fellow students, the rally we presented in group, were about actual policies. This is a class where critical thinking skills are paramount. Discussing, dissecting and debating policies is a clear necessity for all future social workers. Why? Because the work that most of us will enter, including private practice, will be tied to some policy that allows us the resources needed to help the communities we will be serving. Having the knowledge of the policy is two-fold: 1) Any agency that one works with will have certain criterion that dictates the limits or opportunities available. 2) Social workers are advocates, and if there is a need for change, understanding policy and how to affect change through policy provides forum for a social worker.

Although, it was a bit stressful pushing myself to put my critical thinking skills to use, it was well worth it. Personally, evaluating the process post-semester has made more sense to me as to why Policy class was necessary, not just for a course but for the field application and work we will be entering in, this knowledge will be valuable.