

PRAC SIS

PRAC SIS is a framework represented in grid form that can help social work students understand and use the concept of praxis in a thoughtful and explicit way (Alvarez, 2001). PRAC SIS is viewed as a macro alternative to a process recording, and one that follows the process through to its logical conclusion, including the delineation of strategies that can be used to improve and maximize the effectiveness of another such interaction in the future (Alvarez, 2001). PRAC SIS looks at a situation or interaction and attempts to decipher perceptions and assign logical implications for such responses. PRAC SIS strives to understand personal and situational limitations that can or do hinder growth/ progression of the relationship.

Students pursuing the Community Practice and Social Action concentration in the advanced year of the MSW degree program are required to submit 2-3 PRAC SIS per semester to the assigned faculty advisor.

EXPLANATION

When creating a PRAC SIS, the following format is used:

Practitioner Scenario: the description of the situation (overview) is requested first, the actions of the practitioner (general but in sequential order) are requested next, and the characteristics of the practitioner (predetermined to include various demographic variables) are requested last. All practitioner scenario sections are outlined in separate areas and are completed per the student's view of the situation, personal actions, and personal characteristics.

Perceived by Practitioner: the manner in which the student perceived or viewed the situation with reference to the three sections of the practitioner scenario column. This section should include such indicators as student feelings and preconceptions.

Perceived by Others (Evidence?): the manner in which the student felt the other party or the environment/situation responded with reference to the three sections of the practitioner scenario column. This section should include evidence such as body language, tone, and mannerisms.

Effects of: the positive or negative (sometimes a little of each) effects resulting from specific moments during the interaction with reference to the three sections of the practitioner scenario column.

Implications for Strategy and Practice: the outcome and/or learnings that resulted from specific moments during the interaction with reference to the three sections of the practitioner scenario column.

There are no requirements to the length, type of interaction, etc. of a PRAC SIS. It is solely choosing a point in time that will be analyzed to strengthen student growth and development. The PRAC SIS should be complete and thorough. An entire meeting or interaction does not need to be recorded; however, the portion that is used should include a "beginning, middle, and end phase" that completely addresses one moment in time.

PRACISIS: EXAMPLE

Practitioner Reflection on Actions, Characteristics and Situation, by Impact and Strategies

Practitioner Scenario	IMPACT			Implications for Strategy and Practice
	Perceived by Practitioner	Perceived by Others (Evidence?)	Effects of (Describe + or -)	
<p>SITUATION: (Briefly Describe)</p> <p>I am place with HAND (Helping Alliance for Neighborhood Development), an organization that tries to unite east side agencies and citizen groups to promote community development efforts. In my role with them, I was sent to meet with Mrs. Mabel Wright, Pres. of Parkview Block Club. Mrs. Wright (Mrs. W) is a 60-year old African American with a long history of community involvement.</p>	<p>-- nervous about this meeting. I am very new to HAND, and don't feel sure enough of its goals to represent it to others.</p> <p>--don't know this section of the city very well. I had some concerns about safety.</p> <p>--excited to be given a real assignment, and to be meeting with someone from the community.</p>	<p>--this young white woman doesn't know much about my community or her own agency.</p> <p>--Mrs. W. didn't seem sure that either of us could do anything for the other.</p> <p>(For both of these, Mrs. W. pretty much said what I wrote down. Her body language was also somewhat stiff and unwelcoming, although she has loosened up a lot by the end.)</p>	<p>--my uncertainty made it hard for me to relax and make a good case for the coalition (neg.)</p> <p>--since Mrs. W. seemed unimpressed with me, she was reluctant to make a commitment for her group to work with HAND (neg.)</p> <p>--we did get somewhere, and Mrs. W. is willing to come to a meeting and recruit some others. I think this was partly because I went to her home, and seemed sincere and well-meaning, if uninformed! (pos.)</p>	<p>-- I wish I had gone there with a community member, preferably African American.</p> <p>-- I should have been better prepared in terms of what I wanted from the meeting, and what I was asking her for.</p> <p>--I should even have known more about Mrs. W.--she has done a lot, and probably would have been pleased I had been able to talk about it.</p> <p>-- I think it would have been better if I had some information to leave with her--brochures or flyers about the organization and the upcoming meeting.</p>

ACTIONS: (of Practitioner)	Perceived by Practitioner	Perceived by Others (Evidence?)	Effects of (Describe + or -)	Implications for Strategy and Practice
<p>--I called Mrs. W. to request to meet with her.</p> <p>--I explained the HAND program almost as soon as I got inside Mrs. W.'s house.</p> <p>--I first refused, but then and accepted coffee and cookies from Mrs. W.</p>	<p>--I thought I did a pretty good job of explaining myself and HAND. I was surprised when Mrs. W. suggested we meet at her house.</p> <p>--I did pretty much what I had planned. I think it was too businesslike, though. We had to backtrack to more personal chit chat that probably should have come in the beginning.</p> <p>--I don't usually drink coffee in the afternoon, and also didn't want Mrs. W. to go to any trouble.</p>	<p>--Mrs. W. must have thought I sounded trustworthy and as if my group had something to offer since she agreed to meet with me and invited me to her home.</p> <p>--I think Mrs. W. thought I was too cold and jumped into things too fast. She steered us into "getting to know each other" talk after my abrupt beginning.</p> <p>--based on her reaction to my initial refusal, I would say that Mrs. W. saw my initial refusal as rude, and possibly as a reflection on her hospitality.</p>	<p>-- the call got me an appointment (pos.)</p> <p>--I think I made a bad impression by my task-oriented beginning (neg.), but we were able to get on a more personal footing and undo some of that later (pos.)</p> <p>--refusal (neg.); Later acceptance and enthusiastic comments (pos.); Mrs. W. is clearly very proud of her cooking skills, and is glad to share them</p>	<p>--I think this went fine. It might have been even better if someone that Mrs. W. knew from the community had told her that I would be calling and vouched for me.</p> <p>-- next time, I will pay more attention to building rapport and establishing a relationship before trying to get work done. I have to remember that this is important at all times--even if the work I'm doing is not clinical therapy! People have to learn about me and trust me before they will want to work with me.</p> <p>--my boss always tells me that food is a basic component of organizing-- I guess that applies in all kinds of ways! It's important to let people offer of themselves...the sharing here is not all one direction.</p>

CHARACTERISTICS: (of Practitioner)	Perceived by Practitioner	Perceived by Others (Evidence?)	Effects of (Describe + or -)	Implications for Strategy and Practice
--Race	European American	White	--I am sure that this helped increase the distance that was already there due to my age and my not being local (neg.)	--again, I wish that I had gone with an African American, whether another student or not. Next time I will try to arrange this.
--Gender	Female	Female	--I think it would have been even more awkward if I had been a male. On the other hand, Mrs. W. might have taken a male more seriously (mostly pos.; some neg.)	--especially with a home visit like this, I think there are some advantages to having a female with a female. I could probably build a relationship by talking more about "woman" things. If I can get a partner to work with, however, a gender mix might be a good idea. It also might help me feel more comfortable going around in areas I don't know.
--Age	Mid-twenties, with some work and life experience	Very young (I think this was obvious from the way she talked to me and even from some of her comments. She has some grandchildren who are almost my age!)	--I think that Mrs. W. saw me as very young and inexperienced. This probably made it harder for her to have faith in me and HAND (neg.) --on the plus side, I was probably non-threatening (pos.)	--I am not quite sure what to do about this. One thing is to make sure that she knows some of the things I've done, to maybe counteract the idea that I am totally inexperienced. Another thing might be just to go with it, to a certain extent. I certainly need to learn a lot about the community, and it will be great if she is willing to help teach me.

CHARACTERISTICS: (of Practitioner)	Perceived by Practitioner	Perceived by Others (Evidence?)	Effects of (Describe + or -)	Implications for Strategy and Practice
--Socioeconomic Status/Class	Middle class	Middle class or upper middle class? Enrolled in a very expensive school (She made comments about how much the school costs)	--this probably created another barrier, even though Mrs. W. is probably middle class (her late husband had a good factory job), and pretty well-off for her community (neg.)	--I think it's good to downplay the difference here. It's hard to get around the fact that my university program is extremely expensive. I made a mistake by being overly "sensitive" and not asking about what her children or grandchildren are doing. She was proud to tell me about their various degrees and jobs. I need to find more open-ended ways to bring up those kinds of topics.
--Physical Abilities	No obvious physical disabilities except wearing glasses for vision impairment	Able bodied	--no problem with this, I don't think. Mrs. W. uses a cane sometimes and had some trouble getting up and down stairs (neutral)	--Mrs. W.'s (mild) disability was a good reminder of being careful about meeting locations, etc. Also, about learning how to be sensitive and helpful to someone with a disability, without "helping" them unnecessarily.
--Mental Abilities	Mentally able, high functioning	Smart and well- educated	--Mrs. W. is clearly an intelligent woman, but our knowledge bases are different. She seems to think I must be smart to be at my school (pos.?)	--I must remember that sometimes my mental abilities will have nothing to do with how seriously I am taken, and may even be linked to things that people find alienating. Also, there will be a range of mental abilities and skills in the community...we need to pay attention to things like varying abilities to read.

CHARACTERISTICS: (of Practitioner)	Perceived by Practitioner	Perceived by Others (Evidence?)	Effects of (Describe + or -)	Implications for Strategy and Practice
--Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	Heterosexual	--probably easier than if I were perceived as a lesbian. Mrs. W. said something that was mildly homophobic, and I am not sure how well she would relate to anyone she perceived as not heterosexual (pos.)	--I need to be thinking about how to promote diversity in areas where people in the community may not be too tolerant. Also, how to respond to comments that are homophobic, etc., without alienating people but without tacitly supporting discrimination.
--Religion	Jewish (non-practicing)	Some form of Christianity	--Mrs. W. is a strong church member. I was evasive about religion. It would probably have helped create a bond if I could have claimed a strong affiliation to her religion or one close to it (neg.)	--this is something I have to figure out. I wish now I had just explained about my Jewish upbringing and where I am with it. I guess I was partly concerned about her possible response. I know that many people still have anti-Semitic attitudes, and I wasn't mentally prepared it have to deal with that.
--Ethnicity	My grandparents were German and Russian Jews, my cultural roots are important in my family	European American	--most people think of race and ethnicity as the same, especially for "whites." I expect Mrs. W. did, too (neg.)	--a first visit didn't seem like the time for it, but if we get closer, Mrs. W. might be interested in some of my family history and my relationship with my grandparents.

CHARACTERISTICS: (of Practitioner)	Perceived by Practitioner	Perceived by Others (Evidence?)	Effects of (Describe + or -)	Implications for Strategy and Practice
--Other (Specify): --Politics/Social Beliefs -- --	Liberal/progressive	Liberal/conservative	--Mrs. W. made some comments that made me think she expects all students at my school to be "liberal". However, she didn't seem concerned that I might not agree with homophobic remarks (neg.?)	--I need to figure out how to be honest with people-- and true to my beliefs-- without alienating them. I also have to be able to honor and respect the values and beliefs of the people I am working with. How do I do this when I am conflicted about them? Lots of food for thought here.