



**P R A C S I S: Practitioner Reflection on Actions,
Competencies/Characteristics and Situation, by Impact and Strategies**

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

Students pursuing the innovation in community, policy and leadership concentration in the advanced year of the MSW degree program are required to submit 5 completed PRACSIS frameworks per semester to the assigned faculty field liaison.

1. EXPLANATION

When creating a PRACSIS, use this format:

Practitioner Scenario: The description of the situation (overview) comes first. This should include the expected goal or outcome of the situation. The second row should describe the actions of the practitioner (general but in sequential order). In the third row, list the social work competencies practiced in the practitioner scenario. Finally, share the characteristics of the practitioner relevant to the scenario. All practitioner scenario sections are outlined in separate areas and are completed through the student's view of the situation, personal actions, and personal characteristics.

Impact - Positive or Negative as Perceived by Student or Others: the manner in which the student perceived or viewed the situation, with reference to the four sections of the practitioner scenario column. This section could include such indicators as student feelings and preconceptions. The manner in which the student felt the other party or the environment/ situation responded, with reference to the four sections of the practitioner scenario column. Indicate the relevant similarities and differences in social characteristics between you and others in the interaction, remembering that what might not seem relevant to you might be relevant to someone else, and vice versa. Try to think about relevance from dominant and non-dominant perspectives. This section should include evidence such as body language, tone, and mannerisms (including how things are said as well as what is said). Include effects resulting from specific moments during the interaction, with reference to the four sections of the practitioner scenario column. Describe how these factors, and your similarities and differences, may have influenced the interaction.

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

There are no requirements as to the length, type of interaction, etc. of a PRACSIS, as long as it is complete and thorough. The process is solely choosing a point in time to be analyzed to strengthen student growth and development. 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 a significant moment in time.



Table 1: P R A C S I S Template

Practitioner Scenario	IMPACT Positive or Negative, as Perceived by Student or Others	Implications for Strategy and Practice
SITUATION (briefly describe):		
ACTIONS (of Practitioner):		
COMPETENCIES Practitioner Used <i>(Delete Those Not Used):</i> 1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior 3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice 4. Engage in practice-informed research and research informed practice 5. Engage in policy practice 6. Engage, 7. assess, 8. intervene, and 9. evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities 10. Analyze the impact of the urban context on a range of client systems, including practice implication.		
CHARACTERISTICS of Practitioner: (e.g., race, gender identity, sexual expression, age, socio-economic class/status, physical abilities, mental abilities, religion, ethnicity) 2. Engage diversity and difference in practice		



Table 2: Example P R A C S I S Advocacy for K-12 Students

<p>Practitioner Scenario: <i>Advocacy for K-12 Students</i></p>	<p>IMPACT Positive or Negative, as Perceived by Student or Others</p>	<p>Implications for Strategy and Practice</p>
<p>SITUATION (briefly describe): My supervisor and I met with the assistant superintendent of the local school district and one of his staff members, a person who is responsible for community initiatives. We were meeting in order to propose a collaborative project with them, gauge their interest, and see if we could find overlapping outcomes that would make the project beneficial for both of us. I had a lot of detail planned out, since I had been researching and developing the plan, but we didn't want to overwhelm them with detail or come as if the project was a done deal and they would just rubberstamp it. We had to figure out how to present the idea without looking like we weren't serious but also without foreclosing other possibilities that we hadn't thought of, and that would be attractive from their point of view. We hoped to come away with a commitment from them as our partners in this project or to understand that it was not something that would work with them. I think that we did come away with</p>	<p>We were very welcomed by the assistant superintendent, who gave us a lot of time, to the delay of his later meetings and other phone calls. The community liaison staff member was more impatient and direct, raising some goals to focus on from his perspective. My supervisor was slightly impatient with the side-tracks that the AS took us down, but she did not let it show too much. I was interested to hear everything that the AS was telling us, for other reasons: I was trying to think through the complication of running a school district like this one, which is predominantly Black, with low test scores and a lot of truancy. In addition, this district is position next to a white, wealthy, high-performing district.</p>	<p>It is always a challenge for me to figure out how much details or data another person wants to needs. I believe I was able to work on this through the meeting, though what worked for this meeting may not work for another. But the process that my supervisor and I worked out, that we would research the area, decide the focus based on need and based on what makes sense for the mission of the organization, address it with the board, and then reach out to possible partners, made sense, even if it created the possibility of needing to start from scratch if the response of the partner organization had been different.</p>



<p>Practitioner Scenario: <i>Advocacy for K-12 Students</i></p>	<p>IMPACT Positive or Negative, as Perceived by Student or Others</p>	<p>Implications for Strategy and Practice</p>
<p>that – they wanted to partner with us, and proposed some ideas for an other age group that we had not considered.</p>		
<p>ACTIONS (of Practitioner): I mostly listened at the beginning, letting my supervisor present the ideas to the district folks and taking notes. Because I was able to listen to both parties, as the meeting went on I was able to jump in to clarify where I thought my supervisor and the assistant superintendent were not quite understanding each other, or areas where I thought maybe the district and our organization would have different goals, so that we could clarify those in the meeting.</p>	<p>I think that my help to clarify points between my supervisor and the AS were useful. I at times felt that both my supervisor and I were perhaps considered not to really know what the students in the district needed, and that we needed to show that we had researched and thought carefully about community dynamics, but also that we did not have the answers and were there willing to follow the district’s lead in terms of highest need.</p>	<p>I think it might have been useful if I had been able to contribute more to the meeting, perhaps present a portion of our proposal, and that is something that I can raise with my supervisor.</p>
<p>COMPETENCIES Practitioner Used (<i>Delete Those Not Used</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior 3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice 4. Engage in practice-informed research and research informed practice 6. Engage practice with organizations 10. Analyze the impact of the urban context on a range of 	<p>Ethics, human rights, and social, economic and environmental justice competencies were really important in this encounter because we needed to be humble about our position – as white women from a well-funded national organization – vis-à-vis the district, which is impoverished and largely non-white. It was important to show that we had a consciousness about race specific to the region. Using research in developing the</p>	<p>I very much saw the value in intentionally presenting an anti-racist, race-conscious presence at this meeting. It helped our partners to trust and want to work with us that we clearly had considered the implications of bringing largely white, largely middle-class volunteers to a largely Black, largely poor school district. When the district proposed adding something that would create the opportunity for students in the district to give back and</p>



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<p>client systems, including practice implication.</p>	<p>program was important to us, but it seemed to be less important to the district. They seemed to be happy to go with what they feel to be true, working in their district every day, without checking those assumptions against whatever data could be amassed.</p>	<p>we readily accepted it and worked it into the program, I think we gained a lot of their trust.</p>
<p>CHARACTERISTICS of Practitioner: I am white, middle-aged, female-presenting, married heterosexual middle class woman. I am considered non-disabled.</p> <p>(e.g., race, gender identity, sexual expression, age, socio-economic class/status, physical abilities, mental abilities, religion, ethnicity)</p> <p>2. Engage diversity and difference in practice</p>	<p>Because I am older than most MSW students and have worked in professional settings, my role was not immediately apparent to the district folks. My supervisor had to clarify that I was an intern. This was slightly awkward for me, since I am already a bit self-conscious about returning to school at my age. Additionally, I knew the district staff member from another context, but it took us both awhile to place each other, leading to a little awkwardness that was clarified once I could place him and explain why he recognized me.</p>	<p>I made a connection with the AS because he graduated from Wayne State, and is a big WSU supporter. I also made a connection with the staff member since we know each other from the gym. Several mutual friends of ours including the gym owner are Black, and I believe that this placed me as a white ally in the eyes of the staff member (who is Black himself). These factors served to break the ice and make us into more trustworthy partners.</p>



Table 3: P R A C S I S Example Mobilizing for Better Public Transit

<p>Practitioner Scenario <i>Mobilizing for Better Public Transit</i></p>	<p>IMPACT Positive or Negative, as Perceived by Student or Others</p>	<p>Implications for Strategy and Practice</p>
<p>SITUATION (briefly describe): This PRACSIS analyzes an interaction between bus rider Sheila Wright. Ms. Wright was referred to be by another rider for a short interview. My organization, is looking for rider stories to integrate into our transit advocacy campaigns. I’ve been told Ms. Wright is an avid rider, works in data-collection, and is already engaged in transit advocacy. My intent here is not to conduct a formal interview, but to simply establish a working relationship. More detailed, narrative questions can be asked later, after rapport has been established.</p>	<p>Overall, the conversation with Ms. Wright went as intended, but was not without obstacle. From our original email correspondence, I framed our conversation as “hearing her story”, which in turn led Ms. Wright to believe I was conducting a formal interview. So once I began with a more conversational approach, she was caught off guard. She anticipated telling me her “whole transit story”. While understanding the details of Ms. Wright’s experience is valuable, I then clarified that I was more intending this to be an introductory conversation than a full interview. After clarifying, Ms. Wright was much more at ease, and spoke with more candor.</p>	<p>This dynamic between Ms. Wright and myself highlights the practice need of clearly communicated intent. Even though both Ms. Wright and myself are invested in transit and both do advocacy work, there was still confusion about the intent and “desired outcome” of our conversation. My prior email language did not properly communicate to Ms. Wright that this was a “getting to know you” conversation, not a full extractive interview for publication. This confusion reveals that I should have been more focused and specific in my initial outreach to Ms. Wright. Social workers should always think about how they frame their “ask” of a person, and at what point in the working relationship they make their “ask”.</p>
<p>ACTIONS (of Practitioner): My actions during this interaction were those of a community outreach coordinator, although I was interpreted as an interviewer. I was asking Ms. Wright open-ended and clarifying</p>	<p>During previous outreach conversations for my field agency, I had previously conducted them as interviews. I was entirely focused on the individual and collecting the nuance of their story. However, throughout</p>	<p>The disjuncture between my actions and intended perception with Ms. Wright underscores how important it is for social workers to consider how their behaviors are interpreted, even on a very detailed level.</p>



<p>Practitioner Scenario <i>Mobilizing for Better Public Transit</i></p>	<p>IMPACT Positive or Negative, as Perceived by Student or Others</p>	<p>Implications for Strategy and Practice</p>
<p>questions, while also listening and taking light notes. My intention was to get a broad sense of her ridership and gauge her sense of interest in working together on bus advocacy. I was not trying to formally interview Ms. Wright, and therefore the types of questions/language I used should have made that distinction more obvious to her.</p>	<p>the semester, I discovered that riders were less responsive to being just asked questions, and were more responsive when there was more back and forth conversation. By introducing my own perspective into the conversation, riders felt more personally addressed, and ultimately provided stronger answers.</p> <p>While internally this change in my behavior was clear, my goals were not clear to Ms. Wright. My actions at the start read like a formal interview (“so, tell me about yourself”), which adds pressure. Ultimately taking the time to establish rapport first and then schedule a more in-depth interview is a good strategy, but said strategy needed to be reflected more in my actual actions here.</p>	<p>Interpreting the conversation with Ms. Wright as an “interview” has major implications for how I should frame the dialogue and how I ask questions. It would have been a stronger practice decision to instead explicitly clarify to Ms. Wright at the beginning that this was <i>not</i> a formal interview, rather than later clarifying.</p> <p>In this interaction, one can observe how important initial outreach, conversation framing, and clear communication can be, especially when speaking with community stakeholders and residents.</p>
<p>COMPETENCIES Practitioner Used (<i>Delete Those Not Used</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior 3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice 4. Engage in practice-informed research and research informed practice 5. Engage in policy practice 	<p>The most relevant Practitioner Competencies used here are 1). “ethical and professional behavior”, 6-9). “engage, assess, and intervene with individuals”, and 10). “the impact of the urban context on a range of client systems.”</p>	<p>The Practitioner Competencies I used here, (1, 6-9, and 10) all speak to how a practitioner’s actions and language must be sensitive to the situational and individual context. When talking with a community stakeholder for the first time, a social worker has to let go of all pre-conceived thoughts or biases. Even thoughts of strategy or</p>



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<p>6. Engage, 7. assess, 8. intervene, and 9. evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities 10. Analyze the impact of the urban context on a range of client systems, including practice implication.</p>	<p>My behavior, while ethical and professional, needed more internal consideration to be aligned with my professional intent. As a bus rider and as someone who works in the city, Ms. Wright has a range of urban contexts she interacts with. Being able to capture all of her story in one conversation is not feasible, so I instead tried to form a sense of familiarity. From there, my hope is that Ms. Wright would speak with me again, and then we could elaborate on her urban bus experience and explicitly discuss how riding the bus impacts her day-to-day life.</p>	<p>the related project can detract from the conversation at hand. Instead, social workers must be rooted in the individual, and respond to what input they are providing. I could tell Ms. Wright has a dense, multi-angled perspective. Rather than make her feel pressured to “cover all the bases” right then and there, I instead wanted her to feel comfortable with me first. From there, we could transition into the more dense discussion of transit inequities and her experiences. In initial conversations, making the client feel at ease and maximizing their responsibility is the ultimate goal. In the future, I will reference this competencies before meeting with someone for the first time, as to keep ethical and strategic priorities at the front of my thinking.</p>
<p>CHARACTERISTICS of Practitioner: (e.g., race, gender identity, sexual expression, age, socio-economic class/status, physical abilities, mental abilities, religion, ethnicity) 2. Engage diversity and difference in practice</p>	<p>I am a 26 year-old, middle-class, college-educated, cis-gendered white male. I identify with “he/him/his” pronouns. I am of full physical and mental capacity. I have no religious affiliation. Ms. Wright is also a college-educated white person. She identifies with “she/her/hers”. More detailed aspects of Ms.</p>	<p>From my perspective, there was no immediate conflict caused by identity when talking with Ms. Wright. She was generally upbeat, responsive, and interested in hearing about my work. However, even though I sensed no conflict, that does not mean Ms. Wright perceived the same. I cannot</p>



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	Wright's identity were not made apparent.	be sure what past biases or negative experiences she may have had with cis-gendered white men. Therefore, as an ethical social worker, it is my responsibility to minimize my self-disclosure. Instead, best practice would be to inquire about and validate Ms. Wright's identity. Asking about pronouns or basic background information not only builds rapport, but also provides first insight into how an individual provides first insight into how an individual may perceive the topic at hand (public transit).