

ALE Reflection

SOCW 4312-10 Practice II

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The Practice II class has been an extraordinary chance to see how the use of what we have been learning can be best put to use in the field. Understanding the workings of the organizations and communities and how they can influence and work together or can work against each other is important for the social worker. To have an idea of how to advocate and offer services and most importantly make changes through different levels of the micro, mezzo and macro practices helps to better prepare the social worker when entering into the profession.

The knowledge that is gained through this class helps provide a guide to the social worker as to how best to navigate the organization and work to make changes that can benefit the populations that are served. Knowing how to better deal with ethical situations or concerns and apply critical thinking skills will only make the social worker a better service provider to the clients.

What I have gained from this class is a better understanding of how important being competent in the field is imperative to offering the most effective services to the client base. The need to conduct one's self as a professional sets high standards for those serving and helps to ensure that the clients are given the best opportunity for change. The knowledge learned in this class helps the student to apply ethical principles and to help guide while applying critical thinking skills. This course also works to teach the student how to engage and recognize diversity while gaining self-awareness to help eliminate personal biases. Reminding the student that many times the social worker can learn from those that they serve about such things as diversity.

The global awareness that I have gained as a result of this class is that it is of the utmost importance to view those served as simply people. Not whatever their need might be, or the physical or mental health issue is that they are living with, just simply as a person. We all have

stories of how we have come to be where we are, they are just different roads of life. Simply we need to treat each and every person with dignity and respect because we all have value and serve a purpose here on this earth.

ALE Journal- Practice 2

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## ALE Journal- Practice 2

This course was an excellent learning experience that allowed me to use knowledge that was acquired through previous courses. Practice 2 was built off previous courses such as Service Learning, Policy and Research. In Service Learning we were linked with community partners that would join us through the academic journey. My group was linked with Sharon Herrera, the founder of LGBTQ Saves. This is an organization that provides a safe haven for LGBTQ youth of Tarrant County. Over the past two years our group has helped the organization build their website, promote their social media pages as well as assist with various community events. The lack of support for the LGBTQ youth in Tarrant County prompted the organization and our group to seek further assistance. Our group developed a project plan, conducted research to assess the need and prepared a grant proposal.

In this class my group and I prepared a grant proposal for the David Bohnett Foundation. The grant was for three thousand dollars in efforts to assist LGBTQ Saves with future community events. The knowledge gained through conducting research played a vital role in preparing the grant proposal. We had to provide supporting evidence for the need of the grant. Other courses such as Policy and Human Behavior helped prepare us for such a task. In terms of Human Behavior, we were able to incorporate the stages of development and how LGTBQ youth are affected by the lack of support. Policy helped us understand the need on a macro level.

Overall, the course has provided us the tools to succeed professionally. The grant writing process gave us the practice that can later be incorporated in a professional environment such as a non-profit organization. The professor provided students with excellent information as well as incorporated “real life” scenarios. Using such scenarios enabled the students to utilize their critical thinking skills as well as incorporate knowledge from previous courses.

Applied Learning Experience

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This learning experience enabled the student to fully apply what was learned in the classroom to their real world experience in their internship, their full time job, and their future social work job. The student learned how to fill out an IRB and the entire process that goes into attempting to get that approved. The student faced some setbacks in not having their research project approved but, through the encouragement and guidance of her professor, adapted, adjusted, and ultimately learned how to overcome this particular setback. The student and her colleagues were then still able to create and be involved in the grant process for their community partner LGBTQ S.A.V.E.S.

Professional development is pertinent to success as a social worker, especially within the organizations and communities that social workers serve. Tarleton student social workers are taught the importance of self-awareness from the very first class they take. Without knowing oneself, social workers will not be able to continuously monitor their own thoughts, attitudes, and reactions (Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. 2015) in order to control one's personal bias and maintain professional relationships with clients.

Communicating effectively plays a large role in being a social worker. Simple encouragements offered to clients by social workers by "emphasizing accomplishments and stressing personal qualities" (Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. 2015) is positive feedback that "helps to provide a constructive versus destructive context for that communication" (Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. 2015). From clients to bosses to fellow employees, social workers are in constant contact with the public. Without the knowledge and values taught by Tarleton about how to properly engage with others, social worker students would not be able to efficiently serve the populations they engage with on a daily basis upon graduation.

The student feels that the greatest gift Tarleton bestowed upon her and her fellow

students were the opportunities that the internships and community partners gave them. It was a chance to develop real life skills and apply them to social work situations on a micro, mezzo, and macro level. The student feels fully confident that she will take skills like active listening, effective communication, team building, self-determination, and upholding the dignity and worth of any individual she comes into contact with because of what she has learned through the experiences granted to her by Tarleton.

The student values that social work is founded on group work and that change is constant in social work. That is why it is crucial for social workers to be prepared in every aspect. In order to advocate successfully for their clients, they must always be well informed and interested in pursuing the best avenues possible for their clients. Agencies are built upon social workers. Therefore, it is up to social workers to effect change and implement macro interventions where needed. This is one of the many reasons why the student believes she will be able to contribute more meaningfully to a global society; because of all the life skills and lessons she learned in the classroom setting. She believes she will be able to effectively demonstrate a good work ethic, an ability to continuously adapt and overcome any situation she may encounter, and assist in rebuilding the world and affecting change the best way she possibly can. Practice II gave the student insight to social work on a macro level. It allowed her to formulate skills that will help her to “apply an ethical reasoning strategy to make principled decisions” (Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. 2015) in her future endeavors working with clients.



Reference:

Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. (2015). *Generalist practice with organizations and communities* (6th ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage.

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Essential knowledge acquired in Practice 2 was more detailed knowledge of ethics and ethical dilemmas. This knowledge has helped me in my internship, dealing with my intern supervisor and will continue to help me in my career. Other classes taught us about ethics but Practice 2 extended our knowledge of the subject. "Using Supervision" in our book also not only helps us in our current situation, being an intern, but knowledge gained can be applied to our regular jobs too as we have supervisors there. I have learned to be more organized when meeting with my intern supervisor which allows our time together to be used more efficiently.

In an IO psychology class I took, I learned about temperament character intelligence. I am both a Provider and Protector. Practicing logistics is valued over being tactful and diplomatic for both Providers and Protectors. Preserving teamwork, being detail oriented and not being isolated from others are important to Providers. Their minds bounce from one topic to another easily. Providers are also highly sensitive and do not hesitate to show our emotions. We gravitate towards service occupations and are not likely to cause our bosses grief due to our positive attitude towards respect, rules and regulations. Due to our soft hearted nature, we are more likely to take an informative role over a tough-minded role. Our leadership style is do everything ourselves instead of having others do their own work. As a Provider, we are great at upholding teamwork and cooperation. Knowledge about myself can help me understand how to apply myself in a business setting if I know my strengths and weaknesses.

Participating in the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition 2016 Homeless Count was interesting and eye opening to my own preconceptions and assumptions. I met Leonard, a 43 year old white male, behind the Microtel Inn & Suites on N. Cross Blvd in North Richland Hills. I spoke to him and found out he was homeless and willing to answer some questions for us. I did not feel comfortable asking all of the questions on the survey such as questions about being

abused. I felt uncomfortable asking those type of questions because I felt that it was personal and none of my business. I assumed he might not want to answer those questions but realized I had nothing to base that on. I did not know him or know what he was comfortable with. I placed my own feelings ahead of his due to that I wouldn't have been comfortable answering questions like that if it was me being asked. Although I did not ask him all of the questions, I did find out some basic info. He's been homeless for about a year but this was not the first time he had been homeless. He earned money by working at a car wash. We asked him if he wanted something to eat or a bottle of water and he said no. He motioned to a box at his feet, said he had food, water and everything he needed. I told him I had a list of places that could possibly help him (referring to the Pocket Pal) along with their addresses and phone numbers but he shook his head and told me he probably knew all their phone numbers. I assumed that because he was homeless and did not have a lot then he would gladly take what we offered him and I was surprised when he said no. I placed my assumptions on him and before we left I asked again if he wanted anything. Again he told me no.

I think the homeless count has implications on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Micro practice can affect an individual homeless person. If Leonard had taken the Pocket Pal and contacted an agency from the list then it is possible he could have been assigned a case manager that could work with him to find permanent housing. Mezzo practice is affected as the community and agency is involved. Groups of teams go into different communities to find homeless people that are in a specific community. Last year 28 people were counted in the homeless count. The number of homeless people in an area can impact the way an agency works. For example, if this year the number count is twice what it was last year then the agency would need to figure out what caused this influx and what services they can provide to the

homeless community. This count is included in a national count that is used to measure the progress being made in ending homelessness which affects the macro practice level. The government or individual agencies would need this information to determine changing trends, extent, and nature of homelessness. I think this experience will help me contribute more meaningful to a global society by reminding me that homelessness affects every city. I need to be aware of what issues not only affect my community but also the country I live in.

My Learning Experience at Tarleton State University

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The journey at Tarleton State University has been more than an educational experience for the student. The non-traditional path that the student elected has fostered her the opportunity to build professional relationships that are lasting and heart felt. The first day was a fearful event for the student. But, she was not alone. She was afforded the chance to meet some very unique and diverse people that would be the foot stool to her future. The set of colleagues that the student started out with were in every essence her dream team. There were times that the student felt the desire to give up but, there was work to do. And, failure was not part of the plan. Knowledge became a visual endeavor. The student took her studies from the classroom to the outside world. The student and her colleagues partnered with the Newcomer International Academy. The Newcomer International Academy is a school that caters to refugee students that are struggling to integrate in the United States. The students with the school until the last and final semester.

In service learning the student and her colleagues were introduced to a population that they did not know existed, the refugees. It was fascinating yet, heart breaking, to discover that a population evolved that were unsure of their basic needs being met. A people that had to fight and flee in desperate attempt to live. The concept of struggle had not been so evident until the student and her team gathered together to aid the refugees in pursuing a life of freedom. Complaining about daily struggles were longer a part of the student's vocabulary after she embarked on her voyage in aiding the refugees. During the service learning course the student and her fellow colleagues discovered that language was the most strenuous barrier that prevented the refugees in assimilating in the United States.

Uncovering the obstacles of language was the starting point for the student. In her second semester, in Policy, she began to make society aware of the issues that the refugees were

facing in the United States. The student and her team took a trip to the state capitol to meet representatives and talk about the problems that the refugees were confronted with. With dismay, the student and her colleagues were made known that the politicians were not conscious of the obstacles that the refugees undergo. At this time the students found that the refugees are only given a limited amount of time to become self-sufficient in the United States. The team sought out to extend the time frame that government aid can be issued to the refugees. After the trip to Austin the student and her team put on a rally to bring awareness and petition of extending federal aid to the refugees to a year; versus the six months that the refugees are allotted.

In the student's third semester, Research, the student and her team researched the immediate needs of the refugees. The main demand that the refugees voiced was that they needed more time to get adjusted in the United States. The student's work diligently to help the refugees. However, there was a discrepancy in the research project being approved. The student and her peers were discouraged at this point. In fact, the students began to feel that their work from the previous semesters were not viable. But, the comfort of their professor assured them that in the field of social work there will be disappointments. Nonetheless, there is still work to do. This guidance and empathy made the students push harder in their academic accomplishments. The student will take this let down with her as pilot in her future dealings of social work.

The last semester, Practice 2, was the most influential thus far. It was the time that the student terminated her position at the International Newcomer Academy. As all things are meant to come to an end. The student has learned that the beginning and the end is of lesser value than the time between. With this being said, birth and death are evident but, the time in between is



the change element. The student knows from her scholastic studies that she is to make the most of her time as a social worker; utilizing the Code of Ethics as her compass.

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Practice II

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During this semester in Practice II, I feel like some material was new but it was an overall repeat of learning information. We went over NASW code of Ethics, social work systems, micro, mezzo, macro, planned change process, interviews, and supervision. There was a lot more but too much to list. This was a good class to refresh all the material that we have learned throughout the social work program. Finishing up our group projects that we started in service learning was a big relief and accomplishment also. We were finally able to see the project as a whole and how everything we have worked on throughout the semesters come together. Also getting to see everyone else's projects that they worked on was awesome to. Everyone in my class had busy schedules and we all were together from the start. Some days were tough and it was amazing to see us all come together and support each other to get through it. Practice II was definitely a great class to end my bachelors of Social work with to refresh me on everything I have learned throughout the program.

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### ALE Reflection

Practice II course taught me aspects of the social work profession I was not informed about. In this class I had to participate in community events which is different from my previous classes. The one community event that opened my eyes was the Homeless Count Night that we participated in as a group. During this experience I learned that there are many more homeless people out there than most of us are aware of. When we walked into the room there were a lot of volunteers there to help I was shocked by how many people were there to help at nine at night. Although during this event we didn't find that many homeless people it did bring awareness to us about the homeless population. Also I learned that all homeless people are not out to get free stuff and live off of other people like many people believe. The homeless that we did find did not want to admit they were homeless and they also did not want to take our food or blankets. I think this is event that many other members of the community should be involved in because many times the homeless population are being oppressed and stereotyped. If more people knew about the circumstance that the homeless people live in and their encounters maybe we would have more people willing to help them out this population.

Another experience that was interesting was grant writing, this process was a little difficult for me to understand at the beginning because I haven't been exposed to this field of social work. Policy and research were a little similar but it was still a new subject for me. With the help of my classmates and my teacher I understood it as I went on. Grant writing is a very tedious process you have to also know a lot of information about what you want to get funded. During this experience I learned the importance of having relationships with others. It nice to

have people there to help you when you do not know how something works. Grant writing is very important because this is what helps us provide the services to our clients.

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Summary Paper

Becoming a professional Social Worker has been a great experience for me. I have enjoyed mentoring others and helping them get to the next level in their life. My experiences with my professors, classmates and field internship was an amazing learning experience. Now I can apply all of the things I learned to my everyday life and take my skills with me into the work place as Social Worker. My field experience was awesome I taught all girls. Their class was a leadership and mentoring elective at Eastern Hills High School under Girls Inc. The girls taught me a lot and now I understand how important it is to trust someone with your deep secrets and how to become a better person and parent. The girls gave me a lot of Social work experience with advocating and setting boundaries. During my internship active listening, empathy and setting boundaries were great Social work skills I learned while I was mentoring. Time management was another thing that I learned throughout this year because it was hard working fulltime, being a parent and during my internship which was a part time job for me without pay, but I made it through. Over all I really enjoyed being a student at Tarleton State University and I'm going to take everything that I have learned and my resources with me to start my new career as a Social Worker.

## ALE Reflection

Our group process went very well. Our group did not encounter conflict between members, nor did we experience a failure or breakdown in communications. After deciding what our proposal would be, the group skimmed over what the proposal was to look like, then each of us distributed the parts of the grant between the two of us and they would be responsible for their section and then we would come together to work on the proposal and presentation. As a group, we tried to keep each part of the grant proposal as reasonable as possible. Since there was only the two of us in the group we did a great job keeping in contact via email, text, or telephone and was very considerate to each other by attending class to work on the proposal.

Our group members consisted of Karen Kaniki and Jayna Bhakta who will be doing the group process section which includes listing of group members and a detailed account of their exact role in producing the grant proposal.

Our group decided to meet during the days when class was held on Mondays. During this time, we talked about our progress and asked and answered any questions we may have had on the proposal and presentation. As a team Karen and Jayna put together everything from the proposal to the presentation when they met during their designated time on Monday evenings. At that time, our team would be ready for the presentation of our grant proposal as a collaborative team.



## **ALE Reflection**

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While in Practice II we have learned how to develop a grant outline for different agencies, we have learned how to find the places that will give out grants, and have learned how to develop a new program for an agency. By learning to do these steps my teammate and I have been able to write a draft of a grant to be submitted in August to Target Corporation, to help the agency we have been assigned to with extra money for field trips.

Practice II has taught us about different cultures and the ways they may be sensitive, how to interview clients, and how to develop different treatment plans. This has been a learning experience that I have been able to use while in my internship. It has taught me how to work and talk with children and their families.