

*Ideas for Teaching Social
Work Practice*

Supported by:

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FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

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Bradford W. Sheafor and Charles R. Horejsi

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Teaching the “How To” of Social Work Practice

For instructors of classroom courses in social work practice, perhaps the greatest challenge is to engage the student in learning the specific skills or the “doing” aspects of practice. In a practice course, the student must learn new ways of behaving--not just new ideas.

Although the client is indirectly affected by the social worker’s theoretical knowledge, the client is most directly impacted by what the worker actually does (e.g., what the worker says, how it is said, how the worker responds to what the client says and does, etc.). A practice course does not just to teach *about* practice. Rather, it teaches students to perform specific practice activities--the techniques, procedures, and actions that can positively impact the client’s social functioning.

So, what’s new? Social work educators have been teaching practice courses since the founding of the New York School of Philanthropy more than a century ago. Indeed, our professional responsibility to clients has always been to prepare the future service provider to engage in helping activities that will directly impact people’s lives--especially the most vulnerable members of our society, including children, the elderly, disabled persons, and the poor. It is our belief that current the growing complexity of agency operation and service delivery, as well as legal precedents and managed care requirements, have placed even greater demands on social work faculty members to teach students how to conduct effective practice.

Increasingly, we are called on to minimize the liability risks for our students, agencies, and schools by assuring that our students are at least minimally prepared with basic practice competencies when they enter field instruction, internship, or practicum experiences. At the same time, we must be grounded in the recognition that our goal should include preparing students to perform the tasks expected by future employers in the human services, i.e., must strive to be “practice-sensitive” in social work education. In short, we must maintain a balance between protecting human services agencies, their clients, and our schools when students are placed in those agencies, meeting today’s practice demands for social work competencies, and preparing tomorrow’s practice leaders. Indeed, teaching social work practice is not an easy task.

In the following materials we describe ways to help students develop the necessary practice knowledge, skills, and ethics *before* they enter their field placements. The materials also give attention to the practice tools and attitudes that an innovative social worker will need after he or she graduates. Of course, we suggest the new edition of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* as the primary resource for accomplishing that goal.

A Perception of Social Work Practice

We view social work practice as fundamentally an empowering and problem-solving activity, directed toward resolving concerns about social functioning and/or preventing problems from developing in the first place. Guided by an ethical code and using a body of knowledge, the social worker intends to accomplish one or more of the following goals:

- enhance the problem solving and coping capacities of people;
- link people with those systems that can provide needed resources, services, and opportunities;
- promote the effective and humane operation of human services agencies;
- actively promote the creation and development of humane, fair, and effective social policies and human services programs;
- help create societal conditions that prevent social problems and support successful social functioning for all people.

A social work practice course should be designed and structured in ways that facilitate the learning of those behaviors, skills, and techniques that are necessary for a social worker to accomplish these broad goals.

Assumptions Regarding Teaching Social Work Practice

It is the responsibility of the classroom instructor to formulate the course structure, establish high expectations for student accomplishment, maintain an open and interactive class environment, and design experiences that encourage and facilitate learning by the social work student. That learning must occur in three broad areas: knowledge, values, and skills.

Knowledge

The knowledge component of social work is, in many ways, the easiest to teach because there is, for the most part, an agreed upon terminology and language that can be used to present, describe, and discuss concepts, theories, and facts relevant to practice. Chapters 3 and 6 of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* should prove helpful when introducing students to basic practice knowledge. Moreover, it is possible to use conventional exams to determine if the student has acquired the necessary conceptual information.

Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes

The values associated with effective practice can be discussed with students, but cannot be directly taught. At best, values and attitudes can be “caught” by the student. If the instructor “models” or makes visible desired values in their own behaviors, students may adapt their own values to imitate those of a respected teacher. Thus, faculty must be prepared to discuss ethical dilemmas, relevant moral and religious considerations, and the cultural and value conflicts that are typically a part of practice. Materials from Chapter 3, 5, and Techniques 8.8, 8.9, and 8.10 should prove helpful for this discussion.

Techniques, Procedures, and Practice Activities

The skills or the “doing” aspects of practice are also best taught through modeling and demonstration by an instructor. In addition, the student must have the opportunity to practice these behaviors in a real or simulated situation. Simply reading about or listening to a description of a desired practice behavior is seldom sufficient to facilitate this learning by the student. Thus a practice instructor must create a teaching/learning process that allows and requires students to perform various social work activities that utilize basic practice techniques--such as those described in Parts III, IV, and V of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice*.

Selecting Course Objectives and Teaching Methodology

Specific objectives for any practice course require careful consideration by a BSW or MSW program’s faculty. Underpinning these objectives should be a thorough understanding of the Council on Social Work Education’s accreditation requirements, appreciation of the nature and demands of jobs available to new graduates, the ethical requirement to prepare practitioners who will do no harm, understanding of the prior knowledge and conceptual foundation that students bring to the practice sequence, and knowledge of the characteristics of the clients and client systems that students are most likely to encounter in their particular communities. The course objectives are appropriately a curriculum decision and not subject to the individual interpretation of an individual instructor.

The instructor, however, should have the freedom to decide how best to prepare the students to master the content and competencies assigned to his or her class in the school’s curriculum. Factors to consider include:

- Viewing the social work student as an adult. Adults learn best through actual experience and by relating a new learning experience to their own life experiences. To the extent possible, it is best to utilize experiential learning activities, demonstrations, role plays, rehearsals, and so forth.
- Many students have had prior paid or volunteer human services experiences that are relevant to the concerns and purposes of social work practice.
- Modeling and demonstration of both techniques and attitudes by the teacher are critically important in teaching practice.
- Whenever possible, the class assignments and students’ learning activities should simulate or resemble the activities that will be required in practice (i.e., intense human interaction with troubled individuals and families; making decisions and formulating plans, follow through on plans, report writing, record keeping, teamwork, time management, etc.).

A Generalist View of Social Work Practice

For all baccalaureate social work education programs, and for the foundation content of master's programs, preparation for practice from the generalist perspective is a guiding principle established in the Council on Social Work Education's Accreditation Standards and Educational Policy Statement. A generalist perspective requires that practice courses assist students to acquire competencies in seven broad areas:

1. develop and maintain professional helping relationships with clients and client systems that facilitate change;
2. influence, guide, and manage the change process;
3. utilize multi-level interventions (i.e., to intervene at the individual, family, small group, organizational, and/or community levels) as dictated by each practice situation;
4. assume varied practice roles (e.g., counselor, broker, case manager, advocate, teacher, administrator, social change agent, as reflected In Chapter 4);
5. critically examine and evaluate one's own performance and practice activity;
6. function effectively within the framework and procedures of a social agency; and
7. conduct one's practice within the context of social work's sanction (see Chapter 1), expertise, and ethical code.

An Example of Teaching Social Work Practice in the Classroom

How does one teach practice competencies in a classroom setting? Indeed, many practice skills are best learned in a practicum or field work setting. However, if students are to have some practice basics before actually functioning in a real agency and serving real clients, the classroom experience must prepare them with some fundamental knowledge, values, techniques, and practice guidelines *before* they are assigned to field placements.

Certainly there are many ways to teach practice competencies within a classroom environment. The method selected by an instructor must be one that is effective in helping students achieve the learning objectives of the course, one that fits well with the students' characteristics and the instructor's own abilities, and one that can work within constraints imposed by time limitations and scheduling.

As a way of offering some ideas on how a practice course might be designed and structured, we describe below an approach that has been used at the University of Montana. This is a rather demanding course -- demanding on both the student and the instructor. However, it is a class-tested approach and instructors who have used it report a high level of satisfaction. Students also report a high level of satisfaction with the course. However, their feelings of satisfaction usually arise after completing the course

when they recognize most clearly that the course did, in fact, prepare them for the types of tasks and activities they would perform in their practicum and in their first social work job. While the students are taking the course, they usually feel stretched, stressed, and a bit frustrated because this course and its core assignments demand so much of them.

This course attempts to simulate the demands and activities of practice in an agency setting. Its design and assignments draw the students into the actual “doing” of practice. In this course, they must “do” practice rather than simply talk about practice. As will be explained below, this course requires that each student “become” a social worker (i.e., a professional helper) to another student in the class and, in addition, “become” a client to yet another student in the class. Thus, each student assumes the real responsibility to help and provide a service to another person. The concern to be addressed is always selected by the client. However, the focus must be on a real problem or issue. This is not a role play activity. A student’s presenting concern might be fairly mundane like wanting to learn better time management skills or something very personal like wanting to rebuild a ruptured relationship with a dying parent. Given the responsibility to assist another human being, matters such as client confidentiality, record keeping, gathering information, formulating an intervention plan, and perhaps, dealing with a non-voluntary client all become very real issues and concerns. At the end of the course, students often report that they learned more about being a helper from their experience as a client than from their efforts to be a social worker.

The course described below is the second in a series of three generalist practice courses. This particular course gives special attention to the teaching of direct practice skills in work with individual and families. The description presented highlights the structure and the nature of key assignments but it does not describe class-by-class, or week-by-week activities. The reader must understand that nearly every class period includes the use of structured discussion, a video, or a demonstration by the instructor that illustrates the use of specific practice skills and techniques that the student may be able to use in their work with their “client.” The timing of these class-by-class topics is tied to an upcoming practice event or a phase in the helping process (e.g., preparing for the first interview, defining the presenting concern, formulating a service contract, etc.) and also to the concerns mentioned in the student social workers’ session reports.

Instructors are invited to copy, adopt, or adapt some or all of the ideas presented below.

Course Goals and Objectives

The fundamental *goal* of this course is to prepare students for professional social work practice by teaching the basic knowledge and skills needed to work directly with individuals and families and to understand how agency purpose, policies, and procedures impact on service delivery to these client systems. (Other courses focus on work with groups, organizations, and communities.) Practice is approached from a generalist perspective, but in this course the focus is mostly on work with individuals and families and, to a degree, on therapeutic and self-help groups.

The stated *course objectives* reflect the expectation that upon completion of the course a student will be able to:

- Describe the phases and concepts of planned change.
- Describe how the generalist perspective is applied in social work practice.
- Describe the various professional roles common to direct social work practice (e.g., broker, counselor, case manager, teacher, advocate).

- Describe how cultural, ethnic, and religious factors might affect the social functioning of individuals and families and explain how knowledge of such factors can be applied in practice.
- Describe the possible relationships of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, and discrimination and oppression on the social functioning of individuals and families and explain how knowledge of such factors can be applied in practice.
- Describe how worker self-understanding and self-discipline can be enhanced and how worker self-awareness might relate to practice decisions and activities.
- Describe and explain the process of direct practice evaluation, including use of procedures such as single subject design, measurement of client satisfaction, and task achievement scaling, as well as how basic research concepts such as sampling, validity, and reliability apply to the evaluation of services to clients.
- Prepare professional reports and document service activities (e.g., social assessment reports, case notes, service contracts, treatment plans, and case summaries).
- Describe and compare several of the theories, models, and perspectives used in work with individuals and families (especially crisis intervention, task-centered practice, behavioral analysis, and family systems theory).
- Identify the implicit or explicit assumptions of a practice theory or model concerning how and why people change.
- Gather data and assess the social functioning of individuals and families using several different procedures such as direct observation, ecomapping, checklists, and scales.
- Describe the basic principles and guidelines for working with the non-voluntary client, the hard-to-reach client, and the dangerous client.
- Describe the elements and activities of effective case management, client advocacy, interagency coordination, and referral.
- Describe how agency context (e.g., mission, policy, procedures, funding base) may influence the selection of practice roles and interventions.
- Describe how community context, such as public attitudes, political climate, scope of a problem, demographics, culture, available resources, and the economy, influence the selection of practice roles and interventions.

Course Structure and Requirements

At the beginning of the course each student is required to sign a **Statement of Agreement and Understanding** regarding the assignments, responsibility for working with other students who become a client or serving as a client for another student, the tape recording of interviews, maintaining confidentiality regarding personal information shared in the client/worker relationships and adhering to all other provisions of the NASW Code of Ethics, participate in a discussion group, meeting with the instructor outside of scheduled class time, and recognizing the fact that the course may require 2 to 3 times the time spent in other courses.

At the end of each class period, the student is asked to take a few minutes to complete a brief **feedback card**. This regular feedback from students provides the instructor with comments on class content, gives students the opportunity to ask questions, and or/offers suggestions for future class sessions.

To gain experience relevant to direct practice activities, the **client/social worker simulation** (and related assignments) is a central feature of the course. Students will assume a social worker role and work directly with one student who becomes a *client* and will also serve as client for another student who assumes the role of *social worker*. The pairing of students is done at random, thus more closely simulating the situation of a non-voluntary client. Students are expected to take these two roles very seriously and demonstrate maturity, responsibility, and professionalism in the relationship. Thorough knowledge of the content in Chapter 8 of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* is prerequisite to beginning the client/social worker simulation assignment.

During the semester each student meet with his or her *social worker* at least six (6) times and also meet with his or her *client* at least six (6) times. Each meeting must be at least 50 minutes in length and at least four days must separate each meeting. All sessions should be conducted in a private place in order to maintain confidentiality. The *social worker* is responsible for securing an appropriate and private place. Unacceptable places include private homes, cafes, or other public places. All sessions must be tape recorded (audio) by both the *client* and the *social worker*.

A **human services agency simulation** is another integral part of the course. To the extent possible, class assignments and learning activities simulate the tasks and activities of direct social work practice in an agency setting. The student assumes the role of a practicing social worker in the agency. The professor takes on the roles and responsibilities of an agency supervisor and administrator with many of the classes becoming “staff meetings.” Agency policies, procedures, and regulations (i.e., course requirements) must be followed or “employment” may be terminated. As a worker, one must understand and follow written instructions such as those found in policy manuals and protocol statements. Knowledge of Chapter 9 of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* will provide a foundation for the agency aspects of this simulation.

When employed (or having a field placement) in a human services agency, one must also prepare numerous written reports, maintain records, and so forth. Thus the written assignments for the course are designed to simulate expectations in an agency. Meeting deadlines--often unrealistic ones--is a reality in social work practice and the numerous deadlines built into the course must be met (e.g., there are no acceptable excuses for missing a deadline and all late reports or papers receive an “F” or a lowered grade). All written reports must be typed and should be prepared as if the student’s job depends on the quality of this written work. Students should assume that these reports will be read by the client, social work peers, the supervisor, and possibly doctors, judges, lawyers, and professionals from other agencies. It is likely that materials will have to be revised several times before they communicate accurately and are technically correct (grammar and spelling). Item 9.1 in *Techniques and Guidelines* should be especially helpful in this activity.

Just as social workers are expected come to work on time, remain until the work day ends, and actively engage in the work of the agency, students are expected to be proactive learners and that involves attending all class sessions and being prepared to participate appropriately in discussions. Roll will be taken and attendance will affect the final course grade. One or two missed classes can be “made up” by completing optional assignments described below.

The course includes six **quizzes and a comprehensive final exam**. These tests focus heavily on concepts, terminology, and definitions drawn from the text and lectures. Careful and repeated reading of assignments is a key to a high grade. The two lowest grades on quizzes are dropped. For good reason a student may take a quiz early, but it cannot be taken late.

Falsification of client reports, plagiarism, or any other form of cheating will result in an automatic “F” for the course. “Covering for” or “protecting” another student who cheats will also result in an “F.” Also, an “F” will be given to any student who engages in a documented incident of sexual contact with and/or sexual harassment of his/her client (see item 16.6 in *Techniques and Guidelines*.)

The **course grade** is determined on the basis of the following point system.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Points</u>
6 quizzes (lowest two dropped)	230
final exam	120
professor’s judgment call (see below)	130
6 sessional reports + tape recordings	270
6 sessional evaluations of worker (P/F)	10
social assessment report	80
service contract	50
strengths and limitations paper (P/F)	10
family of origin paper (ecomap/genogram)	90
client’s summary report (P/F)	<u>10</u>
Total	1000

Thirteen percent (130 points) of the final course grade (potentially one letter grade) is based on the *professor’s judgment of the student’s commitment to and temperament for professional social work practice*. Student behaviors that add points when the professor’s judgment is applied include: initiative, dependability, honesty, punctuality, capacity to meet deadlines, perseverance, ability to handle conflict in interpersonal relations, sensitivity to others, ability to achieve goals and objectives, ability to plan and organize work, clear writing, motivation and willingness to work hard, openness to new learning, openness to examining own values and attitudes, self-awareness, capacity to work under pressure, personal maturity, emotional stability, respect for clients and other students, fairness in decision-making, and professionalism.

Student behaviors that decrease points when a professor’s judgment call is made include: the opposite of the above listed behaviors and especially dishonesty, missing deadlines, disrespect for others, manipulation and efforts to “bend” or avoid the class rules and requirements, attempts to secure special concessions or privileges, domination of class discussion or avoidance of class participation, and the inability to keep personal problems from interfering with professional tasks and activities.

Teaching Resources

As explained above, the “backbone” of the various learning experiences used in this course is having each student work with a “client” (i.e., another student) and also become a “client” to still another student. Thus, the students themselves become a primary resource in the teaching/learning process. When functioning as a “social worker,” the student conducts tape recorded interviews, completes case recordings, develops a service contract, and prepares a social assessment report that simulate the activities expected in agency-based practice. As a “client,” the student is expected to focus on a real concern or issue, yet one he or she selects. Thus the experience

typically has more relevance and personal impact than is experienced in role play situations.

The underpinning for this exercise involves knowledge of the basic elements of social work practice described in Chapters 1 through 7 of the sixth edition of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice*. Students must be familiar with this material to successfully carry out the exercises required for this course. These seven chapters address the following fundamentals or prerequisites for social work practice:

1. The Domain of the Social Work Profession
2. Merging Person with Profession
3. Merging the Person's Art with the Profession's Science
4. The Roles and Functions Performed by Social Workers
5. Guiding Principles for Social Workers
6. Practice Frameworks for Social Work
7. Facilitating Change through Decision Making

The remainder of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* (Chapters 8 through 16) is designed in handbook format and incorporates many commonly used techniques or guidelines for practice activities. Each is described with a one sentence statement of its purpose when applied in a practice situation, followed by discussion and illustrations (where appropriate) to help students gain a general understanding of the technique, and concludes with a selected bibliography to facilitate locating materials for more in-depth study of the topic.

Some materials from this text are introduced to students through readings assigned *before* the student confronts a particular practice situation. For example, these reading assignments address such factors as conducting the first interview, dealing with the non-voluntary client, performing an assessment, writing a social history, formulating a service agreement, and so forth. Other individualized reading assignments are made when, after the instructor reviews a student's recording of an interview, the student is referred to specific sections or items in the textbook for further study or for ideas on what the student might try next in his or her work with the client.

Finally, a faculty packet or set of duplicated materials fills out the course resources. It consists of sample recordings and reports, evaluation forms, and various outlines that help the student understand what is expected by the "agency" and his or her "agency supervisor" (i.e., the course instructor).

Description of Required Written Assignments

Assignment #1: Family of Origin Paper

The purpose of this assignment is to help the student become familiar with concepts used to describe family behavior and functioning. In this assignment, the term "family of origin" refers to the family in which *the student* grew up or was raised. Before beginning this paper, the student should study items 11.5, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 11.10, and 11.15 of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice*.

In 6-10 pages, the student should describe how he or she has been impacted by

- the roles he or she played in the family,
- the family's rules, boundaries, norms, mood, and expectations,
- communication patterns,
- the family's socio-economic circumstances,
- the family's ethnicity, religion, and moral beliefs,
- the make-up and functioning of family sub-systems,
- problems and dysfunctional behavior within the family,
- family crises and trauma,
- family life-cycle events and changes,
- Individual and family strengths,
- patterns of decision-making,
- how differences and conflicts were handled,
- expression of emotions,
- degree of closeness and connectedness among family members,
- the family's place or status in the community, and
- how issues of control and authority were handled.

Of these 16 aspects of family life, ten or more must be used as headings to organize and structure the content of the paper. To assist the student in understanding what a client experiences when asked to address issues in his or her family, a final paragraph should be devoted to describing what it was like to think about and analyze one's own family's functioning. In addition, students are required to submit an *ecomap* and a *genogram* (covering at least three generations). See item 11.2 in *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice*.

Assignment #2: Session Reports

Each student social worker conducts six sessions with his or her client (i.e., another student in the class). After each of the six sessions or interviews with the "client," the *social worker* is to prepare a written case recording. Sessions 1 through 3 are to be followed by reports 4-6 pages in length using narrative, process (POR) or the SOAP format. Sessions 4 through 6 may use any of these formats, but must be limited to three pages. For assistance in recording the student should see items 9.5 and 9.6 in *Techniques and Guidelines*. All sessions are to be recorded (audio or video) by the student *social worker*. The tape is to be studied prior to preparing the written session report and must be supplied to the instructor along with the written report. Students are urged to prepare the report soon after each interview and after listening to the tape recording and are required to submit it by the due date.

The instructor reviews the student social worker's session report and offers comments and suggestions. Each report is then rated according to the following key:

- FM unacceptable because of improper format or organization
- FQ unacceptable quality of work with client
- FL unacceptable because of lateness
- FWS unacceptable because of poor writing, grammar, or spelling
- 1 barely acceptable
- 2 below expected level
- 3 at expected level

- 4 slightly above expected level
- 5 above expected level (good)
- 6 considerably above expected level (very good)
- 7 excellent (unusually good in many ways)

After written reports are returned, students are to keep the reports and tape recordings in a protected place where client confidentiality is protected.

Assignment #3: Feedback to Social Worker

All sessions are also tape recorded by the *client* on his or her recorder. These tapes are to be used after each session when completing the “Evaluation of Sessional Performance” rating form where the client assesses the social worker’s performance in appropriate areas (e.g., use of specific interviewing skills, use of time, structuring the session, etc.). Items 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4 in *Techniques and Guidelines* should be helpful in developing a sessional rating form.

At the end of the course the *client* and *social worker* will meet for a 7th session during which the client will provide his or her overall evaluation of the social worker’s performance.

Assignment #4: Service Contract

In preparation for this assignment, review the materials in Chapter 12 of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* (and especially items 12.5 and 12.6). After the second interview with the client, the *social worker* is to submit a 1 to 2 page written service contract. The content of the contract is to be negotiated and agreed to by both worker and client.

The format of the service contract should follow the following headings and content:

- background to contract (2-3 sentences)
- presenting concern or problem (2-3 sentences)
- goals for intervention (at least one goal)
- objectives for intervention (at least 2 objectives)
- client tasks (at least 3 tasks)
- worker tasks (at least 2 tasks)
- methods used to monitor progress (2-3 sentences)
- procedure for renegotiation of contract (2-3 sentences)
- other details and clarification of contract
- signatures of both client and social worker

Assignment #5: Social Assessment Report

Soon after the 4th interview, the *social worker* is to prepare a typed, 3-5 page highly factual and detailed social assessment report on the client. See item 11.1 in *Techniques*

and *Guidelines* before preparing this report. The social assessment report must use the following headings:

1. *Identifying information*: client's name, date of birth, age, address, telephone number, marital status, occupation, etc.
2. *Purpose of report*: briefing for agency staff
3. *Client's presenting problem or concern* and the worker's reason for involvement with client
4. *Source of data*: how and when data were collected
5. *Current family and/or household membership*: with whom does the client live, social-legal relationship among these people, describe marriage and children, if applicable (see items 11.4 and 11.10 in *Techniques and Guidelines*)
6. *Family of origin*: description and/or listing of client's parents, siblings, and important members of extended family (see item 11.2 in *Techniques and Guidelines*)
7. *Interpersonal and role functioning*: describe client's relationships with friends, peers, people at work and school; describe client's primary social roles and relationship among these roles (see item 11.8 in *Techniques and Guidelines*)
8. *Education history and intellectual functioning*: describe client's education and training, capacity for abstract thinking, memory, and problem solving; oral and written communication; schools attended, G.P.A., school performance, etc. (see item 11.16 in *Techniques and Guidelines*)
9. *Physical functioning*: describe current health and medical problems; significant disabilities; use of medication or physical supports
10. *Strengths and usual ways of coping*: describe client's particular strengths and predominant and habitual ways of coping with life and its stressors; defense mechanisms commonly used to handle troublesome thoughts and emotions (see items 11.5, 11.7 and 11.9 in *Techniques and Guidelines*)
11. *Cultural background, religious beliefs, and spirituality*: describe identity with a particular cultural or ethnic group, and the values, beliefs, faith, etc. that provide a sense of meaning and purpose in life and put life experiences in perspective (see item 8.10 in *Techniques and Guidelines*)
12. *Employment*: describe types of jobs held, special work related skills and training, schools attended, military service, etc.
13. *Economic situation, housing, transportation*: include income from job and benefits, expenses, debts, financial stressors
14. *Use of community resources*: describe client's current or recent utilization of various social service, health care, financial assistance, legal, educational, and recreational programs
15. *Impressions and assessment*: in one paragraph, summarize the social workers conclusions and inferences from the above facts.

Assignment #6: Strengths and Limitations Paper

The social worker and client will meet for a 7th time. During this informal session, the *client* must identify three strengths and three limitations in the performance of the social worker (see items 14.8 and 16.2 in *Techniques and Guidelines*). This session need not be tape recorded.

After reflecting on the strengths and limitations identified by the client, the *social worker* should prepare a 2-3 page paper that describes his or her strengths and limitations as someone about to enter a practicum agency and, someday, seek a social work job. Specific actions to correct performance problems should be identified. Also, the paper should explain how knowledge of the specific limitations may affect the student's choice of field placement and/or other practice decisions in the future. The paper will receive pass/fail grading.

Optional Assignment: Quiz Make Up Assignment

The two lowest quiz grades are dropped automatically. The submission of an optional assignment is only available if the student misses taking an additional quiz. If the paper is acceptable, the grade assigned will be the average of the remaining quiz grades. The paper must be from 6-8 pages in length (typed, double-spaced) and must make use of at least three relevant reference books or articles. Citations must follow APA style. Chapters 2 and 6 of *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* should be reviewed in preparation for selecting a topic and preparing this paper. The topic for this paper must be one of the following:

- Discuss worker self-awareness and self-understanding as factors in being effective with clients.
 - Discuss the relationships among a social worker's personal values, religious beliefs and spirituality, and his or her effectiveness as a professional social worker."
 - Compare and contrast the generalist perspective with the ecosystems perspective.
 - Compare and contrast the behavioral and the psychodynamic practice frameworks.
 - Describe the task-centered model and explain how it is used in social work practice.
 - Describe the interactional approach and explain how it is used in social work practice.
 - Describe the crisis intervention model and explain how it is used in social work practice.
- "Describe one of the conceptual frameworks used in work with families (e.g., structural, communications, strategic, functional)
- Describe the addictions model and explain how it is applied in social work practice.

Concluding Comments

Teaching social work practice is a challenging, time consuming, but rewarding activity. We are pleased to have the opportunity to share some of our ideas and experiences with teaching this content and thank Allyn and Bacon for the opportunity to include this material on their web page.

We invite you to share with us your thoughts and experiences. In the future we hope to pass on other suggestions from our readers on effective ways to teach from *Techniques and Guidelines for Social Work Practice* through revisions to this set of teaching ideas. We would also like to have your suggestions for new materials or the deletion of existing materials should there be an 8th edition. To share your thoughts and possibly dialogue with us, please contact Brad Sheafor at the following e-mail address: sheafor@cahs.colostate.edu.