

PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM PAPER REQUIREMENTS

Dr. Jeffrey Leitzel Email: jleitzel@bloomu.edu

Writing errors can cost you dearly in grad school and job applications. In your future jobs, whatever they are, you will need to produce brief, meaningful reports. Therefore I grade all Practicum papers to a professional standard of communication.

Papers must be written professionally, including proper spelling, grammar, clarity and organization of your writing. Break your papers into short, logical paragraphs.

All papers must be submitted in MS Word format, in 11 or 12 point font, *single-spaced* with one-inch margins.

All papers are due at 4 pm on the due date.

Expected paper lengths are approximate. Write as much as you need to be clear and complete. **Always give examples** of terms and important points. **Always cite the page number** when you use an idea from the textbook or assigned reading. Always spell out any acronyms the first time you use them.

Common errors to avoid:

- mismatching subject and verb (e.g., singular noun, plural verb: *this school, like others, have*);
- mismatching singular and plural forms:
(instead of *the client and their feelings*, write *clients and their feelings*,
or *the client and her [or his] feelings*);
(*therapist* is singular, *therapists* is plural)
- misplacing apostrophes:
(e.g., *a therapist's values* [singular], or *most therapists' values* [plural]).
- spelling errors;
- using *prejudice* as an adjective (e.g., "I am not prejudice");
- run-on sentences;
- run-on paragraphs that include too many topics (when in doubt, break into short paragraphs!).

Each Practicum paper is graded on a 0-3 scale: 3 = Excellent; 2 = Satisfactory; 1 = Unsatisfactory; 0 = Missing or Late.

If your average grade on weekly papers, across the semester, is less than 2.0 on this scale, you will fail the course. If your Summary Paper grade is less than 2, you will fail the course.

Late papers are accepted ONLY in VERY EXCEPTIONAL circumstances. This MUST be arranged with me ahead of time. The maximum grade a late paper can receive is a 1.

I encourage you to discuss your experiences with others, including classmates and myself. **However, your paper must be your own work.** Quoting, paraphrasing, or using someone else's idea (whether from a published source or another student's paper), without proper citation, is plagiarism. **Penalties for plagiarism include failing the course.**

Papers required for Practicum include:

- **Reaction papers (on readings)**
- **Weekly Journals (by students who don't attend class)**
- **Practicum Goals and Objectives**
- **Organizational Analysis**
- **Summary Paper**

REACTION PAPERS

Each reaction paper will have a Dropbox in Bolt. Submit your paper to the proper Dropbox by 4 pm on the due date. See the class schedule.

I recommend that you complete and turn in each reaction over the weekend before the due date.

These papers concern specific readings, mainly textbook chapters. They should be about one page, single-spaced. Put the title of the reading at the top of the page. Divide your paper into **three paragraphs**. Each paragraph should either discuss an important thing you learned from the reading, or connect a concept, case example or exercise from the reading to your Practicum experience. You especially should focus on anything in the chapter that suggests an area in which it would be good for you to grow, or a skill that you can work on improving.

Avoid all spelling/grammar errors.

Whenever you discuss a specific idea from the reading, **cite the page number** from the reading. You don't need to give a full APA citation or reference for the reading, just indicate page number. However, if you

use a source other than the textbook or assigned reading, you must cite it in APA style and give a complete APA reference at the end.

The first reaction paper, on “Listening and Helping Skills”, has a special format to follow, on the last two pages of the reading. Download this document from Bolt, type in your answers to the response questions on the last two pages, print out those pages, and bring that as a paper document to discuss in during class. Also submit those pages to the BOLT dropbox.

For the reaction paper on the reading “Quiet”: This reading consists of several short excerpts from Susan Cain’s book, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*. The author, Susan Cain, respects both extroversion and introversion. However, she believes U.S. society emphasizes extroverted behavior more than introverted behavior. Everyone has some more introverted qualities, and some more extroverted qualities. However, most persons are more introverted or more extroverted by nature, in terms of what they are comfortable with. Introversion-Extroversion is the best-researched personality variable in psychology.

For your reaction paper on the “Quiet” reading, write **two** paragraphs about two things you learned or find most interesting. Be specific about how these relate to you. If you are more introverted, you can discuss what you learned about yourself or how you could apply things from this reading in your future. If you are more extroverted, you can discuss how you could apply things from this reading to understand and work with more introverted persons.

For the discussion of Dr. Mason’s commencement speech, please select at least two points she discusses and bring to class details of personal responses/reactions that you have, about her speech and your future. Be specific about how these relate to you and be prepared to discuss.

WEEKLY JOURNALS

Write your journal and send it as an email attachment from your student bloomu.edu account. to Dr. Leitzel.

Students in the Bloomsburg area must turn in a journal only if you miss class. Students outside the Bloomsburg area, or student in the Bloomsburg area who cannot attend weekly classes, must turn in a journal every week, in addition to other weekly papers.

The journal should be 1-2 pages, typed, single-spaced. Describe: (a) the most important things you learned during the week prior to the class you missed; (b) the most important problem, challenge, or question that you are experiencing.

Be sure to call or email me *immediately* with urgent problems.

If you are writing a journal because you missed a class, submit it as soon as possible after your absence. If you are submitting a journal because you are at a distance and not attending weekly classes, submit the journal by 4 pm on the day of each weekly class meeting.

PRACTICUM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Submit electronically to the Dropbox in BOLT.

This paper represents what you want to learn through your Practicum – not what your duties will be, but what you want to learn. Its length is 1-2 pages.

Write a tentative set of goals and objectives, discuss these with your field supervisor and make changes based on your supervisor's recommendations. Be prepared to discuss in class why you chose your goals and objectives.

A **goal** is an overall purpose that you hope to accomplish by performing a Practicum, or something you wish to learn during the Practicum. You should determine your goals based on *what you wish to learn, not simply what duties you will perform*. This paper is a plan for your learning and growth, not a job description. Make your goals challenging – things you expect to accomplish, but that you will have to work hard to achieve. Discuss with your supervisor what goals are realistic for your setting.

An **objective** is a method of attaining a goal, or a step toward that goal. Objectives must be specific and behavioral enough to decide easily if they have been accomplished.

Both goals and objectives must begin with verbs and be succinct.

Single-space your Practicum Goals and Objectives list, with spacing between goals.

Please understand that your paper will be saved by Turnitin for comparison with past and future papers, now and in the future.

We provide an example of a Goals and Objectives paper on the next page. Use it for ideas, but write your own unique goals and objectives.

Sample PRACTICUM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Sally Sycollegee Downtown Partial Hospitalization Center Fall 2020

[Sally's list is illustrative only. Write your own specific goals and objectives.]

- Goal 1. Become familiar with the programs of the Partial Hospitalization Center.
- Interview staff members
 - Observe intake interviews, staff conferences, and group treatment sessions
 - Read the Center website and Center program descriptions and brochures
 - Participate in intern orientation sessions
- Goal 2. Learn about the professional roles of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and others at the Center.
- Interview the various professionals about their training and expertise
 - Observe how each professional performs his or her professional roles
 - Observe similarities and differences in professional roles
- Goal 3. Learn to recognize psychological disorders as well as each client's individuality.
- Get to know clients as individuals, especially their strengths
 - Review DSM-IV/5, course textbooks, and other sources for diagnostic criteria
 - Review client case records to learn more about their lives and disorders
 - Participate in staff conferences and other opportunities to learn about professionals' views of clients and disorders
- Goal 4. Learn basic counseling skills.
- Read Practicum assignments, and perform exercises in those readings
 - Read other training materials suggested by my field supervisor
 - Practice counseling skills with supervisor, and with clients as appropriate
 - Ask for feedback from supervisor and other staff
- Goal 5. Learn to lead structured group sessions with clients.
- Observe staff members' methods and styles of group leadership
 - Prepare for leading a session
 - Ask for feedback from staff (and clients if appropriate)
- Goal 6. Explore my feelings about working with clients in this type of setting.
- Reflect on this and write about it in reaction papers
 - Discuss this in Practicum class
 - Discuss this with supervisor and other staff
- Goal 7. Make initial career plans.
- Discuss options with field supervisors, other staff, and Dr. Leitzel
 - Discuss my career-related strengths and areas for improvement with field supervisor and Dr. Leitzel, consider their feedback
 - Discuss career pathways in Practicum class, learn from classmates' experiences
 - Consider possible obstacles for my plans, and how these might affect my plans
 - Consider my life dreams and plans as a whole, with career as one part of that

ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS PAPERS

This assignment is divided into two parts, which are due at two different dates. See syllabus for due dates.

Begin preparing these papers at least TWO WEEKS before this paper is due! These papers are more complicated than reaction papers.

Begin preparation of these papers by interviewing your field supervisor, and perhaps other persons within your department or organization. Also review the organization website or brochures.

The Organizational Analysis papers concern the organizational and community environments within which you work. This information is important for you to know, about your Practicum setting now *and* about future employment settings.

Some topics in these papers concern the **department or office** where you work (e.g., an elementary school guidance office, psychology department of a hospital, a specific mental health setting or program, floor or wing within a prison). Other topics concern the larger **organization** (the school district, mental health agency, hospital, university, or prison) within which that department/office exists. (For a small organization, there may not be smaller departments.) Finally, some topics concern the larger **community** that the organization serves.

For this paper, if you quote any source (online, printed, or interview), you MUST cite that source in the paper AND put it in the Sources section. In addition, you must list ALL sources of information in your Sources section, even if you did not quote them.

In the body of each Organizational paper, in each paragraph in which you used a published source such as a website, brochure, or other document, cite that source by naming the organization and giving the date of publication like this: (River County School District, 2019).

If the source has no date, cite it like this: (River County School District, n.d.).

Cite something a staff member told you in person like this: (Ms. Mary Tyler, personal communication, September 15, 2019).

At the end of each Organizational paper, include a separate **Sources** section with its own heading. In that section, list ALL sources that you used in writing this paper. Examples of reference entries are:

River County School District. (2019). *Mission Statement*. Retrieved from: [give the URL here]

River County School District. (n.d.). *Mission Statement*. Retrieved from: [give the URL here]

Columbia-Montour Aging Office, Inc. (n.d). (brochure). [use if brochure title is also the author]

Columbia-Montour Aging Office, Inc. (n.d). *Services for the Aging* (brochure).

Tyler, M. (September 15, 2019). Personal interview.¹

Use the exact format and headings below in your papers. Break each section into short paragraphs!
Submit Part One to the Dropbox in Bolt.

Organizational Analysis, Part One
[title of your organization here]
[your name]

Organization and Department Mission

Quote the official mission statement of the organization where you perform your Practicum. Cite your source of that statement in this section, and include it in the Sources section at the end of the paper.

If your organization doesn't have a formal, written mission statement, say so in a sentence, and state the source of this information (e.g., interview with your supervisor). Then write down what your supervisor says is the overall mission of the organization.

If your specific department (e.g., guidance office of a school) has its own written mission statement, quote and cite this also, in a separate paragraph.

Organization/Department Services and Consumers

Describe the principal services provided by your department (or organization, if it is small). Spell out acronyms and abbreviations.

In a new paragraph, describe the principal types or groups of persons (consumers) who use these services. Be as specific as you can about the most common difficulties, challenges, or disorders faced by those whom your department or small organization serves.

¹ Note that APA style does NOT have personal communications entered in the reference list, only cited in text. I would like them on the reference list as well.

Organization/Department Funding and Other Resources

In a new paragraph, describe the principal sources of funding for your organization. (These may include state or local taxes, federal grants, fees paid by clients, insurance payments, or other sources.) Indicate whether these funding sources are fairly stable or can fluctuate significantly from year to year.

In a new paragraph, describe at least one service that your department or small organization would like to provide, but does not have the funding for currently.

In a new paragraph, describe any important services or resources that are provided to your department/organization without funding, e.g., services provided by volunteers, or donated goods. This includes services provided by student interns.

Organizational and Department Diversity

Describe the principal forms of diversity that are observable among the persons served by your department and your larger organization. This may include characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, culture/language/nationality, religion, socio-economic status (if known), or other characteristic or important life experience shared by many persons served by your department/organization (e.g., being a veteran or low-income mother). Be specific: don't just say "many forms of diversity are represented".

In a new paragraph, indicate whether these forms of diversity are represented among the staff in your organization.

Sources

Skip at least three lines before beginning this section. List here ALL sources that you used in writing this paper; see examples on the prior page.

Use the exact format and headings (below) in your papers. Break each section into short paragraphs! Submit Part Two as a paper copy to Dr. Leitzel in class on the due date. If you don't attend weekly classes, either mail me a hard copy or scan the paper and send it to me as a pdf.

Organizational Analysis, Part Two [title of your organization here] [your name]

Related Organizations in the Wider Community

In this section, you will describe how your organization is related to other organizations in the wider community (locality such as town or county).

Ask your supervisor to name the organizations that he/she most often contacts outside your organization. Examples of these organizations include child and youth services, services for the aging, mental health services, courts and probation offices, schools, treatment centers, local self-help or support groups, etc. You may name specific organizations (e.g., Columbia County Children and Youth Services) or describe a category of similar organizations (e.g., juvenile probation offices).

Examples of organization that are important to include in this section are:

- organizations that refer or require persons to use services provided by your organization;
- organizations to which your organization refers persons, to use their services;
- organizations that serve some persons who are also served at the same time by your organization;
- organizations that provide similar services, even if not identical to your organization;
- other organizations that your supervisor considers importantly related to your organization.

For instance, if you are in a school, ask your supervisor questions like these: Where you would refer a child or family with mental health concerns too serious to handle solely with school counseling? Does the school have TSS workers from other agencies working with children in this school? What do those TSS workers do? Do you have contact with staff from Child and Youth Services, or Child Protective Services, and what are the school's responsibilities in that case?

In your paper, write *a separate paragraph* about each outside organization, describing its purpose and how your organization (or your supervisor) relates to that outside organization.

Organizational Chart

Begin this section on a new page.

Ask if your supervisor has an organizational chart to show you. Make and submit a paper copy of this chart as one page of this paper, *with the revisions indicated below.*

If your setting does not have a suitable organizational chart, draw one up with the help of your supervisor. (See the example on a later page of this document.)

Make sure that the chart clearly indicates your supervisor.

Also, make sure that the chart includes the “chain of command” from your supervisor to the head of the organization (e.g., superintendent of the school district, president of the university, executive director of a mental health agency or hospital). **Review this chain of command with your supervisor**, to make sure that you understand it.

Also, ask your supervisor to point out the other staff members on the chart who work most closely with your supervisor. For instance, if your supervisor is a school guidance counselor, have her/him name the school psychologist(s) and other guidance counselors in the school district (at all schools), and show you where those positions are on the organizational chart. If your organization has a director of internships, have your supervisor show you that position on the chart.

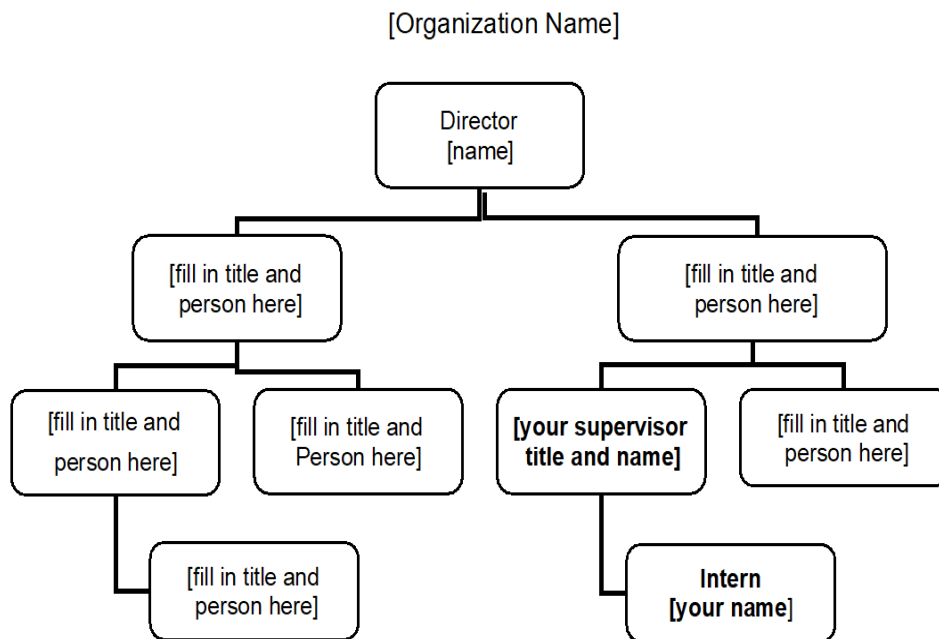
Finally, on your copy of the organizational chart, write (handwritten is fine) in a line or box for yourself as the student intern, under your supervisor.

Include the paper copy of the chart in your Organizational Analysis Paper. You may put it at the end, just before the Sources page. If you are outside the Bloomsburg, scan the chart and include as an attachment in an email, OR submit a paper copy of your paper that includes the organizational chart.

Sources

Skip at least three lines before beginning this section. List here ALL sources that you used in writing this paper. See examples in the instructions for Part One.

Example of an Organizational Chart [create your own if needed, hand-drawing is fine IF legible]



SUMMARY PAPER

Submit electronically to the Dropbox in BOLT.

This paper has two purposes: (a) to review what you have learned through your Practicum; (b) to plan a specific career or educational pathway for yourself during the next year.

Lengths of these papers vary, but plan for at least four pages, single-spaced. It is difficult to do a satisfactory job in fewer pages.

Please understand that your paper will be saved by Turnitin for comparison with past and future papers, now and in the future.

Use the boldface headings given below to divide your paper into sections.

Single-space your Summary Paper but double-space between sections. Avoid all spelling and grammar errors.

Remember that you must earn a score of at least 2 on this paper to pass the course.

Most Important Learnings

Describe the three most important things you have learned in your Practicum. Give examples to support your points. Discuss how each thing you learned is related to your earlier Practicum Goals and Objectives (review that paper while preparing this section).

Personal Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Describe two of your strengths for professional work in psychology or related areas in human services. Give specific, behavioral examples of your strengths.

Then describe two areas for improvement: areas in which you need to further develop your skills for professional work in psychology or human services. Some examples of areas for improvement may include: becoming more assertive; learning to listen better to those I disagree with; understanding another culture better; becoming more responsible about details of my work; understanding the feelings of others better (specify which culture); sharing more of my positive feelings with others; understanding my personal limitations; responding better to constructive criticism. For each area for improvement, describe specific actions you can take to develop your skills in that area.

Career Plan

Use the "Pathways to the Helping Professions" document on the Psychology Department website for information on specific vocations that involve graduate study.

First, identify a specific career goal or set of goals for yourself. If you are not sure, choose one to analyze in depth for this paper, and indicate briefly what other choices you are considering. If you plan to pursue one goal for a year or two, then another after that, describe both goals briefly, but focus your paper on the first goal.

Second, assess the suitability of this career goal for you in terms of academic and other requirements, what you have learned from your Practicum, and your personal values, strengths, and areas for improvement. Be realistic--I've read many papers outlining a career in clinical psychology, including a desire to eventually complete a doctorate, from students whose academic performance simply won't earn admission to doctoral programs.

Third, list the next specific steps for you to follow in the next 12 months, to pursue your career goals. Make these specific and concrete and describe all steps up to gaining admission to a graduate program or landing a job. I will grade these in part on how specific and realistic your plans are, and how well you include alternatives if your first choice is stymied.

I encourage you to interview your field supervisor and others in your field setting regarding their education, job experiences, values and goals, satisfactions and dissatisfactions of their work, and advice for you. Even if your interviewee is not in the same profession, or does not have the same education, values, or responsibilities that you seek, he or she can be a valuable source of information.