



Critique of Written Assessment (3,000 words)

You are asked to choose an assessment document from your current practice. You will need to anonymise the assessment by cutting and pasting the content into a plain word document without logos, real names, and other identifiable references, but retaining relevant section headings. You are then asked to critique this assessment using some of the suggestions offered in each of the areas below. You are being asked to look back on your own work and see what the strengths are, how you might have done things differently and what systemic theories and interventions were used – or could have been used, to improve it.

Consider *each* of the following areas in turn:

- 1. Identification of risk and context setting**
- 2. Systemic social work formulation and intervention**
- 3. Therapeutic relationship**
- 4. Self-reflexive account**
- 5. Presentation**

As you are addressing areas 1-3 outlined above, identify the use of systemic theory that you applied, or made reference to, in the report. If you had not shown evidence of systemic theory in your report, explain how using it might have offered a more helpful understanding of risk, or ideas for intervention. Give examples of theoretical concepts that you think influenced or will influence your assessment work. Ensure that the theory you refer to is clear and explicit and explained in your own words. Say how you think it would have enhanced the relevant area. Use in-text citations when you make reference to a theory or systemic intervention and include the papers/books in your bibliography at the end.

After you have attended to the first three areas, you are then asked to offer a self-reflexive account of your learning. You will reflect on how reviewing the assessment in this way has impacted on you. What have you learnt about your practice and about yourself? Which of your social graces have helped you to understand the influences they have on your work, your relationships and your report writing? How has doing this assignment helped you to understand how systemic ideas are applicable to your work? How will this influence your practice going forward? Please give specific examples of these ideas in this section.

Here is some guidance as to a few ideas that you can include in each of the areas.

AREA 1: IDENTIFICATION OF RISK AND SETTING CONTEXT

- When you read the assessment, ask yourself if the purpose and the context of the assessment is clear. Have you been explicit in your assessment report about what you are tasked with and what the organisation and/or outside professionals want to understand about the risk in the work you undertook? *Either* identify a systemic theory that helped to understand the context of the referral, the risk or the needs of the family, *or* describe how you think a systemic idea might have assisted with this.
- Was the assessment accompanied by a genogram that was annotated in a way that helps to make sense of significant family relationships and social graces? If not, how might this have assisted the reader – or yourself as the worker undertaking the assessment?
- How much were social graces identified and explored in your assessment, to better understand how inequalities and power differentials may impact on peoples' lives, particularly in relation to the referral information and the risk? Or, if they were not used, what difference do you think they might have made to your thinking and/or practice, had you been able to consider them?
- You may want to think about the Domains of Action and Safe Uncertainty ideas to help understand if the assessment is overly certain about events and experiences in relation to risk. Consider whether you were able to remain curious about different family members' positions and experiences or was your thinking and practice too task focused and procedural? Were you able to demonstrate in your assessment an appropriate balance of stated concerns and possible alternative understandings/multiple perspectives?
- How much did you consider and identify the family life cycle transitions which may be impacting on the family? If you attended well to this, how did this help you to contextualise or make sense of the referral/risk information? If you omitted to consider the family life cycle events, how do you think that impacted on how you undertook the assessment and wrote the report?
- Did you set out patterns in the historical relationship between social care and the family, including noting what history tells us about what kind of help is most/least useful for this family? Did you consider what the family thought about the risk and this might influence how they experience or anticipate your interventions?

AREA 2: SYSTEMIC SOCIAL WORK FORMULATION AND INTERVENTION

- In preparing to critique this area of your assessment, ask yourself if there is a well thought out systemic hypothesis informing the understanding of family interactions. Is the child's experience, or the risk understood in the context of wider family relationships? Is there an attempt to connect the child's behaviour or emotional presentation to the way others are interacting with them? Are family members understood as being influenced by multiple factors simultaneously rather than there being a single, linear view of the root cause of the risk? How systemic are your interventions and do they follow logically from the way that the family interactions were understood?
- In this section, either identify a **systemic theory** that was used in your assessment work, *or* describe how a systemic idea might have assisted you in making sense of the family interactions and led you to a different understanding of the family and the risk. Explain this systemic theory in your own words and reference it appropriately.
- You will also need to identify a **systemic intervention** that appears in the report or if one was not offered, suggest a systemic intervention that might have logically followed from the analysis or formulation that you developed. Were your interventions intended to create change at the level of relationship patterns, beliefs, or were you looking for behaviours to change? Examples of interventions you might draw on are would be curiosity about trans-generational scripts, genograms, structural interventions such as sculpting or enacting, systemic hypothesising, use of circular and reflexive questions, externalising, having conversations using the hierarchical or daisy model. *This is not a complete list* – use your own examples to demonstrate what your practice looked like or could have looked like with systemic interventions being used in your work. If you say you used a particular systemic intervention, describe what it looked like in your actual practice. If for instance, you say you used 'reflexive' questions as an intervention, make sure you give examples of these and say how the family responded to them.

AREA 3: THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

- Please cite and explain at least one systemic theory which informs or could inform the way in which the assessment was conducted and the way in which the report was written. How did this then influence the therapeutic relationship with family members?
- You might want to notice and explore how your own social graces influenced how you made sense of the family and any areas that you were more or less curious

about. Which social graces of similarity or difference had the most impact on the therapeutic relationship and what is your understanding of why this is?

- Consider the extent to which you demonstrated neutrality or curiosity, and in which aspects of the case you found it more or less difficult to do so.
- Think about the extent to which the report challenged or reinforced dominant discourses about this family and the issues of risk that presented. What narratives were brought forth about individuals (from the family and from you) and how much influence did they have on the work and on the report. How would you describe the way in which the family engaged with you and the organisation? Did the family have any influence in shaping what appeared in the report?
- Include any other systemic theory that helps you to understand what happened in the relationship between you and the family and the effect of writing about the family in the way that you did.

AREA 4: SELF-REFLEXIVE ACCOUNT

- Think about who your audience was when you were writing your assessment report. How did that influence what you wrote, or how you conducted the assessment?
- How has the process of doing this assignment helped you to locate opportunities for systemic ideas in your social work practice? Do you notice any preferred hypotheses or interventions? How do you account for these preferences?
- Which aspects of writing an assessment report do you think are the most challenging fit for systemic thinking? Which systemic ideas are easiest/hardest to hold when doing an assessment?
- What beliefs influence this view you hold? Think about prior feedback or relationships with managers, children, parents and other professionals as well as your own social graces. How do you think your own life and family scripts influence the lens through which you look when you are doing assessments?
- What do you think you will begin to change about the way you write assessments in the future? Who will need to know about this change in order to support you? How has your systemic learning changed your practice?

Identification of risk and setting context /20

High Distinction 80-100	Distinction 70-79	Merit 60-69	Pass 50-59	Fail >50
In addition to the criteria in distinction...All of the ideas offered in relation to risk are done so in a sophisticated way. Theory in relation to risk is explained exceptionally well. Able to evidence and understand the complexity of risk and to offer multiple perspectives on it.	In addition to the criteria in merit...Systemic theory is offered in an excellent way. Ideas about risk come from a second order position. Able to use the social graces of self and the family to think about how risk is responded to in this context. Organisational responses to risk are included as are wider societal discourses. The issue of power is well attended to.	In addition to the criteria in pass...Offers more than one systemic idea that was used as part of the assessment, or if it wasn't used, able to say how and why this could have been useful. Shows clear understanding of the systemic theory and makes good links to practice. Makes reference to how the social graces might have influenced ideas about risk.	The purpose of the assessment is clear and the student states what their role is within it, as well as where they are located within the organisation. Risks to child(ren) are stated. There is evidence that the student has been able to reflect on how they addressed risk in their work with the family with at least one systemic idea included.	Purpose of the assessment is not clear. Student does not explain the context in which the assessment was completed. The risks to the child(ren) are vague and not outlined helpfully. The student struggles to look back on their work and think about how risk could have been attended to in different ways. When offering ideas about how risk was addressed or could have been addressed, the student does not make good use of systemic theory or practice, so they fail to mention use of genogram, social graces and other systemic theory. Ideas about risk appear to be too certain.

High Distinction 80-100	Distinction 70-79	Merit 60-69	Pass 50-59	Fail >50
In addition to the criteria in distinction... Outstanding ability to offer sophisticated systemic formulations and hypotheses and to offer new ideas of what they could have done differently. All ideas expressed confidently and in articulate ways. Practice examples are of such high quality that ideas and interventions meet the standard similar to that of systemic practitioner.	In addition to the criteria in merit...Demonstrate s a very good grasp of systemic theory and evidences that this translates into excellent practice. Systemic interventions are a fit with the hypothesis offered. Actual illustrations of practice are offered – eg, examples of questions asked in a session, description of what was said when the social graces were addressed etc. Hypothesis/es are well constructed and give useful formulations for what might have contributed to aspects of the work. Ideas about the risk are thought about relationally and the child's presentation is understood by considering multiple perspectives. Careful attention is given to the issue of power.	In addition to the criteria in pass...Demonstrate s a clear understanding of systemic ideas and theory. Correctly identifies where systemic theory was used in the assessment – or could have been used now that they have completed some of the training. Shows that they made attempts to use systemic formulations and hypotheses to inform their thinking during the work. If they had not used these in the assessment process, shows ability to do this retrospectively and to say how this might have made a difference to the work with the family. Offers at least one hypothesis that is relevant to the assessment they completed and links it to an intervention that they tried (or would have tried had this hypothesis been formulated during the assessment work).	Is able to identify at least one systemic theory that they used in their work, or is now able to identify retrospectively, even if they did not have the theoretical knowledge at the time the assessment was completed to recognise it. If no systemic ideas were used in the assessment, is able to identify at least one that with the benefit of hindsight, might have been useful. Systemic theory is named and referenced correctly. Ideas offered may be limited or incomplete but attempts to use them are evident.	Describes how the assessment was completed but the description is basic and linear. No systemic theory is offered to support the ideas used in the assessment, or the systemic ideas offered are misunderstood or inaccurately explained. No attention given to the relational aspects of the work. No hypotheses offered.

Therapeutic relationship /20

High Distinction 80-100	Distinction 70-79	Merit 60-69	Pass 50-59	Fail >50
In addition to the criteria in distinction...Shows an outstanding capacity for self-reflexivity with regard to the therapeutic relationship. All ideas expressed confidently and in articulate ways. The issue of power imbalance in the relationship is explored in a complex and sophisticated way.	In addition to the criteria in merit...Considers the family's relationship to help both historically and in relation to wider social/political and contextual factors. Includes ideas about how the organisational culture and wider dominant discourses might have influenced what happened in the therapeutic relationship during the assessment. Attempts are made to show curiosity about how own social graces might have influenced their ideas about the family and contributed to the therapeutic relationship. Able to critique their own practice and consider what they might have done differently to improve the quality of this during the assessment process.	In addition to the criteria in pass...Attempts to hypothesise about what might have influenced the therapeutic relationship. Uses systemic ideas and theory to demonstrate this point. Includes ideas about how the social graces might have influenced the relationship between the family and the professionals. The power imbalance within the relationship between professional and family is attended to.	Offers a basic account of how the family related to the professional involvement in the context of this assessment. No offer of systemic theories that might assist in understanding the relationship between family and the worker, but is able to describe what the relationship looked like.	Gives a description of the way in which the assessment was completed but does not include anything about the family's relationship to help. No mention of how the family viewed the worker and what happened between family and professionals in the process of the assessment. No mention of any social graces and the influence they may have had to the therapeutic relationship.

High Distinction 80-100	Distinction 70-79	Merit 60-69	Pass 50-59	Fail >50
In addition to the criteria in distinction...Shows an outstanding ability to be self-reflexive and self-critical. Has great awareness of how this learning will impact on self and families in the future. Able to hypothesise about how practice and organisational culture may have influenced the family responses to intervention. Addresses the issue of power and the social graces in a sophisticated manner.	In addition to the criteria in merit...Excellent ability to critique and reflect upon own work. Offers a clear commitment to what to hope to do differently in their future assessments and how they will warm the context for change in the organisation. Considers how wider organisational, social and political influences or discourses have influenced the stated risk, their own formulations and the way in which they wrote the assessment. Attention given to use of power in the system. Offers suggestions about what might lie outside of their own awareness and how they might challenge themselves in practice going forward to maintain curiosity.	In addition to the criteria in pass... Shows a good ability to critique own work and self-reflect. Offers ideas on how the way in which they undertook the assessment either assisted or constrained the work with the family. Uses systemic theory to demonstrate this point. Able to explain how this process of retrospective, reflective critique may help with other cases going forward. Identifies personal social graces, experiences and beliefs which influence their preference for particular systemic ideas and interventions.	Begins to show awareness of how systemic ideas can influence the interventions they offer and that this can lead to a different outcome of an assessment. Makes an attempt to identify the challenges and possible benefits of using systemic ideas within an assessment context. Shows some ability to critique their own work. Offers a basic description of own learning and how understanding of risk has developed through doing this assignment. Mentions at least one aspect of 'self' either by referencing social graces or talking about how personal experiences or beliefs may have had an influence on the work.	Self-assessment is overly generous or lacking critique. Not able to see elements of practice that are linear or of concern. Lacks capacity to recognise that systemic ideas can be used in a risk assessment context. Has difficulty in recognising the impact of the assessment on family members and ideas are very first order. Takes a position of certainty in relation to risk and not able to critique that or move from that position. Does not explain how the systemic learning has expanded ideas or impacted on practice. No mention of 'self' in this process, social graces not referenced and personal experiences or beliefs not mentioned.

Presentation /10

High Distinction 80-100	Distinction 70-79	Merit 60-69	Pass 50-59	Fail >50
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In addition to the criteria in distinction... Exceptionally well written assignment. Demonstrates a high level of academic ability. Assignment reads in such a way that systemic ideas and language appear fluent and eloquent. Clear evidence that theoretical understanding also translates to very high quality practice (or intention of high quality practice if initial report was critiqued as having limitations).	In addition to the criteria in merit... Writing and presentation are of a very high standard. All sections attend well to the key learning objectives set out in the grading matrix. Detailed and coherent descriptions are offered of systemic theory and very good evidence of learning journey and self-reflexive practice.	In addition to the criteria in pass... Clearly written and easy to read. Succinctly presented ideas, well evidenced and good understanding of systemic theory throughout. Structured well and attends to learning objectives.	Reasonably written, spell checked and follows headings and learning objectives as required. Adequate standard of writing. Appropriate use of references and a bibliography provided.	Poor quality of writing which is hard to follow. Incorrect use of grammar, spelling mistakes and incomplete or incorrect referencing. Systemic ideas are misunderstood or incorrect. No subheadings and does not attend to the learning objectives. More than 15% unoriginal content. Assignment is over the word count.
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Overall mark /100