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THE REFLECTION PAPER

The Reflection Paper is an assignment that invites you to draw on your own experience. It is specific and might take the form of a short paper on course readings, a journal, reaction paper, or service placement opportunity. Read the assignment!

IN THE REFLECTION PAPER, YOU...

- *bridge* comprehension of course readings with your knowledge and experience in order to grasp the reading
- *integrate* your knowledge and experience with course readings and concepts by drawing on concrete examples
- *question* your assumptions about a course reading or service placement opportunity; it also invites you to challenge prior beliefs and arrive at a more complex, or new understanding of a reading, issue, or life experience

HOW IS A REFLECTION PAPER DIFFERENT FROM A RESEARCH ESSAY?

FEATURE	REFLECTION PAPER	RESEARCH ESSAY
STRUCTURE	Can have an open structure that connects, explores and integrates course content with life experience	Formal: each paragraph has a topic sentence to prove a thesis statement
THESIS STATEMENT	Generally does not require a controlling idea, however is often exploratory and/or argumentative	Organized around a thesis statement
POINT OF VIEW	First person ("I")	Generally third person
CONCLUSION	Does not need to be conclusive, but can identify questions and gaps in knowledge, make connections, or challenge prior assumptions	Concludes by summarizing the main points and also suggest questions for further research

A STRONG REFLECTION PAPER...	COMMON ERRORS IN REFLECTION PAPERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes insightful and unexpected connections using examples • reevaluates prior assumptions • develops narrative voice and a unique writing style • incorporates brief quotes from the course material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disengaged from course content • unfocused stream-of-consciousness • an uninformed, unstructured response

EXAMPLES FROM REFLECTION PAPERS

SUBJECT	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
Management: reflect on a branding campaign	Brings in experience to probe course material...	When I saw the poster advertising Ai Wewei's exhibition at the AGO, I realized I had come from China. I was already aware that Ai Weiwei was a provocateur in China; and this made it seem that much more enticing, as I might have a personal connection to China. When I later reflected on this experience, I realized that effective reflection is a personal connection from the viewer.
English Literature: reflect on an essay	Reevaluates prior assumptions...	Personally, I don't think Chesterton's description of the colour brown is hyperbolic at all; in fact, brown is the colour of the earth, from which life is derived, which thus supports existence. More importantly, the earth in itself is a prerequisite for creation of any kind. Thinking about the colour brown challenged my initial assumption that brown is a boring colour.
Psychology: reflect on social media	Draws on your knowledge to explain a concept...	One type of social influence I have experienced online is interpersonal influence. Online gaming demonstrates the interpersonal dimension of social influence. Players are motivated to form into organized groups in massive multiplayer online games. When forming these groups, various roles are played in order to accomplish the group's goal. Some of the roles include trading information to reach a destination or being the best player in the group.
Service Learning: reflect on service placement	Illustrates what you have learned from your service placement...	During my placement at CAMH working with a neuropsychiatrist, I developed a new perspective. For example, I read the articles written by the principle investigator. When I was at a practical and academic level with his work, he allocated more tasks to me, which increased my confidence and to bridge my academic knowledge of neuroscience with my experience in lab where the results are not always as cut-and-dry as they appear.

ONE APPROACH TO THE REFLECTION PROCESS

- Identify a fascinating issue, or concept that arose out of the course material, class discussion or service learning experience.
- Relate this to your experience and/or knowledge; you can also start with your experience and connect it to the course material.
- Consider how (a) helps to understand or even challenge (b) and vice versa.
- What are the implications of this in terms of your intellectual development, individual growth and/or understanding of the world?

Works Cited

Mezirow, Jack, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 1991. Print.
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