



**STUDYDADDY**

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**Below, you can see the assignment and an example of an essay that received a perfect score.  
In blue italics, you can see my comments about the essay.**

**Here was the Reading Response Essay assignment:**

**Assignment:** This week, you learned about workforce preparation in youth development programs.

This week, you read the following:

Reading 1: Villarruel Chapter 10

Reading 2: Villarruel Chapter 11

Your reading response essay should not include direct quotes from the readings if at all possible. If you either directly quote or paraphrase the author's words from the text, include the appropriate citation. Your reading response essay should address the following (and **MUST** be written in the same numbered format as you see below):

1. Thoroughly yet succinctly summarize the main points and highlight key themes for each reading. In your summary, include a one-sentence “take-away” message for each reading. (Length: at least one paragraph for each reading).
2. Discuss any shortcomings or provide a critique of the information presented for at least one reading (Length: at least one paragraph)
3. Discuss at least two overall strengths of this week’s readings. For example, you may discuss the merits of the topic, the information provided, how it contributes to and improves knowledge regarding CYD, the research that was cited, etc. (Length: at least two paragraphs)
4. Complete the following question/request. Include at least one citation from the reading to support your answer. (Length: at least two paragraphs).

Provide an example from your personal or professional life regarding a youth program (either court-mandated or not) that incorporates workforce preparation. Describe the program, its goals, atmosphere, and activities. What is the target audience in terms of age range for this program? Do the activities match up with the objectives in Box 10.2 on page 215? If you are unaware of such a program, create one. Is the program (either the real one or the imagined one) effective? Why or why not?

## Reading Response Example

### 1. Summaries

#### Reading 1 – Chapter 10

#### Working Hand in Hand: Community Youth Development and Career Development

A large portion of the purpose of Positive Youth Development is equipping and empowering youth throughout their adolescent years so that they transition smoothly into adulthood and can become active, productive, and contributing members of society. As a result, an important facet of community youth development programming is career readiness through workforce development. Throughout this chapter, Ferrari (2003) has provided an overview of frameworks and principles for programs employing career preparation and development. Due to attitudes and competencies that are applicable across a wide variety of career paths, and largely relate to general life-skills, the most advantageous time to begin this development is in elementary school. Similar to overall constructs of PYD/ community youth development programs, utilizing positive adult role models and relationships in the design and implementation of such curriculum will provide students the best opportunities for establishing necessary skills and thriving in this area. The most efficacious model for ensuring the learning of students is the Experiential Learning Model, where programming activities are not just theoretical or lecture-driven, but require active involvement while also providing space for discussion and processing. In addition, these activities should be created with the intention of: (a) developing positive attitudes toward both the essential nature of work and toward work in general, (b) understanding the different contexts that work is associated with, and related descriptions; and (c) understanding the roles of education, relationships, and personal attributes that jobs require.

*The requirement was just a one-paragraph summary. This student had a hard time being more succinct – so some of you may not have as long of a paragraph. However, the student was specific and clearly understood the material. So, it's a fine line – being able to succinctly yet thoroughly summarize the most important pieces of information. This is a skill that takes awhile to master! In your current class, you'll see that I have put both a minimum and a maximum on the length of the summaries, since it is important to be able to succinctly summarize academic material either so you can explain it to a non-academic audience if you need to OR if you are writing a grant with word limits, for example.*

#### Take-Away Sentence:

Approaches toward the development of career readiness is similar to that of community youth development programs; which include: (a) early-age developmental interventions (i.e. elementary-age students), (b) positive adult role models/ relationships; and (c) positive learning environments that incorporate activities that are experiential and applicable across the many situations of life, jobs, and careers (The Experiential Learning Model) (Ferrari, 2003).

*This student chose to separate her take-away sentence from the paragraph. This is fine - you don't have to completely separate it if you don't want to, but you do need to signal to me*

*somehow that it is your take-away or overall conclusion sentence. You can do this by saying, “In summary...” or something like that.*

## **Reading 2 – Chapter 11**

### **Workforce and Youth Development for Court-Involved Youth: Barriers and Promising Approaches**

Brown, DeJesus, Maxwell, and Schiraldi (2003) provide an overview of studies focused on youth development programs and the juvenile justice system toward adolescents successfully joining the workforce, namely in areas of reform barriers, literature review, successful court-youth serving programs, and policy initiatives toward program efficacy. The court systems, as they involve youth, are about 200 years old, and historically have not taken a positive youth development approach, but instead an approach that often included punishment and institutionalization. Research has shown that just because someone is consistently employed, does not mean they are successful in that employment role; which is similar to the attitude of prevention and positive youth development – The presence of something good has to be matched with indicators of thriving. According to youth professionals, difficulties in helping court-involved youth toward economic sufficiency includes the need for approaching issues with creativity and ingenuity, prioritizing workforce competency a much, relinquishing the “delinquent stigma,” obstacles related to proximal location; and the agreement upon an approach/ philosophy for juvenile justice (Brown et al., 2003, p. 231). Of the 15 successful programs that were examined, they found seven common guiding principles which are; (a) commitment to court and youth development purposes, (b) program goals that reflect the multifaceted needs of the youth such programs are serving, (c) comprehensive education, (d) effective collaboration, support, and accountability; and (e) case management toward outcomes.

Take-Away Sentence: According to the reports by Brown et al. (2003), in order for youth in the juvenile justice system to become economically self-sufficient, youth development programs and public policies must work together, remaining flexible to the ever-changing condition of such issues; and should have funding for programs, especially those that include efficacious principles such as all-inclusive care, case management, education, support, and accountability.

## **2. Shortcomings or Critique**

When I initially began reading the chapter about workforce development among community youth development programs by Ferrari (2003), I was excited about the information it would provide on this topic. As I read though, I kept expecting a new idea/ approach toward the implementation of this topic. While I deeply appreciate the universal applicability for the Positive Youth Development framework, I mostly felt that this chapter was an overview of PYD concepts, simply applied to another context. I appreciated that the Experiential Learning Model and associated examples were given (i.e., Box 10.1), however, I wished more time was spent on such examples (Ferrari, 2003, p. 211-212). For instance, it would have been helpful if a similar job shadowing/ workforce development example had been given in contexts across time (i.e., example during elementary, the same situation employed during middle school, and again during high school).

*The student did a good job of critiquing the reading for what it was. You can critique the reading by thinking about what it left out, what it didn't cover and you thought it should have given the topic, or something of the sort. You might disagree with a statement one of the authors made, or interpret the information presented in the chapter in a different way.*

### **3. Overall Strengths**

While my overall reaction to the overview of workforce development and CYD programs was not necessarily positive, I did feel that the “What You See is What You Get: Exposure to Career Options and Role Models” section to be a strength within this chapter (Ferrari, 2003, p. 217-218). I can recall a number of times throughout my childhood that I proclaimed a desire to be “*fill in the blank,*” but as I grew older, I more deeply came to understand what that career entailed, thus, the relinquishment of that desire. Further, I was often unaware of the subjects, education, and training involved in such career paths. For instance, throughout elementary school I deeply admired many members of my extended family; most of them holding careers in the medical field. This admiration mixed with my personal desire for helping people lead me to believe that I too wanted a medical career. This desire persisted until I realized that such a career was namely science-driven; a subject I didn't enjoy in school. Today, it can seem silly that I did not make those connections sooner. However, this gives me insight into the minds and understandings of children and adolescents; making the exposure to careers and role models an important facet of such development and readiness.

The second strength that I found throughout this week's reading was in the chapter about court-involved youth by Brown et al. (2003); namely in the effective programming principles. I mentioned in my Discussion Question this week that like most institutional systems, the American judicial system has downfalls that result in large gaps and associated disservices toward those they serve. The all-encompassing nature that these principles afford programming professionals provides a safety net that more adequately ensures efficacy and success for the youth they serve. More specifically, I liked the sensitivity toward populations that was included in the care continuum (i.e., “preventative care, assessment, and interventions that meet the various needs of different youth populations). I can recall a situation as a youth development professional where I witnessed the judicial system provide two vastly different youth (background, ethnicity, race, culture, etc.) with the same treatment program. Taking an educated guess, this specific treatment program had originally been designed for Caucasians; and while both of these youth were of minority populations, they were 1) not from the same minority group, and 2) the Caucasian-targeted population of such a program proved to be largely ineffective for these two minority adolescents.

*The student was able to decipher strengths of the readings. Make sure you don't just say that you liked the readings, but explain the benefit of the reading. Think about how it contributes to and improves knowledge regarding CYD, or the integrity of the research that was cited, etc.*

**4. Provide an example from your personal or professional life regarding a youth program (either court-mandated or not) that incorporates workforce preparation. Describe the program, its goals, atmosphere, and activities. What is the target audience in terms of age range for this program? Do the activities match up with the objectives in Box 10.2 on page**

**215? If you are unaware of such a program, create one. Is the program (either the real one or the imagined one) effective? Why or why not?**

The United Future Leaders (UFL) program seeks to “develop young leaders who impact the individual, peer, and social culture of their community through ongoing program participation” (United Future Leaders, 2007). While the UFL program does not hold a primary purpose of workforce preparation, many of the goals and activities parallel those described by Ferrari (2003). For instance, the UFL program targets students in late-elementary and early middle school (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade), and works to engage such students in experiential activities that appropriately challenge and develop both individual and team-building competencies (the Experiential Learning Model). Through the lens of Positive Youth Development, we also work to build positive relationships with students that reflect both role model and partnership-like relationships within an environment that is positive, encouraging, and flexible yet consistent. Other programming facets that align with principles outlined by Ferrari (2003) include: (a) facilitator training that occurs once per week, (b) research-based program development; and (c) programming that is appropriate according to developmental milestones (i.e., curriculum for fifth grade seeks to develop concrete understandings, and sixth grade curriculum builds upon such a foundation toward abstract/ applicable implementation).

The UFL activities largely match the “Career Preparation Objectives” outlined in Box 10.2, such as the: 1) development of an appreciation for and positive attitude toward work, 2) discussion of “work-related activities necessary in the home and school, importance of community workers, and how these workers help everyone, 3) descriptions of family members’ work, 4) identification of work activities that are appealing, 5) recognition of job interdependence, 6) examination of connections between personal values and abilities to occupational interests, 7) achievement from identification of goals and plan of action; and 8) recognition of the role that educational planning has on the achievement of such goals (Ferrari, 2003, p. 215). One activity in particular during the fifth grade curriculum demonstrates a number of these objectives. This activity is called “True North,” and students are to identify a career aspiration and an associated action plan to help them achieve this goal/ aspiration. Prior to the activity, program facilitators share/ describe a number of careers, job descriptions, needed education, and attributes necessary for that specific job. After students name a goal and create an action plan, they are blindfolded and guided through an obstacle course that represents distractions in life that can occur while trying to obtain a goal. To conclude this activity, facilitators and students engage in open discussion/ processing that helps students verbalize their experience and ensure understanding of learning outcomes. The interactive component of the True North activity, along with the other experiential and processing elements of the UFL curriculum serves as powerful learning experiences for students.

*Just a few notes: sometimes these Question 4 questions are multifaceted and complex – make sure you don’t lose points by not answering all of them! Also be sure to be concise in your Question 4 answers as well. Don’t forget to cite one piece of information from the reading to bolster your ideas – be sure to do that effectively and correctly in APA style!*

*You don’t need to include a reference list at the end, as you will likely only be referencing course material! So I know where to find the full citations for the in-text citation(s).*

## References

- United Future Leaders. (2007). *Texas Tech University: College of Human Science, Center for Adolescent Resiliency*. <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/hs/ufl/about.php>
- Brown, D., DeJesus, E., Maxwell, S., Schiraldi, V. (2003) Workforce and Youth Development for Court-Involved Youth: Barriers and Promising Approaches. In *Community youth development: programs, policies, and practices*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Ferrari, T. M. (2003). Working Hand in Hand: Community Youth Development and Career Development. In *Community youth development: programs, policies, and practices*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.



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