

JEP Reflective Questions

**MATH (108, 118, 125, 126, 245)
Spring 2008**

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These JEP Reflective Questions are designed to help you reflect upon your experiences as a service-learning student so that you can make the most of your community experiences. Please use these prompts to help you think about the practical applications of your USC course work in a 'real world' context.

Please read through all of the Reflective Questions prior to beginning your JEP assignment. The questions are related to and build upon one other. In addition, some of the assignments depend on your observations over the course of the semester (vs. during a particular week). We encourage you to refer back to previous responses and to take seriously your PA's feedback each week. Doing so will help you to learn more from your experiences.

***Please refer to the PA agreement you received in training for instructions regarding journal due dates and format requirements.**

WEEK ONE

Describe your initial experience at your JEP assignment. What are your most vivid impressions from your first day at your site? What are some of the notable social and physical characteristics of your JEP site (for example, the number, age, sex, race, and ethnicity of the people, and the size, space, decor, noise level, etc., of the classroom, buildings, and grounds)? **What are your goals and expectations for the next eight weeks?**

WEEK TWO

Describe the student with whom you are working and the responsibilities of your assignment. Why do you think your student was identified as someone who could benefit from math tutorial assistance? What are the particular issues, tasks or problems you are dealing with? How would you categorize your student's attitude towards math in general?

WEEK THREE

Compare and contrast your experiences at your JEP site with your own K-12 education. How is the school, its facilities, its approach to education and teaching (especially math education), etc., similar to or different from what it was like at the schools you attended? What are some of the unique strengths of and challenges facing the students and the school?

WEEK FOUR

Please note that this week consists of two assignments.

1. You are now half way through you JEP assignment and have had some time to reflect on what types of math exercises/lesson plans seem to work and do not work in terms of the tutorial assistance you are providing. **How did you develop your lesson plan and the math exercises for your assignment?** Identify one lesson plan or activity that worked really well with your students and one that is not worth repeating. What about these activities made them particularly in/effective? How did you determine whether the exercises are suitable for K-12 students, particularly in terms of their level of math skills and other age-related factors such as a short attention span?

2. Please log on to the Blackboard Discussion Board for the second part of the assignment. Note that this Blackboard assignment is due on Wednesday 12th March, 2008.

WEEK FIVE

How do you help your student make connections and transfer the skills and attitudes gained during your sessions to his or her life outside school? For example, what special interests or hobbies does s/he have? How could math be integrated into these activities? In other words, how can you demonstrate the importance or relevance of math in the real world? Part of determining how to make these connections rests in what type of learner your student seems to be: auditory (e.g., s/he likes to listen to explanations of how to solve math problems), visual (e.g., s/he likes to see each step of an equation written out), or kinesthetic (likes to use blocks or other manipulatives to “touch and feel” addition principles in action). Keeping your student’s learner-type in mind, **how can you use an understanding of your student’s learning style to develop strategies, techniques or activities that are particularly well-suited for him or her?** Provide an example from your work with the student.

WEEK SIX

How does tutoring a student in elementary math concepts help you to better understand the subject matter you are studying at USC? Provide a specific example from your work with the student thus far. How is your experience in the community otherwise affecting your experience in your MATH course at USC?

WEEK SEVEN

You are coming towards the end of your assignment at your site and now may be a good time to reflect on your student’s progress. **Do you feel that the student you are working with has made good progress in terms of advancing her/his math skills?** Have you witnessed a change in the student attitude towards math (you may want to re-read your Journal for Week 2)? How does the JEP approach, and particularly that of your own, towards math instruction differ from that in the class room? What advice would you give math instructors who have to motivate and teach large classes of students with various levels of math-skills?

WEEK EIGHT

According to USC’s mission statement, “The central mission of the University of Southern California is the development of human beings and society as a whole through the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit. The principal means by which our mission is accomplished are teaching, research, artistic creation, professional practice and selected forms of public service”.

http://www.usc.edu/private/factbook/USCRole_and_Mission_Statement_1993.pdf

Consider this statement in light of your experiences in JEP. Do you think public service-and specifically your service-learning experiences in the community via JEP-have helped to “cultivate” or “enrich” your “mind” and “spirit” and/or those of the community members with whom you worked? If so, how? If not, why not? Please describe in detail what you have gained from your experiences through JEP from an intellectual, spiritual and/or ethical perspective. How have your experiences in JEP compared to what you expected to get out of the program?