

JEP REFLECTIVE QUESTION

Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 100)
Spring 2008

Professor Borders
PA: Lori Itagaki

As a JEP student, your work in the community is similar to that of a social scientist who conducts “participant-observer” research. Throughout the course of the semester, you will observe and participate in the daily activities of those you meet at your JEP site, and you will write about your experiences on a weekly basis. These JEP Reflective Questions are designed to help you focus your observations and critically reflect on your experiences in relation to what you are learning about in your Introduction to Psychology course.

Please read through all of the Reflective Questions prior to beginning your JEP assignment. The questions are related to and build upon one other. 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 note that your experiences in the community will provide you with a valuable opportunity to apply the theories you are learning about in class. **Please be respectful of the community and the limits of your experience and knowledge.**

ALTERNATE QUESTION

If your experience at your JEP site doesn’t allow you to adequately answer a Reflective Question, you may choose another topic to write about. For example, choose a critical incident that might have occurred that week, and discuss the incident with help of a theory that may provide further insight in to why it happened.

YOUR WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS:

The core parts of each Reflection Question (which you need to focus on) are highlighted in bold. Use the additional parts of the question to guide/supplement your answer.

WEEK ONE – First Impressions of your JEP Site

Describe your initial experience at your JEP assignment. Include a detailed description of the responsibilities and activities involved in your particular assignment. What are your most vivid impressions of the site? What were some of your expectations prior to beginning your assignment and what were these expectations based on (e.g., mass media images or personal encounters)? How do your experiences this week compare to your expectations?

WEEK TWO - The Social and Physical Context

Describe the social and physical context of your JEP site. Try to be as specific as possible about the number of people that are there, as well as the age, sex, race, ethnicity, and any other significant characteristics of all those involved in your JEP assignment. Walk or look around your site and take in the environment; specifically, provide details about the size, space, decor, noise level, etc. of the classroom (or meeting room), the building(s) making up the site, its grounds, the neighborhood (or whatever you could see of the neighborhood on your way to your site). How do the aesthetics and overall feel of the site and neighborhood compare with the USC campus and/or other places you have worked or attended school? What are some of the main difference and similarities? Do you think that these differences or similarities (e.g., of the physical context of the class room) have any impact on the learning experiences of students at the site?

WEEK THREE - Sensation and Perception

Psychologists Kosslyn & Rosenberg state that “the processes of sensation and perception lie at the root of our experiences of being alive, serving as the foundation for most of what we know and do” (p.134). **Keeping this statement in mind, describe a meaningful event or series of events (positive or negative) in which you were involved at your site (or which you observed).** Discuss the various factors that may influence the ways in which you and other individuals perceive the same event or series of events differently? For instance, how does your racial/ethnic and gender identification, age, or social class influence your interpretation of the witnessed event(s) as

opposed to, e.g., a fellow colleague? What does this suggest about the importance of perception to society? (Be sure to cite specific examples in your discussion).

WEEK FOUR - Critical Incidents

Describe a meaningful event or series of events in which you were involved at your site. What are your thoughts and feelings about the event(s)? What are the perceptions and reactions of the other persons involved? How has this event affected or changed your relationship, your perspective roles, and/or your perspective about your assignment?

WEEK FIVE- Intelligence and Development

Psychologists have often suggested that intelligence is not a concrete entity that can be quantified, yet IQ testing continues to be a widely used tool to measure intelligence. **Do you think IQ tests provide the best indication of intelligence? Does the child(ren) with whom you are working display any special talents in one or more types of intelligences (e.g., linguistic and verbal, logic, spatial, body movement, musical, inter and intrapersonal, or naturalist)?** Provide some examples of students' comments or behaviors that display a particular type of intelligence. Does the school and/or teach encourage students to develop abilities in each of these areas? **Do some forms of "intelligence" seem to be more valued than others?**

WEEK SIX - Reflections on Introduction to Psychology and JEP

How have your experiences in the community helped you learn about psychology? What theories or concepts "came to life" most dramatically for you in your work with children? How have your perceptions of psychology changed, if at all? (Be sure to provide specific examples).

WEEK SEVEN - Stress and Health

The school environment can have a significant impact on the social and physical well-being of a child. **What potential physical or emotional stressors have you identified at your site (e.g., too much home work, little attention from teachers in the class room, or a lack of nutritious foods)?** How do children cope with stress? What attempts have teachers and/or staff at your site made to provide a sense of emotional and physical well-being for the children?

WEEK EIGHT - Review

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?