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 another. In addition, some of the assignments depend on your observations over the course of the semester rather than just a particular week. We encourage you to refer back to previous responses and to take your PA’s feedback seriously each week. Doing so will help you to learn more from your experiences.

Note that as you respond to the questions, you should concentrate on answering the main question(s) (i.e., those that are bolded). The additional prompts are ‘focusing questions’ to help you identify critical factors related to the main question.

*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? For instance, what are some of the notable social and physical characteristics of your JEP site (think of the number, age, sex, race, or ethnicity of the staff, faculty, and/or students; and the size, space, decor, noise level, etc., of the classroom, buildings, and grounds), and how do these characteristics make you feel? What are your goals for and expectations of the next eight weeks—in terms of your assignment and working with your mini course team?

WEEK TWO
Describe the process of developing your mini course, including the various factors you consider when developing your weekly lesson plans. What strategies have you identified for developing ideas about what to teach and how to teach it? What challenges are you facing (if any) in developing activities that can accommodate a wide range of levels and abilities? Describe the classroom dynamics and other features of your particular group of students. How have the unique characteristics of the class affected the direction of your mini-course? Be sure to use specific examples in your discussion.

WEEK THREE
Describe your early impressions of your mini-course team. How are you and your partners functioning as a group? Do you feel everyone is cooperating and making an equal effort? What strengths do you think each member brings to the table? What weaknesses are you concerned about, if any? What might improve the functioning of the team?

WEEK FOUR
Compare and contrast your experiences at your JEP site with your own K-12 (elementary and secondary) education. How is the JEP school, its science labs and other facilities, its approach to science
education and teaching, etc., similar to or different from what it was like at your school? What factors could account for the differences? **Finally, using specific examples, describe some of the unique strengths of the students, and of the school. Also, describe some of the challenges faced by the students, and by the school.**

**WEEK FIVE**

Go to the Environmental Protection Agency’s homepage and look up data about the community in which you are working: [http://www.epa.gov/epahome/commsearch.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epahome/commsearch.htm)
Enter the zip code for your site’s address and explore the information in the various databases (e.g., “My Environment” or “Envirofacts”)

**What kinds of pollutants and toxic chemicals are located near your JEP site?** How many and what kinds of EPA-regulated industries are nearby? Are they located primarily on major thoroughfares or in residential areas?

What can schools do to minimize or eliminate students’ exposure to toxic chemicals that contribute to disease and other health problems? Based on your knowledge and experiences this semester, **what recommendations would you make to school administrators to eliminate students’ exposure to toxic chemicals and/or to improve the health of children at the site?**

**WEEK SIX**

To what extent does the experience of teaching a mini-course help you to better understand the subject matter of your CHEM 105 course? Provide a specific example from the material you’ve covered in the mini-course thus far. **How would your lesson plan have been different if you had been teaching to a different age group, either older or younger?**

**WEEK SEVEN**

As you’ve probably seen in the classroom, and experienced yourself, students have many styles of learning. One style is to actively apply information that is learned in a classroom to real world settings. Some educators believe that being able to apply information helps students understand the information better, and also helps them remember it for longer. **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 chemistry be integrated into these activities? **In other words, how can you demonstrate the importance or relevance of chemistry in the real world?**

**WEEK EIGHT**

Review your journals for the entire JEP experience and then compose a summary of what you have learned and experienced over the last eight weeks. What kinds of things do you think the children learned from your mini-course? What did you learn in the process of teaching them (about teaching, about the subject matter, about the community, about yourself, etc.)? **How did your experience in JEP correspond to the goals and expectations you had at the beginning of the semester (week one)? Describe any special highlights from your experiences.**