

# JEP REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

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PSYC-LING 406-*Psycholinguistics*  
Professor Shepherd  
PA: Andrea  
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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 (RQs) are designed to help you focus your observations and critically reflect on your experiences in relation to what you are learning about in your USC course.

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS HINTS:

1. **Read the questions first.** Reading the question before you go to your JEP site is required in order to answer many RQs, and having the questions on your mind will when at your site will help focus your observations and improve your response to all RQs.
2. **Write as soon as possible.** As soon as possible after leaving your site, sketch out your answer to that week’s RQ. Even just taking a few notes about some difficult moments, things that surprised you or highlights will make writing later much easier and will provide the examples and observations you need to write an outstanding journal.
3. **Proof your work.** Like any college-level writing assignment, proof your work to make sure the writing is clear, error-free, and that you answer the question at hand.
4. **Read and respond to your PA's comments.** The questions are related to and build upon one other. So refer back to previous responses and to take seriously your PA’s feedback each week and respond to the feedback by following the PAs suggestions.
5. **Be respectful.** Show your respect by being mindful of the limits of your experience and knowledge. Avoid generalizations and stereotypical explanations of behavior; in other words, do not make arguments that assume you know how someone else thinks or feels or use these assumptions to explain the way people act or their circumstances.
6. **Use examples.** Focus on writing detailed and concrete accounts of people, social settings and conversations (including direct quotes, when possible). Never make claims without evidence or examples!

## YOUR ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

The core parts of each assignment (which you need to focus on) are highlighted in **bold**. Use the additional questions to guide/supplement your answer. Please refer to the PA agreement you received in training for instructions regarding journal due dates and format requirements. *Note that some weeks require longer responses and are worth more points.*

## **ESSAY ONE - “Preflection”**

***(1 page, 10 points, due: 9/26)***

*Please respond to one of the following prompts. Question #2 is for returning students only.*

#1: Over the next eight-weeks you will be taking your college education outside of the walls of the University. Based on what you know about JEP and what you know about your site, what do you imagine your JEP experience will be like? Make sure to explain why you think what you think and use examples from your experiences at USC and in the community to explain yourself. Make your imagined vision of your JEP experience specific by addressing these two questions: **Ideally, what would you like to learn from your experiences in JEP? When you think about JEP, what makes you the most nervous or concerned?**

#2: Think back to your last experience in JEP and think about how you can take what you've learned about JEP, USC and the surrounding neighborhood, or the organization or school you worked with and improve your experience this time around. **Now that you know something about how JEP works, what do you hope to learn from doing JEP again? What was the biggest obstacle you faced in your last JEP experience and how will you address that issue this time?** Make sure to use clear and detailed examples from your last JEP experience to explain your reasoning.

## **ESSAY TWO: Your Assignment**

***(1.5-2 pages, 15 points, due: 10/3)***

**Describe the responsibilities of your assignment, including a brief description of your reader.** What are the particular issues, tasks or problems you are dealing with? Using specific examples describe how have you attempted to respond to these things so far? What do you hope to accomplish with him/her over the course of the semester? **Why do you think the teacher has identified your reader as someone who could benefit from tutorial help?**

## **ONE-ON-ONE CHATS:**

***(Scheduled with your PA, 10/10-10/14)***

This week you will be meeting one-on-one with your Program Assistant to talk about your experiences in JEP. In place of a full-length essay this week, we ask that you take a few minutes to **jot down any questions, comments or concerns that you have about your JEP assignment so far.** For example, what are your tasks at the site and how are you adjusting to your new role? How are you relating to the people at your site? Are you having any problems with any of the logistical aspects of your assignment (e.g., schedule, transportation, Blackboard access, etc.)? *You do not need to submit these notes on Blackboard; rather, take them with you to your one-on-one chat with your PA so you are prepared and remember to talk about any issues that need to be addressed.*

## **ESSAY THREE: Language and Social Interaction**

***(1.5-2 pages, 15 points, due: 10/17)***

**Pay attention to the language that your reader uses in different contexts. Does he/she use more formal language with teachers and other authority figures? Does he/she switch to a more informal vernacular when speaking with peers? How does he/she interact with you (and**

vice versa)? Has this pattern changed at all over the last few weeks? Provide examples from your site, noting differences in the languages spoken (e.g., English vs. Spanish), topics of conversation, vocabulary, tone, loquaciousness, terms of address, etc.

#### **ESSAY FOUR: Learning a Language**

*(2 pages, 20 points, due: 10/24)*

**Pay attention to the grammatical and syntax errors made by the community student with whom you are working. Are there any patterns to these errors?** For example, do any students leave out particular grammatical morphemes, such as the plural or past tense? Are there any errors in sentence structure, such as failure to use correct “helping verbs” (e.g., is, have, etc.) or incorrect use of prepositions (e.g., saying “to” when the word should be “from”)? Can you identify other types of language errors? How are these errors consistent with the process of language acquisition? Might the errors be characteristic of someone whose native language is not English? How can you tell?

#### **BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION: Topic To Be Announced**

*(2 posts to Blackboard, 10 points, due: 10/31-11/4)*

*Instructions and topic will be posted on Blackboard.*

**Discussion purpose:** Your weekly journals consistently reveal a wide range of interesting insights and abilities that result from your coursework and service-learning assignments. Since students participate in JEP from more than 100 different courses each semester, and rarely do all students in a particular class choose to enroll in JEP, we lack the opportunity to bring you together on a regular basis to learn from one another. As a result, the educational benefits of participating in JEP are limited mostly to your individual or small group experiences. This forum is designed to counter the relative isolation of JEP’s service-learning assignments by providing an opportunity for you to share your insights with your peers.

#### **ESSAY FIVE: Observing Language Acquisition and Language Disorders**

*(2 pages, 20 points, due: 11/7)*

One your LING 406 course objectives is to allow students to “identify key concepts relating to language and cognition, language acquisition, and language disorders.” **Based on your experience at your JEP site, what observations can you share relating to the language acquisition process and to language disorders? Have you personally observed some of the steps involved in language acquisition? Have you noticed any language disorders? If so, give a detailed account of the disorder as well as your observations.** Make sure to use both your course materials and concrete examples from your experience to answer this question.

#### **ESSAY SIX: Using Psycholinguistic Research Methods**

*(1.5-2 pages, 15 points, due: 11/14)*

Another of your LING 406 course objectives is to “demonstrate an understanding of current psycholinguistic research methods, as well as the ability to interpret results obtained with these methods and to use these methods yourself.” **For this week’s assignment, choose a particular area of interest (for example: language acquisition, language comprehension, language pathology, or any other relevant areas) and consider your psycholinguistic observations at your JEP site through one of the research methods you have studied in PSYC 406. What research method have you used to gather this data? How would a psycholinguist analyze**

**these observations? What conclusions would he/she draw from them? Which psycholinguistic theory, if any, would your observations back up?** Make sure to use detailed examples from your observations as well as your relevant course material.

### **ESSAY SEVEN: Final Reflections**

***(2.5-3 pages, 25 points, due: 11/21)***

Take a look back at the essays you have written (make sure to use Blackboard, so you can see your PA's comments), and think about what you have learned over the past few weeks. It is often noted that one of the benefits of service-learning for participating students is “higher academic achievement.” For this final essay, we want you to focus on this particular outcome vis a vis your JEP assignment. **First, consider the premise itself: how does participating in a service-learning program lead to higher academic achievement?** When does it fail to do so? Do students’ outcomes vary by the subject matter of the course? Or do they vary by their experiences in the community? **Describe what you think are the most important factors in a service-learning assignment that ensure “higher academic achievement” for university students.**

**Next, think about your JEP experiences in the context of your USC course: What is the most significant “academic” outcome of your JEP assignment? How has JEP affected your understanding of the course content?** Why do you think your professor is giving academic credit for JEP? What are his or her goals for you? In answering these questions, make sure to use specific examples from your course. Think broadly about the relationship between JEP and your course. Even if you believe there is no direct connection, consider how you could apply a course concept to help better understand or explain something you encounter in your JEP experience. You might focus on detailing a specific learning outcome (e.g., describing a particular theory and how it came to life through your experiences, or how teaching helped you to understand a particular course concept). Alternatively, you might reflect on how your experiences in JEP shed light on material you have learned in other courses at USC.

*The goal of this assignment is for you to think critically about the academic outcomes of service-learning and describe what you learned from your experience. If you are struggling to make the connection, as an alternative, explain, in detail, how you think the course or JEP could be redesigned to foster a more meaningful connection between your course and a service-learning experience in the community.*