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”

(I page, 10 points, due: 9/26)

Please review the following websites to learn about the missions of both JEP and 826LA:

- http://www.usc.edu/jep/
How will your work as an after-school tutor contribute to the goals of both JEP and 826LA? Consider your unique status (as a teacher and as a student) as well as the unique educational context of 826LA in which you will be working. Do you have any concerns about your JEP role? What challenges do you anticipate?

ESSAY TWO: Service Learning at 826LA
(1.5-2 pages, 15 points, due: 10/3)

If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.
— Booker T. Washington

The above quotation espouses the philosophy that people help themselves when they are helping others, which is also a key concept in service-learning. Reflect upon this quotation in the context of your JEP assignment.

How can you draw upon the lessons you have learned as a USC student to tutor your students at 826LA? How do you think your students will benefit from working with you? What kinds of skills and/or knowledge do you anticipate you will gain from this service-learning opportunity? Have you considered how your JEP assignment might influence your own strengths and weaknesses as a writer, reader, and/or student?

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

How would you categorize your students’ attitudes towards learning? What do you think 826LA as an organization offers to the students you have been working with? Think back to any experiences you may have had with after-school tutoring or learning outside of school at a similar age: how would you have responded to sessions such as the ones you have been facilitating for your students? Compare and contrast your experiences at 826LA with your own K-12 education. In what ways is 826LA (e.g., its facilities and its approach to teaching), similar to or different from what it was like at your school?

ESSAY FOUR: Memorable Events
(2 pages, 20 points, due: 10/24)

Describe a meaningful event or series of events (positive or negative) in which you were involved at 826LA, and go into detail describing the who, what, where, when, why, and how. Why does this event stand out as particularly important or meaningful to you? How has it affected your relationship to others at the site, your role there, and/or your perspective about your JEP assignment?
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: Defining Terms
(2 pages, 20 points, due: 11/7)

A good understanding of basic terms is necessary for any literature scholar. Pick a word that relates to your experience as an educator at 826LA and/or as a student at USC. Look up the definition of the term in a comprehensive dictionary such as the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (http://www.merriam-webster.com/). Now, develop your own, unique definition of the term, drawing from your experiences at 826LA. How has your JEP experience changed the meaning of this word for you? Use specific examples from your after-school tutoring experience in your answer.

ESSAY SIX: Improving the Service Learning Partnership
(1.5-2 pages, 15 points, due: 11/14)

How could the JEP/826LA partnership be improved for the benefit of future JEP and 826LA students? What worked well? What did not work well? What do you feel 826LA as an organization has to offer its volunteers, and in particular USC students?

ESSAY SEVEN: Final Reflections
(2.5-3 pages, 25 points, due: 11/21)

“Service-learning” is an approach to education that attempts to link college classrooms with civic organizations in mutually beneficial ways. Proponents of the pedagogy identify many potential benefits of service-learning, emphasizing to a greater or lesser degree the impact of the pedagogy on individuals, institutions and society at large. For example, some focus on the positive learning outcomes for students. Others note the ability of service-learning to support community organizations or to transform educational institutions. Others believe the pedagogy can address issues of social and economic inequality, while still others argue that service-learning strengthens democracy by engaging student-citizens in society.

Think about these perspectives in relation to your own experiences as a service-learning student at 826LA this semester. What do you see as the primary impact of service-learning? How did you benefit personally? How were the individuals and organization with whom you worked in the community impacted by the experience? How might service-learning make a difference in a larger way, for example, at the university or in society? In your opinion and based on your experiences, what, specifically, can service-learning do to benefit individuals, institutions and societies, and what are the limits of service-learning in each of these contexts (i.e., personal, institutional and societal)?