

JEP REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Art of Living Volunteers
PA: Anna
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These JEP Reflective Questions are designed to help you reflect upon your experiences as a member of a mini-team so that you can make the most of your community teaching experiences. 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 regular basis. These JEP Reflective Questions are designed to help you focus your observations and critically reflect on them in order to make the most of your experiences in the community.

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 with 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 psychological 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 - “Pre-reflection”

(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 JEP, 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: Assessing your Plan

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

Consider the eight-week curriculum you will be teaching with your mini-team. **How do you think this curriculum will convey what you are learning through the Art of Living to your students? What are your teaching goals?** What are some of the challenges you expect over the coming weeks? What strategies will you use to overcome these challenges?

EIGHT-WEEK PLAN DUE

(due: 10/10-10/14)

See your PA agreement for details.

ESSAY THREE: The Team

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

Describe your impressions of your mini-course team. How well are you gelling as a team? What strengths do you think each member brings to the table? What weaknesses are you concerned about, if any? How do you think about your own role in the team? **That is, what strengths and weaknesses do you bring and what skills would you like to develop?**

ESSAY FOUR: The Local Role of JEP and Art of Living Foundation

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

Explore the Art of Living websites (<http://us.yesplus.org> and <http://us.artofliving.org/losangeles>) to find more information about the organization and its programs. What is the Art of Living's mission? What are some of the Art of Living's goals? What types of programs does the organization operate both in the US and abroad? What programs do they operate in Los Angeles? **Now explore the JEP website (www.usc.edu/jep) and consider the ways in which the Art of Living's mission might overlap with JEP's?** Do JEP and Art of Living have similar goals for the community? **Finally, how does your assignment align with both the Art of Living's goals and JEP's goals?**

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 service-learning assignments. Since you are participating in JEP as an independent volunteer (rather than for a course), we lack the opportunity to bring you together with your peers 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: Your Role in a Community Service Organization

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

Reflect on your role at your site as a participant in a community service organization. List one or two things that you have done that might benefit the person(s) with whom you are working, either immediately or in the long run. Consider some of your personal limitations as a helper. Was there something you could have done to benefit your student/client but did not do, perhaps because you could not do it? What kinds of limitations do community service programs like JEP face when working in the community?

ESSAY SIX: Living in the Moment

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

The Art of Living is an advocate of meditation as a way to achieve not only "Peace in me," but also "peace on earth." (<http://us.artofliving.org/>) In fact, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living, posits that, "if everybody in the world lives in the present moment, if we are able to accept people as they are, there will be no problems, no strife."

Consider these statements in the context of your JEP assignment. Have you witnessed any changes in your students' attitude toward yoga and meditation? Do you think your intervention at your JEP site contributes not only to the well-being of your students, but also to the well-being of the larger community? If so, how? If not, why not?

ESSAY SEVEN: Final Reflections

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

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/about/core_documents/)

Consider this statement in light of your JEP experience with Art of Living. Do you think public service and your specific experience 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?