

# Exit Self-Assessment

## My Synthesis Product Shows That... Developing as a Reflective Practitioner

### Describe for each goal

- a) something that reflects what you have achieved well related to this goal, and
- b) something you have struggled with/ need more help on/ want to work further on.

#### I. "MY SYNTHESIS PRODUCT SHOWS THAT..."

(adapted from the "Phases of research and engagement" in the Practicum course in the expectation that these are also relevant goals for students' work in moving towards the synthesis product)

A. I can convey who I want to influence/affect concerning what (Subject, Audience, Purpose).

Subject- the LGBT community, Audience- soon to be, new, and experienced allies, Purpose- through my own journey I'm illustrating the need and reasons why there needs to be more vocal allies within the LGBT movement.

- A- I think the most powerful element of the project was the personal stories, my personal reflections, and my personal take-aways from examining the history. If anything, showing my journey, my thinking process hopefully will open doors to others and help guide them through their own self-reflection.
- B- I think I was weakest with who exactly I wanted to influence. I left it broad because I wanted the paper to be accessible to anyone, but moving forward I would like to narrow in on a specific audience like college administrators or professors and guide them in reflection.

B. I know what others have done before, either in the form of writing or action, that informs and connects with my project, and I know what others are doing now.

- A- In examining and collecting parts of the history of the LGBT movement, I feel I clearly know what has been done relating to my project. But, also I utilized research studies of LGBT experiences at college and high school, and through volunteering and researching current organizations that support the LGBT community I know what is currently being done.
- B- I think what was most difficulty for me was being able to pull from multiple sources in the LGBT history. I relied on 2 main pieces that luckily drew from other works, but I wish I would have had the time to further investigate more sources pertaining to the history, or I wish I would have focused on 2-3 main events, where I could have gather more resources pertaining to those events. But I decided to span the history from the 20-90s.

C. I have teased out my vision, so as to expand my view of issues associated with the project, expose possible new directions, clarify direction/scope within the larger set of issues, and decide the most important direction.

- A- In 692 I started with a narrow focus (LGBT professional development for faculty and staff at colleges), then when moving into 694, I decided to broaden my project to the general public, and more importantly wanted to use my journey of becoming an ally to inspire new allies and those wanting to become stronger allies. Within the field of LGBT studies and issues pertaining to the community, I could have gone in a variety of directions, allies for trans people, allies for lesbians, allies for those affected with HIV. Because this was my first intentional foray in to looking holistically at the LGBT community, I chose to stay broad, so that I could see where within the field I want to focus my time or where I have more questions, and more importantly so that I have a full picture of where the movement started and where it is today.
- B- I roughly touched issues pertaining to the trans community. I am becoming increasing more interested in this issue because it's not about sexual preference, but not identifying with the biological sex given at birth.

D. I have identified the premises and propositions that my project depends on, and can state counter-propositions. I have taken stock of the thinking and research I need to do to counter those counter-propositions or to revise my own propositions.

A- The overall research claims that my project suggests is that homosexual and transgender lifestyles are accepted affirmed and appropriate in US culture. It should be viewed on the same page as a heterosexual lifestyle. The counter argument to that is homosexuality is not natural and different from what is deemed right in society. From what I have researched, my argument back to that proposition would be that all people are the same, sexual preference and orientation is a personal choice that.

Another research focus within my project is that the oppressive experiences of LGBT people are just as important as those as other oppressive identities; such as race, class, religion, etc. The counter argument to that is history will tell us that race and class have much more negative impact on those effected; whereas LGBT is a choice made by people; thus they are self-inflicting the oppression on themselves. My counter to that is all oppression is the same and the structure involved/laden values within oppressors are the same. Therefore because LGBT is new it needs to be given a proper exploration, as we have given other social identities.

The last focus within my research is based off the premise that understanding and being aware of the history of LGBT experiences will be beneficial for improving the lives of current LGBT people, especially college aged students. To that statement some will say, so what? History does not matter to our current context. My argument back is that LGBT students need to recognize that in learning about the history of the LGBT movement that they can gain a deeper respect, familiarity, and perspective on what has taken place for them.

B- Because the subject of my project is personal, connected strongly to individual worldviews, beliefs and values, I have to be careful with how I communicate my purpose. Some might think that I speak negatively about the Bible in the third section of the paper, but I have not. Rather, I have spoken negatively to how organized religion has misused the Bible for advancing a certain viewpoint. I never mentioned that believing in God is wrong or that all Christians do not like the gay community. In moving forward and working with others to become stronger allies I will need to continue thinking about their perspectives that they bring to LGBT work. Luckily, CCT has given me a toolbox of activities and reflection strategies to help people tease out their biases and assumptions.

E. I have clear objectives with respect to product, both written and practice, and process, including personal development as a reflective practitioner. I have arranged my work in a sequence (with realistic deadlines) to realize these objectives.

A- The objectives within my synthesis was to illustrate my journey in becoming an ally, take readers through the history, provide reflective prompts, and then demonstrate how I'm currently taking action as an ally. I started with my opening paragraph and outline. In outlining the sections of the paper it was easy for me to give myself deadlines and focus on each section at a time. About week 3-4, I realized through doing the daily writings that my own friendships were worth talking about in the paper and that I did not want to focus on professional development for faculty and staff. After this realization, I had more freedom to make things personal through using my own story and experiences. It was very important for me to add this element to the project because through doing so, I examined my own reflections and how I've developed through 692 and 694 (It also meant I actually had to reflect on these things!). After submitting my first full draft, which was a deadline provided by Jeremy, I realized my paper was divided into four sections. This realization made it easier to focus on one section a week, adding more and revising parts. A week prior to submitting the first draft, we had our first WIP. At the WIP I knew I wanted to show the tumblr I created for the project and wanted to get feedback. In some ways, all of the parts within my overall objective organically fell into place.

B- Throughout 694 I have to admit I was not intentionally thinking about the process of doing this project. I was just doing it. In some ways it was an item on the checklist that had to get done. Yes, the writing workshops allowed us to stop and vocalize our feelings, but I was not thinking about or pay attention to the ways I was undertaking this process in working through the project. I'm doing it now though!

F. I have gained direct information, models, and experience not readily available from other sources.

- A- My own experiences directly inform my project that is unique to me as an ally. Also in working with LGBT College students, hearing their struggles, successes, and dreams has impacted my own perspective and what I take away from the history of the LGBT movement.
  - B- In 692 I start to informally interview students, which gave me direct information, but unfortunately I dropped the ball in interviewing more students this semester.
- G. I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports.
- A- One big turning point for me in clarifying my argument and thus my research and report was realizing that I really did not want to focus on professional development. I wanted to separate this project from my workplace. My work with students does come into play within the report; I just didn't want the responsibility of advocating for more professional development because I needed to take the time to focus on my own development as an ally. I think the second turning point in clarifying my project was after I received comments from my first complete draft. Having outside readers provide me their reading of the report helped to show me where there were holes and gaps. Even when my copy editor reviewed the report, her comments helped me make sure the voice was consistent throughout.
  - B- In moving forward and tackling larger and even smaller pieces, this project makes me aware of the value of outside perspectives in clarifying the message. All writers need outside readers to double check little things and larger content messages. In some ways I have these people already at work, who check my work, but I think now I know just how important they are.
- H. My writing and other products Grab the attention of the readers/audience, Orient them, move them along in Steps, so they appreciate the Position I've led them to.
- A- Yes, my aim was to grab the reader through sharing personal stories and couple those stories with some theory concerning LGBT issues, then move propose how learning the history of the LGBT movement gave me confident and background knowledge in being a more vocal ally. At the end, hopefully my reader is inspired to use the reflective questions to initiate through own process in becoming an ally.
  - B- I'm not sure how well of job I did in moving them along steps. I feel like I oriented them to the situation and then said, so this is what you need to do. I think that could have been more flushed out.
- I. I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation.
- A- My action of creating a tumblr is a new adventure for me. At this point I'm pretty happy with the tumblr. It serves the basic principle of showcasing LGBT people within society who are making a difference. The project has also led me to take a more active role in opening my office space to LGBT students. Opening my office to them as a safe space on campus has been great.
  - B- In some ways I can see the downfall of the tumblr in being that I do not have the best history of being good with daily tasks. The tumblr needs to be updated consistently, if I ever want it to gain any kind of traction in terms of views by other people. So I've given myself a goal of updating it at least three times a week.
- J. To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing.
- A- The ultimate check list was my rock in being productive this semester. Every week after class, I would make a list of things I need to accomplish and give myself due dates. The list was in my journal as well on my desk top of my computer. Following the list weekly and then the simple joy of deleting and striking a line through the item gave me enough ammunition to keep it up. I almost learned the power of using personal stories. In moving forward I want to make sure to tap into my own experience more at work. In some ways I've been timid to do this at work, but in seeing how useful stories are to convey a message, my timid feelings must go.
  - B- What needs changing, well like I mentioned in E, I was not continuously thinking of the different strategies of process I was employing to complete my project. I think using different metacognition reflective prompts would be helpful in making sure I'm connecting and reflecting, why and how I choose to complete research, reflective projects.

## **II. DEVELOPING AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER, INCLUDING TAKING INITIATIVE IN AND THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS**

1. I have integrated knowledge and perspectives from CCT and other courses into my own inquiry and engagement in social and/or educational change.
  - A- At my workplace I have revised several reflective activities that I use with both faculty and students to pull out more critical and creative thinking elements. I have also focused on using problems/case studies as a way to center on divergent and convergent thinking. In learning the process and value of metacognition, I see how that has taken effect within my own thinking patterns, which thus ripples out to everything else.
  - B- I've started using the activities from my CCT courses in the work place, but usually something seems to go wrong in the explaining the purpose. One time I did a free writing exercise with a class and the students looked at me like I was on drugs; "what you just want me to write, like continuously." I'm going to continue using the activities I've learned, but I need to learn how to explain and set things up so that people are more likely to want to participate and get something from the exercise.
  
2. I have also integrated into my own inquiry and engagement the processes, experiences, and struggles of previous courses.
  - A- Being able to select our own topics for projects throughout CCT allowed me to integrate my own interests which thus developed my engagement for inquiry. From feminist epistemology to food contamination, and lastly LGBT issues I was able to create a process for engaging in research and reflection, which lead to being able to utilize critical thinking dispositions, divergent and convergent thinking patterns to help bring ideas together, as well as expand out to further areas of interest.
  - B- This has become deeply seated within me. In some ways the CCT dispositions are now fully apart of my thinking process that I actually don't realize it. I'm realizing that explaining my thinking patterns to others is going to be a challenge.
  
3. I have developed efficient ways to organize my time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies, etc.
  - A- Working full-time and taking classes, one class or even two classes, I have definitely had to learn to utilize my time and be organized. For the past few years, Saturday and Sunday's mornings from 8-noon was time to focus to on class. Throughout the week I would use some of my lunch time to research online and print reading materials. I've really enjoyed using the wiki because it keeps everything in one place. In using the wiki, I have started using Dropbox and Google docs to keep things also in one place and to keep in another place besides my computer. In terms of research skills, I most utilized the google scholar alerts and then also references the work cited pages in primary articles I read to find more sources.
  - B- I have to admit; I created an account on Refworks, but never used it. It was easier for me to keep things organized myself and I kind of enjoyed formatting all the sources.
  
4. I have experimented with new tools and experiences, even if not every one became part of my toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and reflective practitioner.
  - A- Most of activities I experienced throughout CCT were new to me. One of my favorites was DeBono's Thinking Hats. I do this regularly now with students I work with, when they need help in solving problems, or if I want to them to think through a situation. I've also refreshed my practice of journey writing and keeping a consistent notebook for my thoughts. I know have a PD workbook that I use at work. It's is helping me keep things organized, keep a record of things I've done and accomplished and helps me stay focused.
  - B- I think it is difficult to name all of the activities we have experimented with as CCT students. It actually might be really interesting on the CCT website to have a link to a running list of activities commonly used in courses.
  
5. I have paid attention to the emotional dimensions of undertaking my own project but have found ways to clear away distractions from other sources (present & past) and not get blocked, turning apparent obstacles into opportunities to move into unfamiliar or uncomfortable territory.
  - A- This was a hard one for me. I'm actually really surprised I didn't cry during the presentation. As I cried to myself multiple times when watching films or reading personal accounts. I was at an anti-racist workshop focused on white women as allies a couple years back. I remember the speaker saying, that the people of color in the room don't need to you cry for them or cry because of guilt, cry because of any and all reasons, that crying continues to show privilege you have in the situation. Throughout this project her words her in the back of my head.

B- So instead of crying in public, I turned to sarcasm. I don't want to continue being sarcastic when thinking or talking with others about LGBT issues. I don't think it's a suitable approach, but I'm continuing to work through my own coping mechanism in how to deal with my privilege in the situation.

6. I have developed peer and other horizontal relationships. I have sought support and advice from peers, and have given support and advice to them when asked for.

A- Developing close friendships within CCT has been the best part of CCT. I was not expecting to make such good friends. Through these friendships, I learned how to listen, how to provide appropriate feedback, and how to ask for help when I need it. Being in the peer writing group with CCT is a perfect example of any of the buddy systems in 692 and 693. In the peer writing group, we developed a schedule for sharing work that could either be in sharing a piece of writing or just having the time to help with brainstorming. We each took initiative in using the time to the fullest.

B- In my first CCT course, I actually struggled with a classmate who was in my group for PBL. I had never had a problem in working with people before in a team setting and was bothered in my relationship with this classmate. Luckily, this was the only time in CCT where I experienced difficulty in working with people. But, what I learned from the situation is that I need to listen to people and not project my desires or directions on people.

7. I have taken the lead, not dragged my feet, in dialogue with my advisor and other readers. I didn't wait for them to tell me how to solve an expository problem, what must be read and covered in a literature review, or what was meant by some comment I didn't understand. I didn't put off giving my writing to my advisor and other readers or avoid talking to them because I thought that they didn't see things the same way as I do.

A- I think I was very proactive in taking initiative in submitting work to my advisor and reader. I met all of the deadlines that were given to us. I also took time to think about their comments, ask questions if I needed help making sense of their comments, and had a follow-up meeting with both advisor and reader after seeing their comments of my initial complete draft. I think I took to heart the criticisms they provided and thoroughly made revisions and additions where needed. I found both advisor and reader to be very accessible. In some ways, I always felt proud and honored to be sharing my writings with them.

B- It has always been easy for me to have good relationships with faculty members and advisors. What I'm not good at is maintaining those relationships after the experience ends. Like with the friendships I have made through CCT, what I want to continue to work on is maintaining the community I've had in CCT. This means that I will need to attend the monthly community meetings and try to communicate regularly with my CCT friends.

8. I have revised seriously, which involved responding to the comments of others. I came to see this not as bowing down to the views of others, but taking them in and working them into my own reflective inquiry until I could convey more powerfully to others what I'm about (which may have changed as a result of the reflective inquiry).

A- Like I said in question 7, I took seriously the comments from my reader and advisor. Their comments were pivotal in helping me clarify my voice. Their comments relating to why the history matters helped me to reflect and connect my project with CCT. It also enabled a consistent personal tone to occur throughout the entire project.

B- I have to admit some comments were hard for me to think about. In 694, some comments took me in other directions I did not want to go, or just a little unnecessary. So I just decided not to change anything. But I didn't make this decision hastily. I stopped and reflected first and then ultimately went in the direction I thought was best.

9. I have inquired and negotiated about formal standards, but gone on to develop and internalize my own criteria for doing work—criteria other than jumping through hoops set by the professor so I get a good grade.

A- Doing this was hard for me in CCT, or at least I definitely struggled with it. I've grown up thinking I need to get good grades and that grades are what really matter. CCT helped to dispel that myth and prove that reflection and personal inquiry is what matters. So at the end, what I take away from the program is much more than grades, it is in some ways a new worldview for viewing education, my power in creating change, and what needs to be promoted in the K-16 system.

B- In some ways this question is kind of difficult, because when there are points systems for calculating grades, I feel like that promotes a dependency on getting a good grade. I admit, with the point systems, I did the work to get the points, at least with some assignments. At the end, like I said in section A, the grade ultimately does not matter. The journey I take, how I make new connections, and how it impacts own processes for engagement, is going to be the end result, the long lasting effect of CCT.

10. I have approached the CCT synthesis course and the CCT program as works-in-progress, which means that, instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, I have found opportunities to affirm what is working well and to suggest directions for further development.

- A- Yes, at the end of each course, I had the opportunity to give an evaluation of the course and with some classes, actually close to all classes, I submitted a final reflection on how I think I did in the class, things I thought I did well in and areas that I hope to improve. Doing this allows me to develop a process of continual self-evaluation and enables me to let off steam when I needed, instead of waiting till the end.
- B- If only I felt I could be so critical in all situations in my life. I want to look at work and personal relationships and see if there are ways to develop a process for continual check-ins or times when we can see how things are going, so that in those relationships I know I'm doing all I can to be successful.