

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).

Though I initially struggled to define my goal and vision, I later found I could develop and share my message more clearly by sharing my story through personal narrative. In future, I will work to clarify my initial purpose and audience earlier in the process to allow more time to craft my message.

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.

I have begun to research what others have done in the space of reflective practice to learn how this might impact and inform my own work. Going forward, I would like to focus more attention on alternative sources of information, rather than solely on written work.

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.

Through feedback and tools such as mind-mapping, I have been able to work through a number of ideas about how to approach my synthesis project and then ultimately refine my vision to one primarily of personal narrative describing my own path and growth throughout the CCT program. In future, soliciting additional feedback from more disparate sources may help me to identify even more possible directions or perspectives to consider.

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.

I struggled with identifying premises and propositions in this project because it was primarily a personal, reflective essay and I was caught up in my own self-reflection. In hindsight, better leveraging the concept of propositions and counterpropositions likely would have helped me to deepen that reflection and perhaps identify new and interesting insights to pursue further.

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.

I'm a big fan of frameworks and processes and enjoyed leveraging that in developing a planned approach for future reflective practice. Though the plan has distinct stages and activities, I could

have better clarified timeframes and deadlines to encourage ongoing progress within that process.

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

This is an area that I need to develop further. While I'm comfortable researching for information online and in books, discovering information that may not be readily available tends to take a backseat when I'm going down the rabbit hole of available information. To this end, I need to work further to identify unique or niche avenues of thought earlier on. During this synthesis, I was able to glean some information and models from classmates' presentations which was very helpful, though somewhat late in the semester to fully develop and incorporate into my project. Beginning this work earlier in the process will allow more time to explore and incorporate what I learn.

G. I have clarified the overall progression or argument underlying my research and the written reports.

Working through the presentation of my synthesis was pivotal to helping to clarify the overall progression. The need to explain it out loud to a live audience helped me to think through the appropriate order of my written work and how to set the scene for the overall project. Going forward, it might be helpful to prepare for the WIP earlier on in the process, even in very rough form, to help me to clarify and make earlier decisions about the work.

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.

I found that sharing personal narratives, particularly those that left me feeling a bit more vulnerable, seemed to resonate with readers more than I had expected. An initial fear that I was oversharing and providing too much information was quickly assuaged as readers commented that these were pivotal to understanding my perspective and goals. In future, if the writing feels too dry or comes too easily to me, I should like to take a step back and review the GOSPiness as it may be that the personal perspective is missing or incomplete.

I. I have facilitated new avenues of classroom, workplace, and public participation.

I am in the process of developing a workshop or guide for use by others who are undertaking a similar effort at personal change. I do need to consider further how I might make this guide or workshop available to others, whether by written or electronic product or as something to be delivered in person. Much of this will depend on my own role as facilitator and how engaged in delivering this workshop I can be.

J. To feed into my future learning and other work, I have taken stock of what has been working well and what needs changing.

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I continue to struggle with procrastination in the sense of making decisions. I struggle to decide on a topic or even a single direction to pursue for fear of going down the wrong road. Once that decision is made, I feel I do well researching and pursuing the train of thought but I would like to work on getting to that point earlier in the process.

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.

I found that my own work from other courses and observing the work of my classmates has often inspired and informed this synthesis as well as my other work in the program. In this case, observing peer presentations for another course inspired my own approach forward as a reflective practitioner and, in developing a reflective essay as my synthesis, my prior work in psychology, philosophy, action research, and other courses became the foundation of my story. In future, I'd like to continue this integration and reflection with a focus on finding and exploring the connections that are perhaps 'not so obvious' and see what interesting avenues can be explored.

2. I have also integrated into my own inquiry and engagement the processes, experiences, and struggles of previous courses.

I continue to struggle with time management and early decision-making, in the sense that I spend too much time wondering and questioning what goal/purpose I want to pursue. This has been a theme in previous coursework, with some efforts more successful than others in addressing it, but continues to be something I need to work on. On the positive side, I have found freewriting to be a really helpful tool to gain ground when struggling to get started on projects or anytime I find myself floundering with moving forward.

3. I have developed efficient ways to organize my time, research materials, computer access, bibliographies, etc.

I found that a focus on keeping materials almost strictly online, aside from physical books, helped tremendously in staying organized. In previous courses and projects, trying to manage physical documents and notes became cumbersome and distracting. Using cloud storage also helped as it ensured that I could access my research from anywhere at any time on any device. Going forward there is still room to improve my methods of organization as far as tagging documents and using keywords to make information easier to find.

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.

This is an area that I could work on further. I did experiment with some tools such as mind-mapping which were helpful but I could have made more of an effort in this area. I struggled to correlate the concept of a reflective essay with the stages of research and engagement and therefore likely didn't give those tools as much attention as they might have deserved.

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.

I was initially uncomfortable with delving into the emotional aspects of this project but I ultimately found strength in sharing my story. Sharing my writing was challenging as it felt like a vulnerable position but I found that these vulnerable parts were what drew readers into my project. Going forward, I will pay attention to those moments when vulnerability may steer me away from a topic and work through whether there is more of a story to be told.

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.

I found the peer writing groups in this synthesis course to be very helpful as it provided a system of support when trying to define my approach or needing feedback on my written work. In turn, providing feedback to others also often gave me a new perspective on how I might approach my own work. One way I could have improved upon this goal would be to continue to better leverage peer relationships made in the past within the CCT program. Being caught up in the synthesis, I didn't reach out to others outside of this course as much as I could have. Their insight from seeing my past work likely would have offered interesting insight.

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.

I feel I achieved this goal fairly well as I made a commitment to submit writing samples regularly during the course and I openly listened to and discussed the feedback that was given. While I didn't always agree with or change my writing based on that feedback, it was still helpful for me to see what my readers were taking away from my written work.

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).

I've found the feedback I've received this semester and throughout the program to be very helpful, not only as an impetus to improve my work but also to better understand how readers are receiving the message I'm sending and how I might further clarify that message. Going forward, it will be to my benefit to solicit feedback earlier and more often as the act of revising, or considering what revision is necessary, has often helped to further my thinking and progress in my inquiry.

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.

I did review other synthesis projects and the rubric to understand how previous projects have been structured. Ultimately, this was a personal reflection and I tried to stay focused on what I felt was important to include and whether I felt the work was meaningful and representative of the story I wanted to tell. Fortunately, I don't feel this program is one that requires "hoops" for the sake of hoops and I never felt a particular conflict between the rubric and my own goals.

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.

I have struggled with this goal as I rarely feel that my projects are complete or as good as they could be. But I am able to recognize that this work is meant to be ongoing and these projects are inquiries which can and likely should continue on after the course or programs is completed. In

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this way, the CCT program prepares us for a life of learning and inquiry rather than checking a box marking the degree 'complete.'