

# **DEBRA MOH**

## **EXIT SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Spring 2018

### **I. “MY SYNTHESIS PRODUCT SHOWS THAT...”**

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

Throughout the writing of my synthesis and even before, there were a lot of grievances regarding generational conflict in the workspace of my peers outside the CCT program. As I shared excerpts of my writing and research, many of them expressed that it resonated with the experiences they were going through. The analysis provided an explanation to the difficulties they were facing and it piqued an interest into the application of critical thinking in Asia. I hope to further expand this work to the professional community and influence the way we perceive people management.

#### **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.**

While the concept of generational diversity is not new, there are not many organizations in East Asia that acknowledge or implement suitable management initiatives. Existing publications often take a Western perception of analysis, which inadvertently neglects the complex cultural landscape that these interactions take place. I believe there is a lot of room for the unique exploration of critical thinking in Asia and as the movement is beginning to pick up pace, I intend to contribute to it.

#### **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.**

One of the most significant moments during my synthesis was the question, “Why are you here in the CCT program? What made you register for a course thousands of miles away and to be up at ungodly hours of the night to attend class?” That question prompted me to critically reflect on my own motivations in this program. The inquiry guided my writing and led me to explore deeper aspects such as the influence of my upbringing and culture towards my self development. Through this synthesis, I not only gained a better understanding of the society around me, but also of my identity.

**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.**

As I exit the program, I have come to achieve a balance between critical thinking and culture. I entered with conflict on where I stood between the two and my sense of self. I learned to appreciate inquiry and to practice it with purpose. It was also important to learn to be critical of critical thinking and to understand the difference between critique and being critical.

**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.**

In the past, there were instances when I tried to do too much and ended with completing nothing. I realized that I needed to be honest with my own capabilities and personality. I became more self-aware of my habits and the situations where I was most productive. With this in mind, I adapted my process to produce some of my best work and to ensure that I constantly check myself.

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

Everyone has something to say about the generational tension in the workspace. From the youngest employee to the most experienced manager, there is always an observation or an experience to share. As a former debater, I was very used to giving my opinions and demanding to be heard but when you think about it, information can be given as well as received. Sometimes all I needed to do was to ask and listen.

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

I had initially faced difficulties with the direction of my writing as I was unclear of my exact objective. As I attempted to rearrange my content, I was still unable to provide the meaning that I had in mind. It was only through thorough exploration that I realized the problem lied in the root of my preparation. It was risky but I took the leap of redefining my governing question to better address my purpose. From then on, I was able to expand my work in ways and depth I would not have initially thought possible.

**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.**

Because of the complex and diverse mix of influence and history in Asian culture, there were many components that I had to integrate into my synthesis for the reader to fully take-away a comprehensive understanding of the topic. I was fortunate to have peers that came from a different cultural background and this pushed me to clarify arguments and premises that I would not have thought of. I think the principle is that unless you can explain your topic to a stranger and have them understand it, you don't truly know it well enough yourself.

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

In improving my own knowledge and comprehension of critical thinking and generational diversity, I developed my ability to be a contributor to the change I hoped to see in my country. I look forward to integrating the tools and theories that I've learned into my community and to transform our learning habits. Going forward, I am moving towards gaining experience as a critical thinking practitioner in the field of human resource management so that I may be able to facilitate in both theoretical and application.

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

What was disadvantageous to my development was the initial habit of thinking in absolutes; critical thinking is always good, opposing views are always needed. In doing so, I indirectly limited my capacity to appreciate diverse situations and opinions. I think it is important, especially for societies that are maturing, to practice moderation in principles and to explore as much as possible. There are many ways to achieve growth and the pursuit of progress does not have to come from constantly clashing with others. The world is more complicated than black and white and this means recognizing the complex nuances that exist.

## **II. DEVELOPING AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER, INCLUDING TAKING INITIATIVES 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.**

One of the changes I noticed in myself as I became more involved in the CCT program is in my communication with others. As a debate coach and mentor to many undergraduate students, I needed to provide guidance and sometimes the necessary push to their development. The experience that I received in the program encouraged me to revise my methods and to experiment with new ways of making connections.

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

I was introduced to many helpful tools to expand my thinking as well challenge my understanding of critical and creative thinking. Learning to open up themes and examine intersecting processes made me aware of the complex and often ambiguous situations we are faced with. I learned to pause before coming to conclusions.

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

Taking two to three courses per semester required me to be especially attentive. I had to ensure that my work and resources were consistently organized so that even if I were to be slightly off balanced by the workload, I was able to get back on my feet with minimal issues and delay. One of the characteristics I hope to develop further is a better sense of mental discipline. While I believe that exploration and wandering is essential to creative thinking, there needs to also be a when and what to its application.

### **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.**

There were some tools that I immediately caught on to and saw the practicality of using it in my desired situations. There were others that actually took me a while to appreciate. Some methods I only came to value when I looked back at my notes several months later. It requires a conscious effort to keep an open mind but the fundamental point here for me was not to reject options but to keep them so that I could access them when I needed to.

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.**

Sharing my drafts with my peers was always a difficult process for me. Being one of the younger online students, I felt that I needed to present the perfect work so that they would not think less of me. In my desire to prove myself, I fell behind in submissions sometimes. It was only when I came to see that learning in the CCT program was a collaborative effort instead of an individual one, that I began to be truly engaged in my inquiry. I hope to be able to bring this mindset to my next destination, so that others will know that it's okay to make mistakes and to be willing to work together to discover their abilities.

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 have met some truly wonderful individuals in my journey. I believe that a large aspect of my learning came from the diverse experiences and perspectives that they brought to the class. Many of them as well as the instructors have been very understanding and patient towards my learning curve. In some way, I hope that I have impacted their experience as much as they have to mine. It is always incredible to see how our relationships have strengthen over the semester. Even as we graduate into our respective lives, it is comforting to know that support as a CCT practitioner is just an email away.

7. **I have taken the lead, not dragged my feet, in dialogue with my advisor and other readers. I didn't wait for the 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.**

My advisor and peers contributed immensely to the development of my synthesis. During the check-ins and peer review sessions, my notes frequently ended up with more questions than answers. Because of the significant cultural background to my writing, this meant that it was my responsibility to seek the knowledge and present it in a clear and concise manner. I treated every session as an assessment on my progress.

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 appreciated many of the suggestions directed to me during my writing as it provided valuable dimensions to my analysis. There is a tremendous amount of difference from my

first draft to my final submission. However, I do not see it as a loss or compromise but as a process, to what I hope would one day be a masterpiece. Information only becomes knowledge if it can be understood, and if I were to stubbornly refuse to respond to revisions, my work would just be words on paper.

**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.**

At the point of this writing, a good grade is not even guaranteed. I would hope to be so fortunate but in all honesty, if that was my primary objective, I would have chosen a simpler topic. My synthesis is actually a product that I am very proud of because it incorporates elements that show my reflections and the work I have set out for me in the future. I intend to keep working on it so that my voice can be heard, even by those who I have not had the chance to meet.

**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 in the synthesis course and program as a whole and to suggest directions for their further development.**

Because we are so often pressured by society to label ourselves, we conform to what we think those labels entitle. This becomes a problem when it restricts our thoughts and we begin to establish our options by those definitions. The CCT program provided me with the opportunity to take risks and make changes. I no longer feared being at crossroads because I learned how to practice purposeful inquiry. It enlightened me to how self-improvement comes from realizing that we are all works-in-progress, be in at the age of 27 or 72. In the eternal words of J.R.R. Tolkien, *"Not all those who wander are lost."*