**Jill Lake**

**CRCRTH 692**

**22 Dec. 2015**

**Self-Assessment at the end of a project**

**Describe for each of the 10 + 10 goals**

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.

(Even though you may have many examples for some items, one is enough.)

**I. "MY PRODUCT SHOWS THAT..."**

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

+ My project is clear about its subject – I gathered a collection of resources that will help teachers teach a variety of subjects

in the School Forest on Forest Fridays.

 I need to work further on making sure that my writing connects to my audience. I find it difficult to frame information in a way to appeal to different groups of people (teachers, administrators, school board members, parents) who have different frames of reference and various amounts of background information about the School Forest, outdoor education, and place-based education.

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 know what others across the country and in the U.K. are doing with regard to outdoor and place-based education. I also know of other websites about outdoor education, how nature benefits children’s development, and place-based education.

 don’t know much about the kind of programming that was offered in the School Forest more than seven years ago. I want to connect with more alumni, such as Starre Vartan and two other women to learn how the School Forest was used when they were students. One woman now runs a park in upstate New York. The other leads environmental education in a New York City school. It could be useful to cultivate them as allies for the work happening now concerning the School Forest.

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.

+ Yes. I put my involvement in the issues about creating a forest stewardship plan and conserving the School Forest land on hold. I chose this semester to work on an endeavor that may help to get the School Forest used more often on Forest Fridays. I chose to address the goal of getting children out in nature during the school day. My chief focus was to help teachers find resources easily to help them lead lots of different kinds of interesting activities within the School Forest on Forest Fridays.

 My vision for the website is ambitious, with lots of categories. It was difficult for me to pare down all that I learned this semester to prepare my paper. There is a lot I learned that I didn’t include in the paper, but will include in the website. I have to keep going back to the audience to make sure I align the content to the audience. And again, because some members of the audience have different backgrounds and frames of reference, I find this challenging. It may require talking with many different people who have different roles and asking them “what do you need?”

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.

+ Yes. I’ve read a great deal of research on how time in nature benefits children’s health, ability to focus, creativity, resilience, and even moral values. So, I can state clearly that Forest Fridays are a good idea, and that outdoor education absolutely complements the work being done in classrooms. Further, I can state that providing resources to teachers to help them teach effectively in the School Forest makes sense and provides a benefit. It’s a useful endeavor.

 I was not able to write about all the research I found that shows nature’s benefits to children. But, I hope to be able to link to this information on the future website. This is important information provide and share to counter any arguments some people might make about forest excursions being a waste of time.

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 had a clear vision of what I wanted to learn about and what I wanted to convey through my paper. I did arrange my work in a sequence, and worked methodically to complete my paper.

 I learned that it is useful and helpful for me to begin the writing process earlier. I really enjoyed the research process, and information led me to more information. It will be important for my synthesis project to start writing earlier.

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

+ I learned a great deal that I could not have learned otherwise by going on a Forest Friday outing with students and teachers, and also by interviewing storyteller Jonathan Kruk.

 I wanted to interview Craig Watters with Friends of the American Revolution, and Pete Salmonsohn, who is an environmental educator. I did not interview them. I still want to do this, as what I learn will inform the website. Talking with Pete will be really helpful in identifying for teachers what they can teach at which specific locations within the School Forest. He has taught in the School Forest for years. Craig Watters knows all about the effort to preserve and restore the fortifications that were part of Fortress West Point. So, I will want to talk with him, as well.

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

+ I think so. I’ve shown that outdoor education benefits children. I’ve explained that the new administration of the school supports teaching in the School Forest more often, and has launched the Forest Fridays program. I think I’ve made it clear that the Garrison School’s teachers are not all trained in how to teach outdoors. At present, the school does not have an online resource that gathers information relating to instruction in the School Forest together in one place. And, I think I’ve shown that the information I’ve found will be useful to teachers and students. So, I think I’ve shown that I have identified a need, and that I am creating a solution for that need.

 I’m not really satisfied with the “How Nature Benefits Children” part of my paper. I’m not sure if that section makes a strong enough argument. I wanted to explain more about various researchers findings about how time in nature improves attention, helps with healthy body weight, helps with motor ability, etc. But, I couldn’t figure out how to discuss the research in the confines of the word count of the assignment.

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 think that by starting the paper with my experience on a Forest Friday, I draw the reader in. Then, I later reference the importance of fairy houses. So, I do think that I was able to move the reader along as I presented additional information.

 I wonder if the section about the rationale for my engagement is overly long, and if it really matters to my audience.

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

+ I think I grew as a critic or reviewer of my peers’ work this semester. I tried to offer well-thought-out and useful feedback regarding my peers’ writing. I found it really useful to interview Jonathan Kruk.

 I reached out to both Craig Watters and Pete Salmonsohn to ask if I could interview them. Both of them were very enthusiastic and said yes. But, I did not schedule the interviews. So, I want to follow up on that. Both people are important allies, and they want to help with this project.

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’s been working well is using the UMass Boston Library, The New School Library, and my local library. I also found that I’m able to access the library at Bank Street Teacher’s College through my affiliation with The New School. This is great, as they have resources that I was not able to find in other places. Using diigo to save and tag articles I’ve found is also working very well for me. Keeping was is now a series of three notebooks throughout this class has also been very useful for freewriting and notes and drawings.

Δ What I need to work on is using an integrated system for citations for next semester. I was put off by Endnote. While Endnote basis is free, I wasn’t sure it would provide what I needed. Endnote for students costs $113.95. At the time, at the beginning of the semester, I was not sure that would be a useful investment. I did get the Endnote app for iPad, but didn’t use it. So, I need to explore this area. Perhaps there is another product that would be better for me. Or, perhaps Endnote is the right product. Also, as I wrote earlier, I need to start my writing process earlier.

**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 integrated things I learned in my Human Development class into the work I did in 692 this semester. I also integrated things learned in Critical Thinking, Philosophical Thinking, and Dialogue Processes.

Δ I fell out of the Reflective Practice that I created in the spring of 2015.

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

+ Yes. I’ve reflected on what went well for me and what I struggled with in the past. For instance, I realized that I find APA style not so intuitive, and that I had difficulty with it in a past course. So, I felt that it would work better for me to use MLA style for my 692 paper. Also, although URLs do not have to be cited in MLA, they can be. This is useful for me, as I will be using information from my paper to build a website. Retaining the URLs is a smart effort that saves time for me later.

Δ At first, in 692, I was following to some extent what I had learned to do in the Action Research class. So, I had to learn to set that process aside and engage in what I was being taught to do in the 692 course. Also, as I am working on a real life project with things that occur through the actions and decisions of others, I needed to stay the course of my research and not be buffeted by what was occurring outside, in the community.

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

+ Even though I didn’t use endnote, I had an efficient system of housing my bibliography in Google Drive, and adding to it when I found a new source of information. I used a succession of three paper notebooks for the class, which was useful. I have one red two-pocket folder for paper resources, which I carry around. My computer file organization is working fine for me. I saved digital resources using diigo. I found tagging them by subject to be very useful. I was also very dedicated and organized with my time. As I work on the computer in my office, my iPad, and my home computer, I email drafts to myself and also catalog them in Google Drive. I also save documents on my office and home computer.

Δ I think I will want to use Endnote or another attribution software next semester. I will want to re-name my Google Drive folders in the future, as they are named for each class. It will be useful to group resources by topic.

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.

+ I experimented with ways of writing and revising that were new to me. I experimented with diigo.

Δ I did not experiment much at all with Endnote. I will want to do this. Or, I’ll want to find a different attribution software to use.

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 haven’t talked about this much. There has been a re-organization at The New School, and I am now engaged in a job with far fewer responsibilities. I decided to stop fighting things at work and to just accept the new situation. What I found is that I can do my job quickly and easily, leaving a lot of time to actually work on my school work. I do want to find another job. But, when I realized the amount of work I had to do for my two classes – and when I developed a kidney stone and pneumonia – I stopped engaging in my job search. So, I did my much smaller job at The New School, and I also worked on my school work during my work day. I cleared my head of anger about past things at the job, and decided to put my energy into my school work. It was helpful to work in this way, because it helped with my home life. It helped me to be present with my family when I was with them. I worked this semester to get into better physical shape. I had begun swimming in July. Most weeks, when I was well, I swam five mornings a week before work. The swimming process helps me to move through problems with research, writing, bringing together ideas. I find that it’s a good complement to my engagement in the 692 course.

Δ It’s important for me to keep to a schedule for my school work, and to work on the train during my commute. If I drag my feet on something or get absorbed in a distraction, the work moves into the weekend, which is not good, as it may negatively affect my family life. So, I will need to continue to be self-motivated and return to the reflective practice that I developed in spring 2015.

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’ve developed good peer relationships with Sara Kaplan, Myra McWethy, and Kaylea Champion. I believe I’ve given good advice regarding other students’ work. It may have been difficult for some of them to hear or take in. I’ve also received support from the Garrison School’s principal, superintendent, and members of the Environmental Education Committee.

Δ I need to ask for the kind of feedback I want. I think that when we sent our draft papers out, I should have listed at the top the kind of feedback I hoped to receive. I received useful feedback from one peer. From two others, the feedback was too positive, and did not really delve into the problems of my paper. So, I should have asked for what I needed.

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 identified many of the problems with my work myself. I knew that the writing was a process, and that it would get better with time and reflection. I did not avoid submitting work. I did reflect on comments provided, and I understood them better with time and reflection. Sometimes comments seemed to be in the form of a koan that I would figure out over several days of swimming.

Δ In terms of an expository problem, I was not able to solve how to get my paper to 4,500 words. That is a skill that I still need to work on. I need to learn how to revise to meet a certain length requirement – and still convey the information I hope to share.

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).

+ Yes. I’ve changed and simplified content with the audience in mind, after learning that what I presented in my draft was confusing. So, that was great feedback. I also reflected for quite a while on the order of one section of my paper, and chose to change it because the change made more sense. I have engaged in an enormous amount of reflective inquiry and resulting discovery throughout the writing process for the paper.

Δ It is unclear whether I’ve achieved my goal in conveying more powerfully to others what I’m about. I need to share the paper with members of my community to find out if I really did speak to the audience.

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 definitely have an internal compass that provides direction for doing good work. Through many revisions of my paper, I identified holes and places that needed to be worked on. The work is for me, and for a project that I’ll create for my children’s school. So, I have a pretty high standard, because I know that it will be judged by an external audience.

Δ While I know that the maximum word count for the paper assignment was 4,500 words, I had a lot of difficulty cutting my paper and getting it to align with that requirement. So, I did revise, edit, and cut it down, but the final product is longer than the requirement. So, this is an area in which I need to grow and work on. I need to learn how to better shorten my work and still convey what I want to convey.

10. I have approached the course as a work-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 definitely approached the course as a work-in-progress. I am very grateful to have been able to engage in the writing in dialogue process. It has helped me to produce and submit work without fear of it not being “perfect” at that moment.

 I see what has worked well for me. And I’m clear that I need to learn more about revision. Perhaps I even need to learn to redefine my topic to make it smaller. I also know that I’m unclear about whether the final paper really speaks to all of the people in the intended audience. That is another important skill I need to master. I need to be sure that I’m able to speak to a specific audience through my writing.