

Charly Rauscher

**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).

*I'm clear on what I think I can do with these workshop strategies. As we all know these ideas of critical and creative thinking are not new. The novelty is in demonstrating awareness of what is not being done, how this affects problem-solving and decision-making and how these thinking skills can help make a difference.*

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.

*There's a lot of information out there concerning organization change. There are also a number of resources promoting critical and creative thinking. For example, Peter Senge and Howard Gardner have the own institutes and affiliations with universities. There are also independent ventures promoting these skills. I found one organization that is so clear about their abilities that they offer a double refund if the client isn't completely satisfied, that's \$20,000.*

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.

*Based on my business background I kind of gravitated toward the development of these workshops. These ideas have real potential for organizations. The real challenge is making a connection with an organization and demonstrating the importance of using these concepts.*

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 believe I communicated my position on certain concepts of CCT. One example that comes to mind involves the ability of an individual in one profession to be able to think critically in another profession. The premise is that knowledge of subject is a clear criteria. I think otherwise, knowledge in a specific field is important, but not absolute. For example, I know an individual who was a computer science major who transitioned into biology and now works with DNA coding.*

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 needed a lot of reflection to arrive at a project that I was comfortable doing. Once this was decided I set goals for myself and I was pretty successful at staying on target for deliverables.*

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

*As I developed my work it was clear to me that in order to attain critical and creative thinking attitudes within an organization 3 things need to happen: 1. the organization's leadership needs to make a commitment to fostering these skills; 2. a learning progression occurs from the individual to the team, and then to the organization; and 3. an atmosphere of conscious reinforcement must prevail.*

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

*I believe I presented ample author's perspectives and my own appreciation of what I believe to be important in terms of critical and creative thinking concepts. Also, I corroborated this information with examples of my experiences.*

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 my works flows accordingly. I begin with my own reflections about myself and my ideas, then progress into concepts that I feel are important along with my introspection and opinions. Then I give the reader concrete examples of critical and creative thinking strategies; and also discuss them from an organizational perspective. Lastly, I revisit my personal reflections and share my thoughts on future projects.*

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

*I had a lot of fun with my presentation. I was able to use various media to share my information. I incorporated my photography, I used music embedded within a power-point presentation, and even shared my hand-puppet (bark) to help demonstrate my ideas.*

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

*I learned how to push myself intellectually. I see numerous examples in my reading notes, my writing topics, my research, and course products. Having immersed myself in this program has provided new ways of thinking. To me it seems like the first time I examined materials with a critical eye. By this I mean I didn't blindly accept the author's work as gospel. I perused this work and questioned ideas and concepts. These benefits have carried over to my professional work as well. I am much more involved and vocal about strategies. One of the things I need to change is allowing time for myself to appreciate those things that are important to me, for example my artistic endeavors. Too often I discount these.*

## **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.

*This idea just came to me the other day. I realize that I am consciously examining what I read and what I hear to determine the validity of the material presented. I also seem to have this ongoing sense of being deluged with ideas. Sometimes I ponder if this is a gift or a curse.*

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

*One major item, I took away from course work, that can be applied in many avenues is the ability to fully explain my ideas and connections. Professors have pointed this out to me on occasion. I develop a point but sometimes leave out supporting material. What I think happens here is that in my mind I have the information and in the course of writing I tell myself that I already provided this information. Now I take a critical view of my writing to ensure I develop my thoughts.*

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

*I don't think I fully realized how competent I was in organizing my time and work. I made a mental commitment to myself to keep up with the readings, materials, planning, and writings. Group interactions in courses like Invention and PBL helped reinforce these principles.*

Dec. 12, 2004

Charly Rauscher

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.

*Tools like mind-mapping, post-it-brainstorming, and the why-why diagram have been very effected for me in teasing out ideas, answers, and direction. These are all new to me and now their tolls I have even shared with colleagues to help in problem-solving and decision-making.*

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.

*About ten years ago I could say this was something I had to overcome. I was easily distracted and also anxious about my work. Today, I'm pretty organized and focused on my work even when I'm discovering new ideas and possibilities.*

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 developed both academic and personal relationships with both former and present classmates. I felt an attachment from my very course in the program. There was a true sense of caring that prevailed. That's in part why I continued in the program, the students and the professors. Throughout this experience there have been numerous times where there have been exchanges with peers, both in giving and receiving.*

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.

*Once I decided on a theme I stayed pretty much on track with the exception of acquiring a reader. I started writing immediately, pulling together authors & materials, building an outline, and working on my presentation. On the reader side I delayed asking for a reader, and then I heard from classmates how CCT staff seem to be over-committed. This piece of synthesis may need to be more formalized and defined in the first weeks of class.*

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 never had this attitude that I was conceding to the views of others. I was always openminded and felt comments were directed at me positively, so I could expound on my viewpoints, make a better argument, or prompt me to consider ideas that I may have overlooked.*

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 made a mental commitment to myself to keep with the readings, materials, planning, and writings. I believe I have an advantage drawing on my career and project planning. I've been doing this 20 years.*

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've never taken any professors' comments as criticism. It is clear to me that these comments were provided to further challenge thinking and to provide direction with the underlying role to make me a better CCT thinker. I would agree this is a work-in-progress. For example, my workshop themes are only the beginning, there are many more levels in support of critical and creative thinking.*