

Reading Reflection

After completing the reading assignment, write brief responses (i.e., at least several sentences) to 2 out of 3 questions:

1. What is the main point of this reading?
2. What information did you find surprising? Why?
3. What did you find confusing? Why?

Too often, when we read the words on a page we do not fully integrate that new information into our existing knowledge structure, and so we fail to gain new understanding of the world around us. Research in cognitive science and learning tells us that “deep learning” requires that the learner reflect on new knowledge and create personal meaning from it.

To help us reflect more deeply on readings in this course, we will use reading reflections. These reading reflections are designed to help the reader engage with the material in a deeper way, and to construct new meaning from it. The reflections also have the advantage of providing the instructor with detailed information about your learning in the course. This not only helps guide the daily preparation of course activities, but also helps connect us as a community of learners.

Your response need not be long, but must clearly indicate careful reading and thoughtful reflection. You must respond to two of the questions.

What is the Main Point?

Reading assignments often contain a lot of information. What is the main concept that the author is trying to get across? This may, or may not, have been explicitly stated in the reading. Why did the author choose to emphasize this point, and not some other? Your response is not a summary of the chapter, but a restructuring and analysis of it in a way that creates new meaning for you.

What is Surprising?

Your response to this question should be reflective. Did you learn something that is in conflict with your previous notions of the world? Did you learn something that fascinates you in a way that you did not expect? How does this new knowledge connect with material in other courses, or with other parts of your life? Responses must also clearly explain “why.”

What is Confusing?

Responses to this question require careful reading and reflection; it is only through the process of reconciling new information with our existing knowledge structure that we become aware of inconsistencies, or “gaps” in our understanding. Responses to this question should be specific and actionable – that is they should outline a clear path to understanding. Responses must also clearly explain “why.”

Rubric for Evaluation

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| 10 points | Responses to both questions are labeled and clearly indicate careful reading and deep reflection. Responses submitted before class meeting. |
| 5 points | Responses are not specific, do not clearly indicate reflection, or are submitted soon after deadline. |
| 0 points | No response, or response submitted more than one class period late. |