Final Reflection Essay

Over the past semester, I have gained a wealth of new knowledge about anthropology and ethnographic research. I have been amazed at how much there is to learn about human societies and cultures, and how different they can be from one another.

One of the most impactful aspects of this semester has been interacting with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds within my class as well as around our campus. Through interviews, observations, and participant observation, I have had the opportunity to engage with individuals and communities that I may not have otherwise had the chance to encounter.

Through these interactions, I have come to appreciate the importance of empathy and understanding in the situations or circumstances some people may be in. I’ve learned that it is critical to approach individuals and communities with an open mind and a willingness to listen and learn. I have also learned that effective communication and trust-building are essential to establishing productive relationships with interview participants like we did at the YWCA. Overall, I feel as though Dr. Bennett this semester has given an incredibly enriching and eye-opening experience. I feel that I have gained a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of human cultures and societies from her, and I look forward to continuing to explore these topics in the future.

This semester, I have had the opportunity to continue working with my research team towards a big project in partnership with the YWCA. Our task was to conduct a needs assessment of the organization's programs and strategies as well as analyze the ways the YWCA was operating and if wether the things they were doing were working or not.

From the beginning, I was excited to contribute my skills and knowledge to the project. One of my primary contributions to the project was conducting interviews at the YWCA as well as taking notes and making the videos. Generally, as a people person I was able to draw on my interpersonal skills and empathy to establish rapport with our interviewees, and to encourage them to share their thoughts and experiences.

In addition to conducting interviews, I also played a key role in analyzing our data and identifying key themes and trends. I used my knowledge from psychology to identify patterns and relationships within our data, and to draw meaningful conclusions about the needs and priorities of the YWCA.

Finally, as we approached the final stages of our project, I was responsible for bringing together our findings and insights into a coherent and compelling presentation. Although it’s not the presentation we used in our final presentation it posed as good practice for the future.

Overall, I am incredibly proud of the work that our group accomplished together. Looking back, I didn’t have many challenges this semester apart from the one everyone suffers from and that being procrastination.

This semester we continued where we left off last semester by setting new goals for ourselves to accomplish, this is how I approached mine. First, I was able to effectively define the scope of research questions and select information that addressed central questions. This required a great deal of critical thinking and analysis, as I had to identify the most relevant sources of information and data that would help me to address our research questions. I also had many instances where I had to come up with research questions such as our photo voice and Participatory (GIS). I was able to construct insightful problem-solving statements with evidence of relevant factors, which helped to shape the direction of our research and ensure that we were addressing the most pressing issues.

Throughout the course of this semester, I also demonstrated my ability to work independently towards team goals many times. This involved contributing to team efforts and meeting deadlines, even when faced with challenging obstacles. By staying focused and dedicated, I was able to help move our project forward and achieve our collective goals. Doing this ensured that we were ready for class and take on the next assignment.

As I worked on the project, I also made sure to use appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate my mastery of the subject matter. I wanted to convey my understanding of the material and make sure that my contributions were adding value to the team's efforts in order to hit my fourth goal. Finally, I demonstrated my detailed attention to and successful execution of a range of conventions particular to the specific writing task or medium. This involved carefully organizing and presenting our findings, formatting our work in a professional manner, and making stylistic choices that enhanced the overall impact of our project.

I learned so much new things this semester, things that challenged me to think beyond the surface as well as take new approaches to finding new answers. Sadly, I’m still trying to figure out the path I want to take in life, with so much to go off and my interest being so vast it’s hard to pick one. I am unable to answer this question at the stage of life I am at right now.