

Critical Reflection Worksheet Topics & Introductory Paragraphs

Week One—Attitudes

We will be talking about attitudes as part of our discussion of social psychology concepts this next Wednesday evening in class. We will also be making decisions about who will be discussion leader for the topics available over the course of the term. The topics are the individual lines on the Schedule Overview (e.g., PTSD/combat, empathy & moral values, video gaming). In order to prepare for the process of selecting your topic for leading discussion, select 3 topics and then identify at least one example of each of the 3 components (affect, cognition, behavior/intention) that go along with your attitude about each topic. You may already feel strongly about the topic or it may be one on which you do not know much. So, for example, if I was ranking Courageous Resistance as one of the topics I was going to select, I might write something such as:

Affect (feelings and values; emotions, moods, evaluations about the object or idea)

I feel proud to think I could be a courageous resister. (values)

I do not like to read about people who are in pain, or who suffered. (evaluation)

Behavior (observation of behaviors or intentions to behave toward an object or idea)

I am going to have to do the most reading about this topic of the 3 that I am thinking of doing.

I could try to do something in the next week that might be considered a courageous act.

Cognition (knowledge, meaning, beliefs about rewards & punishments, properties of object)

I know that there was a movie about a courageous resister. What was his name again?(knowledge)

I believe that some courageous resisters have lost their lives while trying to help others. (belief)

Week Two—Structural vs. Direct Violence

This past Wednesday evening we began a discussion of the differences between structural and direct violence after we discussed the ABCs (i.e., affect, behavior, cognition) of attitudes. I handed out several different ways of approaching the dichotomy—one being Tables 1 and 2 from the Christie et al. text and the other a Pyramid of Violence (Ntl. Assoc. of Social Workers). For both approaches, personal (i.e., direct, individual) violence seems easier to identify. It takes more thought to identify the structural (insitutional, cultural) aspects of the violence. Please think about all these levels of violence using the attached story about Arthur.

Week Three—Aggression: Innate or Learned?

The Seville Statement on Violence declares that it is scientifically incorrect to say that: 1) we have an inherited tendency to make war, 2) war or any other violent behavior is genetically programmed into our human nature, 3) human evolution has been selective for aggressive behavior, 4) humans have a 'violent' brain, and 5) war is caused by 'instinct' or any single motivation. APA endorsed the Seville Statement in 1987 as a social statement "designed to eliminate unfounded stereotypic thinking on the inevitability of war."

You may clearly believe (or not) the Seville Statement is accurate. Regardless, there are many who believe aggression is inborn and war is a natural response to conflict. We want to think about the Seville Statement in more detail this next Wednesday evening, so explore what it means to believe what the Seville Statement declares (regardless of whether or not you believe it) by either (1) interviewing someone who believes war/aggression is innate, not learned, and that we are by nature violent; or (2) think through the questions below for yourself as the interviewee. In other words, what would change in the attitudes, behaviors, and values for a person who came to believe the Seville Statement (i.e., shifting to believe we learn to be aggressive rather than that it is a natural response). NOTE: Your task is NOT to change the person's mind but to ask him/her to think about what it means to believe we are not naturally aggressive.

Week Four—Video Gaming & the ABCs of Attitudes

Our discussion on Wednesday night about video games included the demonstration of a video game that most (probably all?) of the class would clearly recognize as being in the violent category. Since Peace Psychology is about exploring the possibilities and promises for prosocial behavior, I included a variety of games on our Sakai website for that class. Go back and take a look at one or two of the games on the Sakai website and think about the ABCs of attitudes with which we began the term. Identify at least 2 examples from the prosocial video games for each of the sets of questions/concepts below. Be sure to give enough detail so it is easy for me as the reader to know you understand the concepts involved. It's okay to use the same game throughout or to switch back and forth from several. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Week Five—Optimism Bias & Spanking/Video Games

In class Wednesday evening we saw a video on the Optimism Bias (see Resources—Class Materials on Sakai for the video link). We discussed how this bias toward hopefulness may filter our perceptions of the negative effects upon us personally of violent video games or being spanked as a child. However, we did not get to the discussion of what this means in terms of the negative consequences of such behaviors on our communities and at the institutional level. In other words, if we think of ourselves as having resilience and "turning out just fine," we may not be motivated to work towards change in our communities and in the broader institutional settings in which we find ourselves.

Think through the implications of the optimism bias not just on personal behaviors but also at the structural/institutional level. What would it take to correct for the optimism bias in order to counteract the effects of violent video games and/or spanking/swatting/corporal punishment. Note: You do not have to believe there is a severe negative impact but you do have to role-play through the "what-ifs."

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Week Six—Crossroads to Courageous Resistance

The film *Defiance* we saw on Wednesday evening (and the discussion with the producer/director that followed) gave us a very powerful example of courageous resistance in action. Think of yourself in a situation that has caused you concern or discomfort because it is not fully in agreement with values and behaviors that you honor (e.g., someone uses distasteful jokes or teases another person who is very awkward in social situations; a person is in an abusive relationship).

Week Seven—Nationalism ≠ Patriotism

The concepts of nationalism and patriotism are often confused. Review these concepts from the handouts and class reading assignment in Christie, and then interview 3 people with whom you have at least a casual relationship. With each person go through the following steps: 1) Ask each person to tell you how he/she would define nationalism and patriotism by giving an example, if possible. 2) Explain the differences between nationalism and patriotism to each person you interview. 3) Before continuing on to a second and then a third person, record the ideas each shares with you and the responses to your explanation. Try to find a variety of people to interview. Do not identify the people with whom you talk other than to give a general description (e.g., gender, possible age group, occupation).

Week Eight—Reflecting on the Psychology of Peace

During the first half of this course we looked at a variety of issues, primarily organized around the concept of direct violence but also touching on structural violence. You have had an opportunity to become more familiar with the concepts and may even have become more comfortable grappling with the issues that are covered in a psychology of peace course.

No class is ever exactly what every student expected. What had you expected we would be talking about in this course before the first night of class? Please give an example or specifics—perhaps related to the framework put forth on our syllabus—so that it is clear what you were thinking.

Week Nine—Terrorism, Peace Psychology, and Current Events

The class this past Wednesday evening focused on the topics of genocide and terrorism. While there are numerous newsworthy events related to our course occurring every day, I have selected 2 different perspectives offered on the same events occurring at Guantanamo this week (see attached *Reflections Guantanamo Events* readings) for this reflection. This should build on our conversations on terrorism but is not limited to it.

The purpose of this reflection is to compare the information and the way it is offered in these 2 articles (i.e., what is brought up, what is left out) and then think about the key concepts that we are covering this term that relate. Hopefully you will find applications beyond just this past week's discussion of terrorism. Note that you do not have to agree or disagree with either article; the point is to understand the perspectives and look for concepts that may apply.

Week Ten—Global Peace Index and Other Structural Indicators (Human Development Index, Global Terrorism Index, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute)

Let's use this opportunity to explore structural indicators of peace and violence by comparing countries (for example, the United States and Canada) and the criteria on which these indexes are based. This information will relate to our class discussions from here on out for the rest of the term so think about the underlying concepts that were used to develop the criteria as a starting point for really understanding structural issues involved in peace and nonviolence.

Week Eleven—Collective Resistance: Idle No More

This assignment is about reviewing our class materials to integrate and apply concepts we have been covering. Think deeply about the concepts (using the Reflection Rubric) in order to go into adequate detail. It should be evident that you have learned something new about these issues based upon our class.

We've been talking about collective resistance and nonviolent movements around the world. Attached is a description of an indigenous people movement occurring in Canada that began this past November. It is called Idle No More. The attached poster from the Syracuse Cultural Workers website illustrates the movement. Along with this visual, there is a posting from The Guardian that helps to explain the movement. Go back over the materials we have covered this term to find 3 separate concepts from our readings and articles that could be applied to this example. Be specific about the authors, pages, and the ways in which the concepts/readings apply.

Week Twelve—Reflecting on Forgiveness and Perception of Others

NOTE: This is the last of our weekly reflections so it is an exercise in practicing with the use of the cognitive shortcuts (heuristics) with which we began the term. Think through more deeply how our perceptions affect our interactions based on what we have been covering recently in class and in the readings on forgiveness. How are different social psychological processes working to affect the process of forgiveness and reconciliation for you with others or for others in their own situations? Use items from the survey on forgiveness (Knutson, Enright, & Garbers, 2008) and the materials on forgiveness/reconciliation to apply these concepts/key words. After you have thought through these heuristics, think about how your perceptions reflect the worldview of a Westerner (i.e., from the US and/or an individualistic culture) as compared to the reconciliation processes that we read about focused on more collectivistic, community-oriented cultures.