

Examples from Reflection Essays

Disciplinary Awareness

“The research I did this summer focused on sorption of cesium and strontium by soils. These two chemicals are commonly found in chemical contaminants... My research also focused on the distribution coefficient which is a measurement of how much of a solvent is [absorbed] by a geologic medium.”

“I found that many of the readings I came across regarding abortion seemed to convey a strong belief in human rights, which was demonstrated by the dichotomy of “pro-choice” versus “pro-life” beliefs. Both of these stances entail issues surrounding a woman’s right to choose when to give birth as well as a fetus’s right to live, which fall under the realm of reproductive rights.”

“The Attorney General can have an impact on public policy when he issues opinions on the legality or constitutionality of proposed or enacted laws. Attorney General Abbott discussed how he established a Cyber Crimes Unit, a Fugitive Unit, and expanded the Medical Fraud Control Unit. He also discussed how he appeared before the Supreme Court in order to defend the constitutionality of the 10 Commandments display on the Texas Capital grounds... The Attorney General can become involved with high-profile public policy, which can leave the office in the public eye.”

Interdisciplinary Awareness

“To understand how a contaminant moves through the soil, you have to understand **geology, mineralogy, environmental engineering**, and a little bit of **nuclear chemistry**. If I did not research the **mineralogy** of my soil sample, I would not have understood what was absorbing the cesium and strontium ions. If I didn’t know some about **nuclear chemistry**, I would have not understood radioactive liquid tracers that are used to measure distribution coefficients. The **engineering** work comes in to play in designing and implicating experiments with the implementation of a solution method after.”

“While I was reading about abortion policies, I was able to apply a **government** and **international perspective** to my research. I also visited health clinics which allowed me to view this issue from a **healthcare perspective** as well as a **social work perspective** by witnessing the effects and implementation of governmental policies. Finally, in reflecting about my experience, I was able to apply a **women’s studies perspective** that reflected patriarchal ideals which makes accessing healthcare difficult for some women.”

“**Journalism** played a role in my research, because I had to go through many news articles finding relevant materials for my research... **Social Justice** is a very important part of my research, and I found out through this connecting experience that there are many organizations dedicated to the cause of Social Justice and they employ the same scientific methods in seeking out the truth... I learned that most things involve multiple disciplines like my research. For example, for **politics** to reach the people, the **media** has to first organize the information in ways that the people can understand.”

Interdisciplinary Comparison

“A difference that can be observed of different disciplines is their purpose. The **environment** side is trying to keep the planet clean and sustainable. The purpose of **economics** (there are many depending on which side one looks from) can be seen as the study of the human behavior and their consumer habits with respect to monetary values. Despite the differences between the two subjects they intersect since **policies** tend to depend on the **economics**. A common underlying similarity between disciplines is the expansive nature of things. No discipline is one sided, there is always more to what it seems. They all analyze concepts and come to a conclusion, which can be influenced by their moral purpose.”

“The most striking realization I came to was that **sociology** and **psychology** relate to each other in more complex ways than I had thought. Previously, I built on the analogy of the natural sciences to think of **sociology** as the emergent outcome of **psychology**, like biology arises from chemistry, which itself comes from physics. However, in Spain I realized this is an oversimplification. **Psychology**, identity, and (therefore) action, are constructed through relationships with existing **social structures**. Since we are born into societies with existing power and normative relationships, **sociology** influences **psychology** very strongly.”

“Through this research, I saw the connection these three topics had with each other. One aspect of **politics** is the process of making **laws**, and **laws** can be made to ensure **Social Justice**. In the case of my research, one of the bills I was researching was about putting regulations on the payday industry and the industry was giving a lot of campaign contributions to stop this bill.”

Transfer of Knowledge and Skills

“I have some basic coursework in geology which gave me a broad introduction to some of the mineralogy work I performed. My chemical engineering coursework in transport phenomena also gave me some background information in liquid and solid movement.”

“I found that I was also well versed in women’s reproductive health issues, such as pregnancy, contraceptives, and pregnancy because I had just taken a Women’s Reproductive Health course the previous semester that focused on the sociological and biological perspective of these issues. Because I had this background, I felt that I had a strong foundation regarding these issues as I began my research which allowed for a further understanding of these subjects.”

“Knowledge I have gained in previous experiences and courses affected the way I understood my connecting experience with Consumer Protection Division. Previously, I interned with city government and a majority of my work involved Internet research. I learned how to summarize the research, pull out the important points, and present it to my supervisor. All of these skills transferred to my experience with CPD and were further developed with my research on Children’s Online Privacy Protection (COPPA).”

Self-Reflection

“Before my internship I knew I wanted to attend grad school, but I always said I want to work two years then figure it out. My coworkers pushed and poked my brain to really determine what I want to do now. They made me realize how hard it is to start working and go back to grad school. I have now figured out that I want to start my master’s degree the following fall. I have also decided that not only do I want to get my Master’s in Environmental Engineering but I also want to get my Master’s in Business Administration.”

“I discovered that as I continued to learn about the area of reproductive rights, I was drawn to the social work perspective because of my interest in a “hands-on” approach to aiding women accessing these services. I also learned that I am much more interested in the practical application of this research, such as social work practice, rather than performing the actual research. I feel that this experience has furthered my knowledge in women’s reproductive health issues and will be beneficial for me when I apply to intern at a local women’s health clinic in the fall.”

“I have discovered many different aspects of myself through my connecting experience. While working with Children’s Online Privacy Protection (COPPA) I realized that I do have an interest in the laws that regulate the Internet. I enjoyed my assignment and would like to see how the act develops and how it is enforced in the future... Through my connecting experience, I have been able to refine my professional goal of becoming a lawyer. The experience has allowed me to observe the public service career path and now I believe it is a path that I want to take... The experience taught me that I can do both and I do not have to rule out one or the other. The experience also taught me that I want to go into an area of law that allows me to prepare and present cases in court.”

Understanding of Subject

“The whole idea of conservation and sustainability is important to the field of environmentalism. At Environment Texas their mission is to have clean air, clean water and open spaces... There were various bills that Environment Texas was supporting such as an extension to the Clean Water Act that would apply to intermittent water ways, support for a limit on mercury emissions, a push for more electric cars and better building codes. All the campaigns had a common goal of bettering the environment through different means such as more stringent codes and regulation or using more environmental resources.”

“I learned that a social justice view explores the conventions of how local policies reflect issues of morality rather than medical facts about women’s health, and how these policies negatively affect women seeking these services. I observed that these perspectives of human rights and social justice remain relevant within the realm of women’s reproductive health as local policies reflect, or fail to reflect these ideals.”

“Social Justice, Politics, and Law are all relevant disciplinary perspectives to my connecting experience. By interning with the Consumer Protection Division, I actively participated in social justice by aiding the CPD lawyers in protecting Texas consumers and the business community. I quickly learned that consumer complaints formed the basis of many investigations and legal actions that brought companies performing deceptive business practices to justice. One of the activities I participated in included consumer complaint review and analysis.”