

## ***REFLECTION PAPER HINTS & GUIDELINES***

The purpose of a reflection paper is to demonstrate what you have learned about principles (theories, concepts) of bargaining and negotiation. A reflection paper has three elements. You might do well to think about these as roughly one page per element in your write-up.

**(1) A brief summary of what happened.** This might include what you negotiated, and what the outcome was. It might also include a summary of your strategy going into the negotiation, your perceptions as the negotiation unfolded, what behaviors you (or the other side) engaged in during the negotiation, and how the two negotiators influenced each other during the negotiation. It is important that your summary cover not only the facts of what happened, but also your *perceptions and impressions* of those facts as they unfolded. It might also be relevant to compare what happened in your negotiation to what happened in other negotiations like yours, or other negotiations in which you have participated.

Remember that the purpose is to demonstrate what you have learned. In the summary, you do not need an exhaustive description – in fact, you won't have the space to provide one! You will need to decide what facts of what happened are relevant to the important lesson(s) you learned. Those are the facts that you will need to present.

**(2) Identify and explain relevant conceptual material (theories, concepts) from our course.** In this part of the reflection paper, the point is to demonstrate your “ownership” of the concept/idea/theory that you identify. The first half of ownership is being able to describe and explain the concept/idea/theory. In the best of all reflection papers, the element of the paper should be able to stand alone as an explanation of some concept/idea/theory from our course. The identification of this relevant conceptual material should not make reference to the situation you are going to analyze – that comes later! In this part of the paper, just identify and explain the relevant concept/idea/theory. Also, don't assume that I know it! The point is not whether I know it – the point is whether you know it. Also, there is a tendency in this part of the reflection paper to try to explain as many concepts or ideas as seem relevant. Don't fall into this trap! If you try to explain too many ideas, you will not be able to discuss/explain any of them in enough depth to really demonstrate your ownership. Stick with a core concept (or two) that you see as most central to focus on.

**(3) Use the concept/idea/theory to analyze what happened in the negotiation.** The other half of demonstrating ownership with the central concepts/ideas/theories in our course material is to be able to apply them successfully and insightfully. That application may include using the concept/idea/theory to explain why what happened in your negotiation happened. It might include using the concept/theory/idea to explain how or why you might have behaved differently, and what would have happened if you had. It might include using the concept/idea/theory to suggest what you should do the next time you find yourself in a similar negotiation situation.

In this element of your reflection paper, it is critical that you USE the concept, idea, or theory to drive your analysis of what happened in your negotiation. Thus, it is not sufficient in your analysis to know what to do; you also need to correctly explain why to do it. Using course concepts, ideas, and theories to explain why is what applying theory is all about.

## **STANDARDS OF EVALUATION**

Not longer than 3 pages double-spaced, typed in 12-point font or larger, with at least 1” margins.

**A = *insightful*** (up to 40% of papers in past courses)

- Description of the course concepts demonstrates reflection and learning beyond just summarizing what was discussed in class.
- Application to the negotiation situation demonstrates real ownership of the ideas.
- Tight logical link between the description of the negotiation, the concepts from the course, and the conclusions or implications drawn.
- Conclusions are a logical outgrowth of applying the concepts to the description of the negotiation.
- The conclusions/implications go beyond the boundaries of our classroom discussion, and show some initiative in exploring the learning opportunity.
- Focus of the paper is depth of understanding, rather than breadth of coverage.
- May tie several disparate ideas from class together into a central concept, or find some insightful connection to an apparently unrelated issue.
- Paper probably could be used as the basis for a nice talk on the featured concept.

**B = *competent*** (up to 60% of papers in past courses)

- Paper demonstrates correct and complete (but not insightful) analysis and application of the course concepts to the described negotiation situation.
- It is clear from reading the paper that the student understands what was communicated and discussed in class, but probably has not necessarily learned something more from the analysis/application and reflection/write-up of what happened. (*NOTE: this may occasion very little feedback from the grader.*)
- Paper’s link between description, concepts, and applications is not tight.
- Not clear how the concepts relate to the description, or how the description and concepts logically lead to the conclusions or implications.
- Paper touches on several concepts on the surface, rather than exploring any one of them in any useful depth or identifying a theme that ties them all together.
- Paper missed some of the subtleties of the featured concept.

**C (*or worse*) = Inadequate**

- Description of the course concepts is incomplete or incorrect.
- Application of the concepts to the negotiation situation is flawed.
- Paper does not link the negotiation description, course concepts, and application.
- Paper describes the negotiation situation without really using the concepts to analyze it.
- Paper bounces around among a variety of concepts without fully explaining or applying any of them.
- Paper uses words/terms from the class without communicating a sense of understanding their real meaning.
- Paper doesn’t make clear what the student learned, or that the student learned anything.