

SSH 100: Inquiry and Problem-Solving

SHARED LEARNING PORTFOLIO

OVERVIEW

Each week, you will be engaging in critical reflection through the completion of online discussion postings anchored in a consideration of biographical disruption and using the DEAL model as a structural framework; these postings, as a collection, will constitute your shared learning portfolio in the course.

ON BIOGRAPHICAL DISRUPTION

The concept of biographical disruption comes from the field of medicine, which we will be using in a social scientific way. In medicine, the term was coined by Michael Bury in the early 1980s to highlight how chronic illness may be considered a fundamental rupture in one's everyday life. In the medical sense, this rupture acts as "a disruption to the ability to enact an embodied orientation towards the world." Bury's analysis focused on how illness disturbs "the expectations and plans that individuals hold for the future" and can introduce confusion and uncertainty, including about one's self-worth. In short, Bury offers that chronic illness is a fundamental disruption to the experience of everyday life as well as a disruption to the knowledge that underpins our experience of everyday life; certainly, chronic and serious illness disrupt knowledge in the most embodied of ways. In this course, we will incorporate, utilize, and extend this idea of biographical disruption to think of the pandemic and online learning in similar ways, meaning that we will think about the pandemic and online learning's massive impact on the everyday, which we are all experiencing right now. In addition, we will (extending Bury) think about the pandemic and online learning as a kind of social and historical disruption, meaning how the pandemic and online learning has impacted communities and the functioning of societal power structures.

ON CRITICAL REFLECTION

We will define critical reflection according to the DEAL model by Ash & Clayton (2009), which involves three elements:

1. **Documentation** (wherein you objectively and richly describe a specific incident or a set of artifacts). We often mistake categorization or evaluation for description, so we might say students were engaged (a category) or substandard (an evaluation). Vibrant description actually uses sense data to document, before interpretation takes place.
2. **Examination** (wherein you analyze the events documented in your reflection's first part by applying key concepts). Examination is the process of interpreting the events you described. Here, you will locate and incorporate a found source into your reflection to assist in framing and analyzing the events you documented.
3. **Articulation of Learning** (wherein you discuss what you have learned through your documentation, examination, and the critical reflective process). One important feature of deliberate learning (as opposed to the ongoing casual learning) is to *make meaning* or claim what you have discovered through your process. Ash & Clayton note that students in universities are not often given the specific opportunity to reflect on and claim what they have learned, even though this opportunity is invaluable in the learning process.

Overall, these critical reflections should serve as a valuable mechanism for you to think more deeply and theoretically about your (pandemic and online) learning.

ON YOUR CRITICAL REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION POSTS

Reflective discussion posts will be completed each week, in phases, and posted on the course's learning management system. In the documentation phase (weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9), you will be given a prompt to describe a situation from your experience, emphasizing empirical sense data rather than interpretation. In the examination phase (weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10), you will be asked to analyze the experience you documented by locating, evaluating, and incorporating a found source (academic article, artistic work, popular article, or something else). Finally, you will articulate your learning by summarizing what you have discovered through your collection of critical reflective posts and the feedback you received from your instructor and peers (due during the university's final examination period).