



# Narrative Evaluations of Students

Learning & Teaching Commons  
Fall 2023 Resource Packet

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Compiled by Julie Levin Russo  
sourced primarily from the Canvas site  
Teaching at Evergreen

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## Evaluation of Student Work (excerpts)

from [Evergreen](#)

Evaluation week can be a hectic and trying time for many faculty members. The workload is likely to be heavy, and careful organization is necessary in order to meet with all students and get evaluations of their work turned in to the program secretary. Some faculty prefer to schedule evaluation conferences one after another at the beginning of the week (asking each student to bring in his or her self-evaluation and final program assignments), and then write all evaluations in an intensive effort in the latter part of the week. Others have found it more efficient to write up evaluations of students before holding conferences. This allows discussion at the conference to focus on what has been written in advance. Still others have used a pattern of alternating conferences with writing periods throughout the evaluation week.

Timely submission of evaluations to program secretaries is a must. (See Section 7.622 in the Faculty Handbook.) Evaluations which are turned in late to the secretary can cause delays in meeting student requests for transcripts, awarding of financial aid for the following quarter or reporting to the Veterans Administration and scholarship-granting agencies.

A well-written evaluation of student work covers as many of the following elements as possible:

1. Command of information covered in the program or course;
2. Understanding of central ideas;
3. Imaginative and creative use of subject matter;
4. Ability to think, verbalize ideas and plan strategies for problem solving;
5. Writing ability;
6. Class contribution (preparation, attendance, participation);
7. Growth over the quarter (or year); and
8. Diligence and effort;

So far as possible, the text of the evaluation should relate clearly to the course equivalencies at the end. That is, some comment should be included in the text to indicate what the level of the student's performance was for each area of equivalency. Faculty are explicitly directed not to use letter or numerical grades in the evaluation and, insofar as possible, should refrain from using language which is the equivalent of grades. Because the evaluation is of *student achievement*, there should be no comment about work which was not successfully completed. That should be handled by simple reduction of credit [as per course/program policies] or, when no credit at all is to be awarded, by turning in a "no credit."

A few caveats about evaluation writing: it is important in assessing a student's performance to remember that the ultimate audience of the evaluation is a public one--and may include readers looking at the evaluation many years later... In general, honest and direct writing about observable performance works best.

## Evaluation Reminders (excerpts)

from the Program Secretaries

Thank you for writing a careful evaluation of your students' work and performance. Please remember that the evaluation may be read by a variety of audiences and needs to have a long shelf life. Your careful preparation of evaluations now can save you and staff from time-intensive back-and-forth corrections.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

**Address how student met learning outcomes and Six Expectations (SEAL).** The evaluation should refer to learning outcomes that were clearly identified in the syllabus and in assignments, and how well the student did in achieving them.

**Only comment on the work that students are getting credit for.** Do not include information such as personal health or financial challenges, family life, ability, problems, race/gender, etc. **Keep the language about the work that was completed** and not personal attributes. Avoid describing personality traits (or physical traits) in the description.

**Length:** Not too long, not too short! A 16-credit program evaluation should contain enough detail to describe the work that earned 16 credits. A super short evaluation may not do justice to the student work; a super long one may be tedious for future audiences to read through.

**Use Evaluative Language.** Some evaluations are three pages long and say a lot about *what* the student did; they still might say extraordinarily little about *how* the student did. Whether it is graduate program admissions committees, employers, or granting agencies, evaluative language is important.

**Shorter Program Descriptions:** Don't wear the reader out with a long laundry list before they ever get to student eval. Keep it about the student work.

**Credit Equivalencies:** Needs to be detailed. Decipherable, transferable.

### COMMON ERRORS

**Chosen Names in Evaluations:** The student's registered name must appear in the first sentence of the evaluation (per [Evaluation Guidelines](#) policy), but the evaluation may use the student's chosen name other than that one required reference. Please consider consulting students about how they would prefer their name to appear.

**Note from Julie Russo:** *As of Spring 2023, policy is that all chosen names must first appear in the format "NameofRecord (ChosenName)" so that evaluations are consistent throughout the transcript. A comprehensive review and update of policies and processes around chosen names in student records is needed, and discussions about undertaking it are underway.*

**Gender:** Please consider writing an evaluation without using gender pronouns. This way, if a person's pronouns change over time, the record is still fine. If you do want to refer to gender, and a student's gender does not match their gender of record, please note this in the first sentence. See our website dedicated to pronoun usage in Evaluations:

<https://www.evergreen.edu/registration/gender-evals>

***Note from Julie Russo:** I want to acknowledge that this is a controversial recommendation, but it was adopted after full consideration. As with other aspects of a student's identity, their gender (at the time of the evaluation) should not necessarily be shared with an external audience, and it is not relevant to their learning and performance ([more on gender bias](#)). Writing an evaluation without pronouns can be awkward mechanically, but it gets easier with practice!*

## MECHANICS

- **Verb Tense:** Be sure to write Descriptions and Narratives in **past tense** all the way through.
- **Please do not mention other students by name**, nor use pictures, website references or links in evaluations. Consider coaching students to build their own e-portfolio to feature their accomplishments.
- **Contract Titles (ILC/INT) in Evaluations:** Make sure the title of the contract is in **bold type** in the Description.
- **Use beginning and end quotes** when quoting field supervisors, other students, etc. Use a block quotation for longer passages and do not use italics in the quotation, unless it is the title of a book.
- **Ampersands** and long dashes are not permitted in the title of programs and the Credit Equivalencies section. They are unrecognizable in OARS (Online Academic Record System) software and show up as code in Transcripts.
- **Please remember to remove all Evaluation Meeting comments** and notes to yourself before posting.
- **Seasons** identifying quarters are not capitalized. Students attend during fall quarter, winter quarter, etc.
- **Punctuation** goes inside quotation marks. "... for their project." Not "...for their project".
- **One space** is placed after a colon, semi-colon, and period. Not two spaces.
- Papers and projects are **titled**, not entitled.
- **Periods** go after abbreviated words, including the U.S. and middle initials.

## EDITS BEFORE AND AFTER SUBMISSION

**Before Submission:** Status will be "In Progress." To make a change, click on the EDIT tab at the top of the page, make your corrections, and save.

**After Submission:** Status will be "Review." Click on the UNLOCK tab at the top of the page, make your edits, save, and turn in.

## TEMPLATES

Use [https://helpwiki.evergreen.edu/wiki/index.php/Evaluation\\_Templates](https://helpwiki.evergreen.edu/wiki/index.php/Evaluation_Templates) for a quick how-to.

**When setting up your templates, be sure to:**

- Include the "by" lines in the Description *and* Narrative
- In the Description use Faculty: (one space) Name, degree designation
- In the Narrative use Written by: (one space) Name, degree designation
- Please be sure the bylines are identical in the Description and Narrative, including middle initials and degree designations (Stacey M. Childs, Ph.D.)

## DIFFERENTIATED DESCRIPTIONS

If you are differentiating descriptions (or writing unique descriptions for different students), it is **IMPORTANT** you contact the Program Secretary Team at [programsecretaries@evergreen.edu](mailto:programsecretaries@evergreen.edu) **PRIOR** to submitting your evaluations. Please provide a list of which students are to receive which description. This is necessary to avoid using the wrong Description in every eval in the program.

## EVALUATION STATUS KEY

**In Progress:** You have worked on the Evaluation, but not turned it in yet. Click "Turn In" to submit the Evaluation for Review.

**Review:** You have turned in the Evaluation for processing; it is now in the Program Secretary's To Do queue.

**Correction:** The Evaluation has been Unlocked and Returned to the Faculty so they can make edits and resubmit it for Review. It is now in Faculty's To Do in my.evergreen account.

**Return:** Faculty has returned the Evaluation to the Program Secretary after making a correction and is now in Program Secretary's To Do.

**Amend Transcript:** Registration is reviewing a Revised Evaluation.

**If an Evaluation is in "In Progress" or "Correction" status, it requires action by Faculty.** Unlock Evaluation at any time for changes/editing by clicking on the UNLOCK tab at the top of the student's page. "Turn in" again when done, for Program Secretary to process/post.

**Start to finish HOW TO do Evals:**

[https://helpwiki.evergreen.edu/wiki/index.php/Evaluation\\_Guide\\_for\\_Faculty](https://helpwiki.evergreen.edu/wiki/index.php/Evaluation_Guide_for_Faculty)

# Balancing the Formative and Summative in Narrative Evaluations

by Julia Metzger

## Narrative Evaluations of Students

Narrative evaluations are one of the unique elements of studying at Evergreen. Narrative evaluations provide a summative evaluation of student learning at the end of a quarter or program. They also provide formative assessment of a student's work. The formative aspect of this assessment is a critical part of a feedback loop that provides the recipient with some actionable information about their performance they can use in the future. Drafting effective narratives that balance summative evaluation with formative feedback can be tricky. The following advice can help.

### Anchor to shared goals

The inherent value of a narrative evaluation is the flexibility to speak directly to an individual's growth and performance. This flexibility can present challenges. If the narrative is too wide ranging, it can be difficult for the learner to interpret and thus limit their ability to take action to continue learning. Analyzing growth and performance according to a set of established learning goals (e.g., your program goals or [Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#)) helps the student anchor the feedback in a framework that is familiar to them.

### Critique compassionately with examples

The value of a narrative evaluation is to identify for the learner where they have been successful and where they can improve. Strive to balance these in your narrative. Only speaking to the successes, leaves the student without clarity about how they can take their learning to the next level or may communicate that there is nothing left for them to explore or develop. On the other hand, an evaluation that over-emphasizes lack of progress can communicate that there isn't much they can do to succeed and can be demotivating. Show the student what success looks like by including examples of when they've been successful. Motivate the learner by concretely describing steps they can make to improve when they weren't.

### Shift evaluation from comparison to growth

When writing narrative evaluations for a group of students, you are likely going to want to lean on some adjectives that help you compare work or skills across the students in your course or program. The comparison is natural and unavoidable. Knowing how they compare to others can be motivating to individuals with a performance orientation to goal achievement. For others, however, this feedback can lead to performance avoidance to escape being judged in comparison to others. In both cases, the feedback rarely helps a learner understand how to achieve the learning goals. Instead of using descriptors that comparatively describe performance (e.g., poor, good, excellent), shift to descriptors (e.g.,

emergent, developing, mastery) that help students understand where they are developmentally in terms of knowledge attainment or skill development.

### Create a legend

Save yourself time and provide clarity to your students by creating a legend that explains the meaning behind the adjectives you use to make judgements about students' learning or work. For example, consider the following rubric. This rubric was developed for students in a general chemistry course but could be adapted to many learning contexts.

<b>Mastery</b>	You have shown that you can critically adapt application of concept or skill to novel or unpredictable contexts. Continue to challenge yourself by considering how this concept or skill could help you understand other aspects of the world around you.
<b>Developed</b>	You have shown the ability to reliably apply concept or skill in known contexts, Seek to explore new approaches to improve your understanding and challenge yourself.
<b>Emergent</b>	You have demonstrated inconsistent use of the application of the concept or skill. Continue practicing and checking your understanding with peers and expert sources.
<b>Neophyte</b>	Evidence from your work or performance shows you have made effort towards the learning goals; however, your demonstrated understanding of the concept or skill is insufficient or contains inaccuracies. Return to the readings and assignments to expand your understanding. Seek support from your instructor or a tutor.
<b>Shapeless</b>	I am not able to judge your ability from observation or analysis of your work. We need a conversation to determine your next steps.

### Write to the context

The narrative evaluation serves many roles for you and the student. Your written evaluation is an important summary of the students' progress of the learning and a justification of the credit earned. It is also a piece of the students' transcript that will be read by external audiences as a chapter in their undergraduate journey that lives long beyond their time in your course or program. Remember both of these contexts when you make choices about detail and language.

### Communicate in more than one modality

The written evaluation is important but it is all too easy for the student to ignore it – especially if it comes at the end of a stressful quarter. Building in an opportunity for them to read and respond to it (i.e., the evaluation conference) is a valuable opportunity to process the feedback. It is also a unique opportunity to clarify the action steps the learner can make.

# Sample Evaluation Handout for Students

by Julie Levin Russo (and teaching partners)

**Portfolios due [time/place/format].** Late or incomplete portfolios will not earn full credit.

**CHECKLIST** of assignments/portfolio contents

Check off all included items, make notes about missing items, and include in your portfolio.

## CREDIT BREAKDOWN

As a reminder of the policies from the syllabus, to earn full credit for this quarter you must:

EVALUATION PROCESS and POLICIES (see [Evaluations](#))

*If you are leaving the program, we will not post your credits until you have submitted a complete portfolio, including self and faculty evaluations. If you are staying, credits will not be posted until the end of the program.*

### 1. FACULTY EVALUATION OF YOUR WORK: **Draft Shared at Conference**

This evaluation is based on the work that you completed this quarter according to the guidelines set out in the syllabus, assignments, and learning agreements provided. It will evaluate the work that has been turned in and award credit based on that work. As a policy, work for which you have not earned credit will not be discussed in evaluations. If you are staying in the program, this evaluation will be informal, and will be incorporated into the final evaluation of your work submitted at the end of Spring quarter.

### 2. YOUR SELF EVALUATION: **Due with Portfolio**

In addition to the paper copy, you should submit your Self Evaluation using the online system (Evaluations option at <http://my.evergreen.edu>). To share with faculty you must click the Turn In button. Turn In does NOT mean that you're sending the self-evaluation to your transcript – that is a separate, optional step. Self-evaluations are cumulative for the program, so if you stay on, you may add to what you write now for next quarters version (you may choose to continue in a separate paragraph or integrate your new experiences).

[http://wikis.evergreen.edu/computing/index.php/Writing\\_a\\_Self-Evaluation](http://wikis.evergreen.edu/computing/index.php/Writing_a_Self-Evaluation)

[http://wikis.evergreen.edu/computing/index.php/Submitting\\_your\\_Self-Evaluation](http://wikis.evergreen.edu/computing/index.php/Submitting_your_Self-Evaluation)

### 3. YOUR EVALUATION OF FACULTY: **Due when leaving the Program**

When writing this evaluation, consider the ways that your faculty have supported you in your learning and the ways they could improve upon that support. It is helpful to focus on specific aspects of teaching, including lectures, seminar facilitation, assignments, materials, program structure, etc. You may update these evaluations if you are staying in the program through winter quarter, but it's important to capture your feedback about the past 10 weeks at least for your seminar faculty.

We encourage you to share this written feedback with us, but it is not required. Post your Faculty Evaluation online via <http://my.evergreen.edu>; you have the option to share your evaluation with us or specify that faculty will not access it until after your credit is posted.



# Sample Evaluation Template

by Julie Levin Russo (and teaching partners)

## INTRO PARAGRAPH

[Name] was a strong/excellent/good/fair/brilliant/passionate/exemplary/advanced/fairly good/satisfactory student in this program  
a committed student in this program whose participation was very uneven due to external factors / although external factors interfered with full participation as the quarter went on bringing an openness to new ideas / willingness to share perspectives / excitement about the topic / astute critical thinking / a deep interest in interrogating [topics] / a commitment to learning

[Name]

- participated (fully) and completed assignments consistently and on time throughout the quarter
- participation in activities and completion of work was fairly consistent throughout the quarter
- performance in this program was mixed: this student had excellent participation and contributed a great deal to discussions, but completion of assignments was very uneven
- showed good engagement with the material and assignments, but participation and completion of work was uneven throughout the quarter.
- Although this student kept up with class sessions and assignments very sporadically, all assignments were complete by the end of the quarter.
- Although active participation and punctuality with assignments was not always consistent as [Name] balanced many academic demands, this student completed nearly all of the work and showed great enthusiasm for the material.

[Name's]

- enthusiasm for the material and the personal connections made
  - willingness to share perspectives and pose challenging questions
  - enthusiasm for and thoughtfulness about the material
  - willingness to share experiences
- made a positive contribution to our learning community.

## SEMINAR AND WRITING

[Name]

- was reliably involved in lectures and (active in) discussions.
- was reliably involved in lectures, answering all the post-lecture surveys thoughtfully.
- was an especially strong participant in seminars, often making astute and substantive contributions and even volunteering to lead small group discussions.
- was reliably involved in lectures and seminars and often made astute and substantive contributions (that moved conversations forward).

- did not typically contribute to seminar discussions but completed all writing assignments related to seminar material.
- was sometimes involved in lectures and discussions (and always participated actively with generative comments and questions when present).
- and made some thoughtful replies to peers on Canvas.

Weekly seminars offered students an opportunity to engage and work through program readings, screenings, and concepts.

- [Name] was a regular participant in the discussions, making thoughtful contributions that showed this student's keen critical thinking skills and ability to relate the ideas raised in the texts to larger issues and themes in the program.
- I would have liked to have heard more from [Name] in seminar, and I encourage this student to take on the challenge of becoming a more active contributor in discussions.

[Name]

(mostly) kept up with / turned in all / nearly all / most / some of the writing assignments related to seminar material

(and completed these) thoroughly / in detailed and thoughtful/insightful ways

- evidencing a careful reading, analysis, and synthesis of the material.
- evidencing that this student regularly may not have completed or understood / thought deeply about the readings.
- demonstrating sophisticated reading and writing ability and strong skills in humanities inquiry.
- using these as an opportunity to relate the topics to additional ideas and questions.
- and (while not especially detailed) these reading responses were closely tied to the articles and effectively demonstrated an understanding of concepts/texts.
- and comments ranged from somewhat minimal to more substantive, sometimes including specific references from the texts.
- (substantive) reading responses accurately summarized key ideas in the articles and included specific references from the texts, demonstrating a strong ability to understand humanities scholarship.
- offered succinct summaries of key ideas in the articles that organically incorporated specific references from the texts.
- and these reading responses effectively cited a specific passage from each text, succinctly summarized this key idea, and offered an original take on it.
- amply demonstrated an engagement with the material and critical thinking skills.
- were fairly minimal, but sometimes represented thoughtful and original takes on the week's topics.
- showed good synthesis of the topics and an ability to relate them to original ideas and questions.
- showed critical engagement/consideration with/of the topics and an ability to relate them to original ideas and questions.

- were well developed, closely following the prompts and making insightful connections between the week's topics and original perspectives.
- completed a few of the seminar assignments which did not fully demonstrate regular engagement with the readings. However, these responses did show that this student was closely involved with class topics and had insightful commentary and connections to share.

[Name's] writing

- demonstrated sophisticated/solid/good writing skills.
- demonstrated a good foundation to build on in terms of skills.
- was articulate if somewhat informal.
- writing was clearly constructed and straightforward.
- writing style tended to be somewhat informal, but this student effectively demonstrated a thoughtful and engaged understanding and synthesis of the concepts.
- and thinking skills were strongly evident in this student's ability to express complex ideas clearly.
- was clear and conversational, showing a good foundational grasp of humanities skills overall.
- was characterized by complex and well-structured ideas. This student was able to develop a clear and focused thesis and support it with specific evidence in an articulate voice.
- Communicated ideas that are interesting and clearly stated, although there was room for improvement in sentence and paragraph structure at times.
- was characterized by complex and sophisticated ideas that were sometimes disorganized.
- communicated strikingly well crafted, cogent, and original analyses that combined close reading and theoretical insight.
- demonstrated that this student is focusing seriously on composition skills and developing into a sophisticated writer.
- was characterized by good sentence and paragraph structure, and the ideas were interesting and clearly stated.
- was characterized by good sentence and paragraph structure and well-reasoned claims.
- was characterized by good sentence and paragraph structure and an articulate voice.
- shows learning toward developing a clear and focused thesis, and the claims and evidence were generally well crafted.
- communicated ideas were interesting and clearly stated, but this student could continue to work on refining a thesis (and fully developing the supporting evidence).
- progressed toward developing a clear and focused thesis and supporting it with well-reasoned claims and specific evidence.

- shows that this student could continue to work on defining a focused topic and deepening her textual analysis.

## OTHER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS...

### CLOSING

[Name] submitted a well-organized and comprehensive portfolio and a thoughtful self-evaluation.

[For students continuing: write internal notes about any issues this quarter, like credit loss, and/or things to think about for next quarter.]

[For students who are exiting:]

Over the course of this program/course, [Name] has developed a thorough understanding of / has progressed in understanding of core ideas in [topics].

[Name] takes responsibility for learning, frequently asking questions in class and always fully participating in discussions, and has showed up as a mature and conscientious scholar with good collaboration and communication skills.

[Name] was a solid student who participated in most program activities and seemed engaged in the material.

[Name] could have been a more conscientious student, but participated in most program activities and seemed engaged in the material.

[Name] submitted a well-organized and comprehensive / partially complete portfolio and demonstrated a growing/strong capacity to reflect on learning, composing a thoughtful self-evaluation.

## Sample Student Evaluation #1

Example of using learning objectives to organize an evaluation (for a two-quarter program; still probably too long):

Lee came to this program with a strong background in science and a powerful sense of curiosity about all the material we were learning. Lee was particularly eager to find ways to apply what we were studying to life, and used various assignments as a chance to bridge the gap between theory and practice. When fully present, Lee was an enthusiastic and generous contributor to class discussions. This student took charge of learning in various ways, including by establishing open lines of communication with faculty whenever missing class was necessary or turning an assignment in late.

In this program, students worked on enhancing their knowledge of the following topics and skill sets:

*Demonstrating basic knowledge of typical reproductive physiology, as well as the major structures, functions, and concepts of human genetics*

Lee did good work in physiology (reproduction, genetics, endocrinology), and apprehended many of the objectives, as demonstrated by performance on exams and hard work on the winter quarter endocrinology worksheet. Lee also correctly answered a few optional questions in both quarters that demonstrated some comprehension of more advanced material.

*Thinking critically about race, class, gender, disability, and sexuality*

Lee's fall quarter exam demonstrated a strong understanding of key program concepts, including biopower, and took advantage of student-created questions (including a self-created one) to devote extra attention to disability, something we were only able to cover briefly this term. Likewise, Lee brought in examples of the medicalization of trans bodies and the experience of incarcerated parents, two other crucial subjects that we touched on but did not explore in depth. Lee also captured many of the key details involved in the history of the birth control pill, including both the abuses suffered by women of color, and the resistance practiced by white women who had the privilege necessary to make their voices heard about the necessity of informed consent. Finally, Lee succinctly described the commodity status of white babies in relation to infant mortality, thus addressing a question this student raised earlier during our discussion of chronic stress. When asked to evaluate both sides of a controversial issue—the use of illegal drugs by pregnant people—Lee made excellent use of evidence from both program texts and external sources to support the analysis. Lee also made rhetorically effective use of the popular idea that people under the influence cannot give sexual consent to explode the idea that addicted people “choose” to expose their children to drugs.

### *Strengthening critical writing skills*

At the start of fall quarter, Lee identified critical writing as a growth area, and I would like to see Lee continue to focus energies here in subsequent terms. Lee's weekly papers were characterized by a good deal of self-reflection, and strong textual comprehension. This student regularly reframed complex concepts by paraphrasing, and often synthesized material across different texts, or lingered over examples from the text that we had not covered fully in class. On a regular basis, Lee "tested out" what we were learning by applying theoretical insights to contemporary examples from politics and popular culture. Lee's synthesis papers were consistent with a commitment to putting theory into practice; the second essay, in particular, used the assignment in order to dig deeper into a question this student had posed in class. The extra work Lee put into writing, including seeking tutoring assistance, definitely paid off in terms of improving grammar and paragraph organization winter quarter. In the future, Lee may want to focus additional attention on analysis skills.

### *Strengthening research skills*

For the final project, Lee wanted to research a wide range of topics related to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Lee was particularly interested in Bruno Bettelheim, and the dangerous myth he propagated about so-called "refrigerator moms." With the help of feedback from faculty, Lee narrowed her topic, while maintaining a transhistorical perspective, linking Bettelheim to some of the social stigmas that persist today in relation to parents of autistic children. Lee also researched the way in which reactions against Bettelheim paved the way for efforts to de-stigmatize autism, bringing resources rather than shame to parents of autistic children and culminating in the formation and ongoing work of the National Autistic Society. This student's final research paper was clear and well organized.

### *Strengthening public speaking and facilitation skills*

Lee was enthusiastic about learning with and from other students, often asking probing, genuine questions. Lee also did an excellent job naming the stakes of our inquiry, especially when we were discussing the experiences of traditionally marginalized populations, inviting us to move, as this student put it, from noise into action. Lee frequently reached out to quieter students, including on the very first day of class, and often responded directly to other students' comments when speaking.

When asked to co-facilitate a seminar, Lee and partners designed a really excellent lesson plan that succeeded in getting the group back on task after a challenging week. They set a productive tone for the conversation, managed time well, included multiple modes of learning, gave participants an appropriate amount of choice, and solicited feedback in the end, all of which made the seminar a real success. The most innovative part of their lesson plan was the decision to ask each participant, anonymously, to set goals for themselves for the seminar, and then to check back in on whether those goals were met after an initial

activity. This allowed each participant to feel both empowered and responsible. Lee came up with the learning goal activity in response to some of the frustrations expressed in a previous class session, demonstrating a capacity for quick, creative, and responsive thinking. Lee took full advantage of the opportunity to rehearse the final project presentation, and really refined the delivery in the week after rehearsal. Lee's final presentation was, as a result, much more clearly organized, allowing the audience to follow the historical argument communicated. Lee also included a strong opening, and supplemented the delivery of information with an "interactive timeline," in which this student asked each member of the audience to read a short description of an event representing a "win" for autism visibility. Lee offered a particularly lucid summary of early critiques of Bettelheim's work, and demonstrated real mastery of the subject during the question and answer period. I also appreciated Lee's strong conclusion, which directly tied the presentation to program themes. Lee received a raft of positive feedback from peers, who praised the timeline activity and noted that this student did an excellent job covering a great deal of material in an engaging way.

In short, it was a pleasure working with and learning from Lee in this program!

# EVALUATION OF STUDENT BY KOPPELMAN, NANCY F

What Are Children For? The Psychology and History of Childhood 09/28/2020 - 12/18/2020

Dinky, Debbie (a fake student name)

A12345678

Last, First Middle

Student ID

## Description

Faculty: Nancy Koppelman, Ph.D., Nathalie Yuen, Ph.D.

Students in this program studied the physical, cognitive, and social development of children, and how children's experiences have changed over the course of U.S. history. Students examined Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Kohlberg's stages of moral development, information processing theory, and behaviorism. The program also considered what childhood was like before these theories existed, and how they both described and changed what it means to grow up. Our work also considered how heredity, environment, and social change have influenced childhood, and examined whether both human development and historical change occur gradually or in distinct stages. Paula Fass's *The End of American Childhood: A History of Parenting from the Frontier to the Managed Child* guided our historical studies; Jennifer Paris et al.'s *Understanding the Whole Child* provided grounding in human development. Students heard several guest speakers who work with and on behalf of children. Our weekly schedule included two book seminars, all-program lectures and films, and writing workshops. Students wrote 15 seminar reports, a project that introduced research methods in psychology, a brief memoir, and a creative/critical essay on an aspect of childhood of their choice. Both project and essay were produced in several phases, with final iterations due at the end of the quarter. Students also completed a Life Stories project where they conducted a thematic analysis of memoirs by program members, wrote an essay analyzing historical changes in children's sense of self, and presented their findings to the program.

This program was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic; all classes were held remotely. Students had to exercise an unusually high degree of independence in order to fulfill its requirements.

## Evaluation

Written by: Nancy Koppelman, Ph.D., and Nathalie Yuen, Ph.D.

Debbie did a great deal of very good work in the program; some of her work was excellent. She attended all classes, completed all required writing, participated in numerous study groups, and received many thanks from other students for her help and support with their work. Debbie participated in seminar ably and often. Her twice-weekly Seminar Reports were often searching and highly articulate forays into the texts and concepts of the week. I always looked forward to reading them. Overall, Debbie demonstrated a keen grasp of historical perspectives on childhood and of developmental psychology. She showed a consistent ability to bring knowledge and perspectives from these academic disciplines to the challenges of understanding contemporary childhood.

Debbie's psychology research project focused on language development in infancy. She demonstrated proficient library research skills and APA Style skills. All of the sources she included in her annotated bibliography were recently published empirical studies from peer-reviewed journals. Her reflection was thoughtful and detailed. She also included a revised draft that included her sources in her reflection. Debbie created an engaging poster to share her findings and actively contributed to the poster session.

Debbie completed all parts of the Life Stories project. The focus of her Life Stories essay was that although there were examples of the self as motivated agent present in our texts, these examples varied based on historical context. Her essay would be improved by providing additional examples to support her analysis of these changes throughout history. After missing the panel discussion, Debbie was instrumental in organizing and moderating a second one, an act much appreciated by other students.

Debbie's 10-pp. creative/critical essay was exceptionally well-written and ambitious in its aims. Debbie wrote the paper in five phases; each improved upon the last one and brought her closer to writing with purpose and unity. Entitled "The Limits of Culture and Objectivity in American Childrearing," the paper was inspired by a classmate's childhood experience of learning the credo to "do no harm," and then



encountering other children who were harm-doers. Debbie took this story as a springboard to inquire about how adult interests enter children's milieu in the minds of children themselves. She located children's embrace of adult ideas in Piaget's concrete operational stage of development when, she wrote, "[p]arents who think they understand how the world works [lead] to children who think they understand how the world works." Recognizing the ubiquity of passing understanding from one generation to another, she deemed Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as an effective frame for understanding the overlapping influences that shape the back-and-forth interactions between children, the adults who care for them, and society at large. She then employed Fass's book to introduce historical illustrations of how influences on children work over time. Debbie wrote,

"An adult is not just a grown child, but the grown child after having undergone a cultural transformation that is meant to define thought and behavior," and "The way that Americans engage with developmental theories is still a cultural style."

Although Debbie had no background in American intellectual history, her analysis recalled the path-breaking post-World War II work of such thinkers as David Potter, David Riesman, and Christopher Lasch, viz.: "[T]he emphasis of American child-rearing is clearly placed on a certain category of individuality that is a cultural style and not an activated psychological state per se." Debbie's paper stood as a strong argument that the ethic of individualism has shaped knowledge under the rubric of scientific truth, as if individualism was an inherent feature of our species. In the future, Debbie is fully capable of doing advanced work in any field in the humanities and social sciences that she chooses, and of making genuine critical contributions to the issues with which she is concerned. She was a rare student, and it was a pleasure working with her.

Credits Attempted	Credits Earned	Course Equivalencies
16	16	<i>5 - History of American Childhood</i> <i>5 - Developmental Psychology</i> <i>3 - American Studies</i> <i>3 - Expository Writing</i>