Reflection 3 – Finding Your Purpose

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CUNY La Guardia Community College

8-2019

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Assignment Description

1. The assignment was used in the Liberal Arts: Social Science and Humanities First Year Seminar (LIF 101).
2. The main objectives are:
   a. Facilitate student self-examination and exploration of how interests, skills and values can connect to academic and professional goals
   b. Build student capacity for reflective planning, including breaking out tasks and self-assessment
   c. Build student knowledge of academic and career paths
   d. Support students with making a decision on proper major
   e. Increase engagement with college offices and staff
   f. Build writing skills – including essay organization and development
3. Relevant student Performance Objectives for course:
   a. Locate the multiple resources available at LaGuardia and use these to solve academic problems related to advising, course selection, academic skills, and extracurricular activities.
   b. Identify education and career goals and prepare an individualized educational plan, based on a structured exploration of personal interests, skills and values.
   c. Define and practice academic survival and success strategies (e.g. note-taking, active reading, test preparation and taking, collaborative learning skills) and the self-management habits necessary for academic success (e.g. time management, motivation, self-responsibility and financial literacy.)
   d. Demonstrate the use of skills and knowledge gained from diverse experiences to enhance learning and success.
4. The assignment draws from extensive in-class activities, both in lecture and Studio Hour. There are weeks’ worth of in-class activities drawn on, and the student should expect to spend a few additional weeks putting together the assignment. Some specific information on the staging of the assignment:

   Stage 1 – Student Learns About Self
   a. You Map – a visualization the student completes of what’s important to them and key past experiences
   b. ePortfolio Understanding Myself
   c. Career Coach Assessment (linked to in ePortfolio)
   d. Classroom discussions and activities related to how we can learn about ourselves
Stage 2 – Student Explores Career/Transfer/Academic Possibilities Based on Prior Stage

e. Possible Lives Map – a visualization of their goals and what they want to accomplish
f. Lectures and demonstrations on academic and career research, including a document which lists out activities and resources
g. Lecture on possible trajectories and assessing what education is needed to reach certain career goals (for instance, a need for a bachelor’s and post-graduate education for certain jobs)
h. ePortfolio modules including Degree, Career and Transfer Planning
i. Student uses a “Ways to Explore” form to start thinking about concrete steps he/she can take to learn more
j. As part of the assignment, students must submit a draft of their goals and planning, using the Goal and Planning Form, before moving forward so they can get feedback

Stage 3 – Writing Up Plan and Moving Forward

k. Taking the knowledge gained and instructor feedback, student finalizes goals (or is aware that some goals are still undefined) and moves forward with completing concrete steps to learn more and create a plan that is unique to current needs
l. Every student must visit a campus office or meet with a Program Director to learn more about some aspect of their development
m. Every student must conduct some initial career research using the “Career Research Before and After” activity (which mirrors a particular module in the ePortfolio)
n. The final assignment is worth 20% of the final grade

Reflection

This assignment assumes the following: a) students who possess or develop an understanding of self will have a more productive college experience and can better find a purpose b) students need support connecting their purpose with major and career exploration and c) students need support with specific activities and research skills that will help them learn more and plan. This assignment is used in LIF101. This course has a high number of students who are often unclear about their future goals. Even for those who feel certain of their goals, support is needed to help them realize a path for reaching those goals.

An important structure that is used in the assignment is Probability Planning, Possibility Planning, and Purpose Planning. This structure is lightly adapted and borrowed from You Majored in What? Designing Your Path From College to Career, by Katharine Brooks. It’s vitally important to give a name to the stage of planning a student is in. This helps both the advisor and the student. A Probability Planner has a good sense of future goals and needs to focus on activities that will move him/her closer to those goals. A Possibility Planner has some good, clear ideas, but may need to narrow things down or make a decision on which path to follow. A Purpose Planner (Katharine Brooks uses the term ‘Intention Planner’) is overwhelmed with possible ideas, or has no clear ideas at all. This student needs more guidance on self-exploration and major and career research. For LIF101 students who often feel overwhelmed regardless of what stage they are, giving a name to that stage helps organize energy and attention in a productive way.
LIF101 Reflection 3 - Finding Your Purpose

Background and Instructions
This assignment requires you to think about all of the activities and research you’ve conducted to find your purpose in life and to plan your academic and professional career. You will be asked to think about your goals and why you have them as goals; or, you will need to reflect on what you need to do to clarify your goals or create goals if you’re still unsure. You need to identify a list of at least 5 of the most important things you need to do to learn and move forward, and you need to do three of those things and write about what you learned. Last, you need to identify your plan going forward.

For Parts I-IV, refer to the Goal and Planning Form and complete the information on the form. You will then write more about what you’re placing in the form for your reflection, discussed in Part V. Note, you will draw on many activities completed in the course for this assignment.

Part I - What Are Your Goals?
Using the Goals and Planning Form, write down your goals for each category. If you are completely unsure, write “unsure.” If you have multiple ideas, list all of them. If you have one idea you’re pretty sure of, but are considering some other possibilities, list the idea you’re pretty sure of and also make a note of the other ideas that are “maybes.” You should put as much information into the form as is relevant and will help you reflect. Remember: think about who you are and your purpose!

Part II - What Type of Planner Are You?
Use the Goals and Planning Form to check off what kind of planner you are. Knowing what type of planner you are helps you know what you need to focus on. For instance, if you are a Probability Planner, then you need to work towards reaching the clearly defined goals you already have. If you’re a Possibility Planner, you need to work to narrow down your ideas and make a decision. If you’re a Purpose Planner, you need to focus on exploration and finding your purpose(s).

Part III - What Do You Need to Do to Explore and Learn?
Using the Goals and Planning Form, now you’re ready to write what are some of the most important things you need to do to explore and learn more. If you’re a Probability Planner and you have decided you want to transfer to a 4-yr college to pursue a Philosophy degree, perhaps a step forward is to research philosophy programs at different colleges. If you’re a Possibility Planner, maybe you need to make a decision on whether to major in Secondary Education or Psychology, and to help you make that decision you need to meet with the Program Directors. If you’re a Purpose Planner, perhaps you need to conduct career research and view some job listings to start exploring possible paths.

In the space provided, write at least 5 things you need to do to clarify your goals and learn more. Then, complete three of your steps. One step must involve meeting with a Program Director, attending an event, or visiting a campus office. A second step must be completing a Career Research Form.

Part IV - What Is Your Plan for Reaching Your Goals?
Using the Goals and Planning Form, write a list of your overall future plan. If you have a clear career goal in mind, your plan might involve the major steps needed to get to that career. If you’re on the
other end of the spectrum and don’t have a clear career goal in mind, your plan might involve giving
yourself a deadline for making a decision and a series of steps to make that decision.

Part V - Written Reflection

Write a reflection in which you discuss the work you did to complete the Goals and Planning Form, and
also the major steps you took to learn more. Your reflection should use the following structure:

1. Paragraph 1 - Explain where you are with your goals. Have you decided on them? If so, how did
   you decide and why are you confident in your decision? How do your goals connect to your
   purpose - your interests, skills and values? Are you still figuring out some or all of your goals?
   Are you trying to decide between two very different paths? Explain your current thoughts. Last,
   explain what type of “planner” you are.

2. Paragraph 2 - Explain the most important steps you need to take to learn more and why the
   steps are important.

3. Paragraph 3 - Explain one step you took and what you learned (Required: Campus
   event/Program Dir./Etc.).

4. Paragraph 4 - Explain a second step you took and what you learned (Required: Career research).

5. Paragraph 5 - Explain a third step you took and what you learned (Student Choice)

6. Paragraph 6 - Conclude by reflecting on any changes you’ve made to your future goals based on
   this assignment, and briefly lay out your future plans.

Guidelines
Your reflection should be typed using Times New Roman font, size 12, with one inch page margins,
double spaced. Your reflection should be 1,100-1,200 words. You should turn in a completed Goals and
Planning Form, and your written reflection. Send your form and reflection as an attachment. Do not
send a link to an online document, and do not place the paper in the body of your e-mail message. You
must send as an attachment.

Due
A draft of your Goals and Planning Form is due in class on May 1. The instructor will provide feedback.

The complete assignment, including Goals and Planning Form and the written reflection, is due Sunday,
May 12 by midnight. Please e-mail your assignment as an attachment to the instructor at
jogoldblatt@lagcc.cuny.edu
### Part 1 - What Are Your Goals? (Tip: work backwards by first identifying your career goals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Career Goals</strong></th>
<th><strong>Anticipated Start Date(s)__________</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What professional goals do you have, being as specific as possible? If you’re not sure, say it!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>_Very sure _Somewhat sure _Not Sure</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Transfer Goals</strong></th>
<th><strong>Anticipated Graduation Date(s)__________</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What degrees do you wish to tackle beyond LaGuardia, including graduate work? If you know you’re not interested in transfer, then it’s ok to say that.</td>
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<tr>
<td>_Very sure _Somewhat sure _Not Sure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>LaGuardia Degree Goal</strong></th>
<th><strong>Anticipated Graduation Date__________</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What degree and program do you wish to earn at LaGuardia? If you’re not sure, say it!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_Very sure _Somewhat sure _Not Sure</td>
<td></td>
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| **Other Goals** |  |
|----------------|  |
| Are there other important life goals you have? |  |
### Part II - What Type of Planner Are you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planner Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability Planner</td>
<td>You are extremely certain of your overall goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility Planner</td>
<td>You have some good ideas but need to narrow them down/make a decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Planner</td>
<td>You have so many ideas you feel overwhelmed, or have no clear ideas yet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part III - What Do You Need to Do to Explore and Learn?

#### Ways to Explore

1. (Campus office/Program Director)

2. (Career Research)

### Part IV - What Is Your Plan for Reaching Your Goals?

<table>
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<th>Action</th>
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Instructions: First, check off what type of planner you are. Probability Planners are extremely certain of their overall goals. Possibility Planners have 2 or more good ideas but need to narrow them down or make a decision. Purpose Planners may have so many ideas they feel completely overwhelmed, or have no clear ideas yet. Once you know what type of planner you are, use this chart and the guiding questions to reflect and start planning what you need to do to learn more about reaching your goals. See the back for suggested activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probability Planner</th>
<th>Possibility Planner</th>
<th>Purpose Planner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding Questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Things to Learn/Ways to Explore</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Career Planning** | - What career are you planning on? How will it fulfill Status, Money, Passions/Interests, Making a Difference, and Talents/Skills?  
- How important is work/life balance?  
- Are you looking for a job/paycheck, or something more?  
- Should you have a backup plan or consider multiple possibilities?  
- If you are sure of a career/job, explain why.  
- What can you do now to learn about potential careers? Internships? Networking? Research? | |
| **Transfer Planning** | - What kind of degree and major do you need for your career choice? (AA, BA, MBA, PhD, Certificate, etc.)  
- If you need to transfer, where do you want to go and why?  
- What will you study at a 4-yr school?  
- What courses should you take at LaGuardia to ease your transition to a 4-yr school?  
- Do you need post-graduate education? | |
| **Choosing a Major & Degree Planning** | - What is your major and how confident are you?  
- Is your choice of major based on a career goal?  
- What are the pros and cons of different majors you’re considering?  
- If you’re unsure, what can you do to decide on a major? What interests you? What are you good at?  
- If you’re unsure, what courses should you take in the meantime?  
- What is the right number of courses to take each semester? | |
| **Extra Curricular & Academic Success Planning** | - What LaGuardia opportunities can help you explore your interests? (clubs, activities, events, research, etc.)  
- What internships, jobs (summer or otherwise) can help you learn and gain experience?  
- What opportunities outside of LaGuardia are there?  
- Do you have the habits and skills to do well in | |
ensure your life is in order

your courses?

Is your life where you need it to be so you feel healthy and can focus on school?

Resources/Activities for Exploring and Making Progress

LaGuardia Degree Planning

- Visit Academic Departments/Program Directors (location varies) to learn more about a program
- View Course Descriptions (CUNY First): Descriptions of courses, pre/co-requisite information, and more
- View Degree Maps: https://www.laguardia.edu/dgreemaps/
- View Degree Works Audit (access in MyLaGuardia): See degree progress & the impact of changing major
- View LaGuardia Major Pages (https://www.laguardia.edu/academics/): Detailed information on majors
- Create MyDegree Plan in ePortfolio

Transfer Planning

- Visit Transfer Services (Room B-215): For more support on transfer research and preparation
- Access College websites: Research the application process, academic programs, financial matters, etc.
- Conduct research: Look at online and printed resources on colleges
- Visit, call or e-mail colleges you’re interested in applying to
- Create Transfer Exploration Grid in ePortfolio

Career Research

- Visit Career Services (Room B-114): For more support on career research and preparation
- Conduct research using LaGuardia Library Career Guide (http://guides.laguardia.edu/career)
  - Visit the Library Reference Desk for career research assistance
- Conduct research using Online Career Resources Provided by LaGuardia (https://www.laguardia.edu/careerservices/)
  - Career Coach: Career research/links academic programs with job info; personality assessment
  - Career Connect: Job board
  - Vault: Career research/more in-depth industry information
  - WayUp: Career Research and job board
- Conduct research using other online resources
  - Glass door (https://www.glassdoor.com/): Company information and career research
  - Indeed (https://www.indeed.com/): Job postings and career research
  - LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/): The “facebook” of career information and job searching
  - Website of a company/organization you’re interested in working for; view job postings
- Complete a Career/Job Research Form (Career Research Before and After Activity)

Extra Curricular/Academic Success/Life

- Visit Campus Life (Room M-115): Find out ways to get involved
- View LaGuardia Calendar/Attend an Event: https://www.laguardia.edu/home/frontline/Default.aspx
- Join LaGuardia social media accounts like Facebook to find out what’s going on
- Visit Single Stop or the Wellness Center for help with personal, financial and health issues
- Visit a tutoring lab for help with coursework

**General**

- **Conduct research using Google/YouTube**: Try searching specific questions you have, such as “how can I become a videogame designer,” or “what clubs or activities can I get involved in if interested in x.”

- **Networking**: Consider the connections you have - friends, family, co-workers, professors, etc. - and develop new relationships to learn more about things you’re interested in - majors, jobs, transfer colleges, etc.
Career Research Before and After Activity       Name______________________________

Note: This activity mirrors an ePortfolio activity – you will be able to use this activity to fill in the ePortfolio.

1. Pick a specific job of interest: ________________________________

2. Before (Answer the following based on your current understanding before conducting any research)

   A. What is the salary?

   B. What education is needed?

   C. What experience is needed?

   D. What is the job description?

   E. How does one apply for the job and/or get the job?

   F. What advancement/growth opportunities are there?

   G. What do people in this line of work say about their jobs? What is daily work life like? What are the pros and cons? What advice do people in the field give?

   H. Why are you interested in this job? How does it match with your skills, interests and values? (Consider the activities completed in the course, including Understanding Myself)

See reverse...
3. **After** (Access at least three different career research resources to answer the following. Cite where you found the information. You can use the list of resources provided in the Ways to Explore document)

   A. What is the salary?

   B. What education is needed?

   C. What experience is needed?

   D. What is the job description?

   E. How does one apply for the job and/or get the job?

   F. What advancement/growth opportunities are there?

   G. What do people in this line of work say about their jobs? What is daily work life like? What are the pros and cons? What advice do people in the field give?

   H. Did conducting research on the job make you more or less interested? Do you still think the job is a good fit for you? What are your main takeaways after conducting research?