

Reflexivity Assignment

Soc Res: SW-322-0601

	Personal Location	Possible Advantage	Possible Barriers
<i>Research Interest</i>			
<i>Biography and/or beliefs</i>			
<i>Socio-Economic Position</i>			

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How to fill out this table

Take a look at this example

The Reflexivity Tool is to help you situate yourself relative to your research topic and identify your potential assets and biases. Think hard and be honest when you fill it out. You will use this information in the methodology section of your **final paper** for this course.

Below are indications regarding what each column and row covers:

Personal location: What is your position relative to each dimension (research interest, biography, or socio-economic position)? Where do you stand? Think of your life experience as well as your opinions. Just state your personal location, don't try to analyze it, since this is what the other two columns are for.

Potential advantages: How may this help you conduct research?

Potential barriers: How may this make it more difficult for you to gain objective information and come to valid conclusions?

Research interest: How interested (or not) are you in this project? What do you hope to find? What is your past experience with conducting research? What is your knowledge of the topic? How do you feel about conducting interviews or observations?

Biography and/or beliefs: Do you have personal experiences that relate to this topic? Do you have strong personal beliefs about it? Do you have beliefs or experiences that may influence how you approach this topic?

Socio-economic position: What is your social status? Think, for instance, about your gender, race/ethnicity, age, level of education, occupation, income, religion, sexual orientation, and

marital status. How does it compare to the socio-economic status of the people you are going to interview or come in contact with in your observations?

Add essay (Brief Paragraph):

After you complete the table, add a summary paragraph answering the following question:

Identify some potential areas where you may not agree with your research subjects, and describe the strategies you will use to offer genuine empathy even when you do not agree/accept the participants' views.

*Remember, it is not a good idea to complete this assignment by saying you are completely neutral and objective and open-minded, and so you will have "no problem" connecting with anyone. Research always includes unanticipated problems, and everyone has opinions, no one is completely neutral about everything. Please complete a realistic, holistic assessment.

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Sample Reflexivity Sheet

This sheet illustrates how to build a reflexivity sheet. It is based on a research project in Tennessee, looking at how local churches interacted with Hispanic immigrants. It involved interviews and participant observation.

In brackets are comments that describe how the statements fit with each cell.

Identification	Personal Location	Possible Advantage	Possible Barriers
Research Interest The integration context for Latinos in the rural US, a topic I have researched before in Louisiana <i>[This is the topic that I'm interested in, and my past experience with it]</i>	Look at religion in the broader social context Extensive research experience, including in this particular field <i>[Here, I explain how my past experience with the topic gives me an edge]</i> Similarities/connection with the immigrants (immigrant status, religion, language) No strong religious beliefs that could influence how I perceive local religious practices <i>[Typically, having something in common with your research participants is an advantage, so I state it, and I explore how my position may help me interpret what I observe]</i>	Project past research experience onto a very different context and limit possible interpretations of the data <i>[Here, I state how past experience can also be a hindrance]</i>	Not much in common with the local church attendants and leaders Possible prejudice based on religion, immigrant status, and political orientation (them against me, me against them) Risk of wanting to act as an advocate for the immigrants Risk of believing that my immigrant experience compares to the Latinos' Strong local prejudice against Catholics among evangelicals Not familiar with a lot of local church rituals <i>[Here, I explore the limits of my personal experience and beliefs to assist in the research, thinking about how I will perceive them and how they will perceive me]</i> Intimidating to both Latinos and church people (education), maybe perceived as snobby Social class and race may be intimidating to Latinos <i>[Here, I show how some other social characteristics may be a hindrance, or how the same characteristics may cause different reactions in different participants]</i>
Biography and/or beliefs I am an immigrant I am fluent in Spanish I am a non-practicing Catholic Politically liberal Well integrated into American culture and society <i>[These are aspects of my personal experience and opinions that are relevant to the project]</i>			
Socio-Economic Position Female, middle-class, PhD, Caucasian, mid-adulthood <i>[These are demographic characteristics that are relevant to the project]</i>	I will be perceived as more compassionate and less threatening (female) Race or age won't be an issue with church members because I don't physically stand out as very different <i>[Here, I think about how some of my social characteristics will assist me in the setting]</i>		