AP® Research

COURSE AND EXAM DESCRIPTION

Effective
Fall 2020
Preparing the Process and Reflection Portfolio (PREP)

The primary purpose of the process and reflection portfolio (PREP) is to inspire, support, and document the students’ development throughout their research process. This portfolio should be reviewed throughout the year as a formative assessment component of the course and should be maintained by the student as evidence of participating in research to show to academic counselors, college admission officers, and faculty members.

Throughout the inquiry process, students will document their research and/or artistic processes and communications with their expert advisers, pose questions they want to explore, and reflect on the decisions made throughout the iterative research process. Students should also examine their strengths and weaknesses with regard to implementing such processes and developing their arguments or aesthetic rationales.

Through the professional development experience, teachers will be provided with a list of optional questions and tasks to help them guide students through the inquiry process. These questions help students in the early months of the academic year as they begin the inquiry process and throughout the year as they examine, and reexamine, their chosen areas of study and the process by which they engage in research. Teachers can also design their own questions and tasks.

The combined group of questions and tasks in the PREP document should address all five big ideas in the curriculum framework (QUEST), with specific attention paid to the following:

- Choice of the research question and interest in the subject matter
- Directions in which the inquiry or project seemed to lead and changes to initial topic, question, assumptions, and research method
- Research method, including resources used (documents, people, multimedia, measurement instruments etc.)
- Compilation and analysis of evidence
- Ways in which students have worked both on their own and as part of a larger scholarly community
- Challenges and solutions encountered throughout the research process

Teachers should regularly engage students in individual discussions or interviews to help them reflect on and document their work, organize their time, and reach appropriate milestones. Teachers should also use these discussions as opportunities to formatively assess students’ progress. The PREP should be used to inform regular progress reviews throughout the year. Teacher and student preference can determine the format of the portfolio (electronic or hard copy).

In addition to responses to questions and tasks provided by teachers, the final form of the PREP should have a clear organizational structure and include:

- Annotated bibliography of any source important to the student’s work
- A completed and approved Inquiry Proposal Form
- Documentation of permission(s) and approval(s), if required — for example, permission(s) from an IRB or other agreements with individuals, institutions, or organizations that provide primary and private data such as interviews, surveys, or investigations
- Documentation or log of the student’s interaction with expert adviser(s) and the role the expert adviser(s) played in the student’s learning and inquiry process
Feedback from peer and adult reviewers both in the initial stages and at key points in the research process; reflection on whether or not this feedback was accepted or rejected and why
Photographs, charts, spreadsheets, and/or links to videos or other relevant visual research/project artifacts
Draft versions of selected sections of the academic paper
Specific pieces of work selected by the student to represent what they consider to be the best showcase for their work
Notes taken in preparation for presentation and oral defense
Attestation signed by the student which states, "I hereby affirm that the work contained in this Process and Reflection Portfolio is my own and that I have read and understand the AP Capstone™ Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information"