

Assignment:
Organizational Problem/Challenge Essay
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Course: MGT 360
Title: Management and Organizational Behavior (3 units)

“Are you a student?”

---the question asked of all customers by the employee cashiers at CSUN Sierra Center

“At each stage in the process, ask the question ‘why’ five times.”

---Taiichi Ohno (1912-1990)

Goal:

I want you to reflect briefly on a substantive issue germane to this class, and I want to capture a small writing sample from each of you. This assignment is straightforward.

Objective:

In narrative essay format, I want you to describe the most intractable organizational problem or most engaging organizational challenge that you have ever encountered as an employee. If you have little or no work experience, you may describe a problem that you have encountered as a customer. Only choose a problem at the University if you are employed at the University. I am less interested in which problem you select; I am more interested in your attention to detail, critical reasoning, and language use/grammar. More to the point, *all* issues in organizations are management issues. The challenge for managers, therefore, is to apply the theories and practice of management and organizational behavior to address, and perhaps resolve, the issue to deliver value.

As to structure and level of detail, please follow the “VALUE” critical thinking rubric on the following page. At a minimum, each element of the “VALUE” rubric will require a separate paragraph. Beyond that minimal requirement, students should employ typical expository, composition, and communication techniques in college-level narratives.

Length:

This essay is to be no less than one and one-half pages in length and no more than two full pages in length. Other relevant formatting requirements (“style guide”) are linked from the course web page. Recall also that for all written assignments in this course, 10% is deducted from the content score for each type of error in language use.

Performance Measurement:

There are five elements of the VALUE critical thinking framework. Each element is scored with a number—0 is relatively weak, 1 is moderate, and 2 is relatively strong. Therefore, the maximum number of points is 10 (5 x 2).

“VALUE” Critical Thinking rubric:

The following text is excerpted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). See:

<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/CriticalThinking.pdf>

| Element | <i>Relatively Strong</i> | <i>Relatively Weak</i> |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Explanation of issues</i> | Issue/Problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. | Issue/Problem to be considered is stated without clarification or description |
| <i>Evidence</i> | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly. | Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question. |
| <i>Influence of context and assumptions</i> | Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others’ assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position. | Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position. |
| <i>Student’s position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</i> | Specific position is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position are acknowledged. Others’ points of view are synthesized within position. | Specific position is stated, but is simplistic and obvious. |
| <i>Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</i> | Conclusions and related outcomes are logical and reflect student’s informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspective discussed in priority order. | Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes are oversimplified. |