

EDLP 295
McNair Scholars Seminar
Fall 2009

McNair Scholar Journal

Introduction

The *McNair Scholar Journal* is intended to support you as a student and to help you better understand your learning experiences as a participant in the **McNair Scholars Seminar**. The *Journal* will provide opportunity for you to engage in thoughtful reflection about your learning experiences, and will also allow you to engage in thoughtful exchanges about your ideas with your peers and faculty. By keeping a journal, you will gain in more self-awareness with respect to yourself as a learner, your graduate school goals, and your career aspirations. *An important goal of this journal is to document your progress as you prepare your graduate school application. By systematically and consistently reflecting on your goals, aspirations, strengths, and areas in need of improvement, you will gain confidence and position yourself to enter the graduate program of your dreams!*

Reflection

Reflection is an important aspect of journal writing. Reflection is defined as a way of thinking about matters, events, experiences and culling out personal and professional meaning about them. To truly value from the journal experience, you will need to try to:

- a. find regular time for silent reflection and journal writing
- b. turn inward and digest what you are experiencing
- c. pay attention to your own “cues” about what you are thinking, feeling, learning
- d. construct new meaning about your experiences
- e. find ways to use what you are learning to support decision and make choices

Purpose

We will arrange your journal writing to correspond with Seminar learning experiences. You will receive “prompts” around which you will write. The “prompt” will be related to the seminar. You may be asked to write and reflect on guest speakers, course readings, your research, your service-learning project, personal and professional interests, and plans for the future. Through these experiences and your journal writing, you will begin to see how the **McNair Scholars Seminar** is related to your goals and career aspirations. The prompt is mainly a statement to help focus your writing. It is not intended to restrict your writing. You will write what is important for you to write, but

related in some way to the prompt. More specifically, the purposes of keeping a journal are as follows:

- To encourage writing on a regular basis
- To reflect on experiences and relate it to yourself
- To organize your learning and keep track of ideas, presenters, events, assignments
- To learn about each other's experiences and offer insights into each other's writing and ideas
- To make connections to personal learning goals and career plans
- To focus your strengths and areas of potential growth
- To arrive at new understandings about events, readings, presentations, and service learning
- To understand your commitment as a McNair Scholar

Guidelines

NOTE: Each week you will be given a "prompt" around which you will engage in your journal writing.

1. You will need to write in your journal at least one time per week, but more often if possible.
2. Write from the "prompt" but feel free to write what YOU want to say, and do bring your voice clearly into your writing.
3. Do not look for "the correct" way of writing in your journal; write what you are thinking, feeling, questioning, and so forth. Do not revise as you write.
4. Read over your journal entries periodically and see if you begin to see any particular patterns or themes that emerge in your writing. Reflect on what you find.
5. Keep confidentiality with respect to yourself and everyone else, i.e. course participants, faculty, individuals upon whom you might reflect, and so forth.

Aiken, 2006
Vigoreaux, 2009