

Assignment 1: A Critical Review of My Personal Journey (100 points)

The purpose of this narrative essay assignment is to explore personal, family, community and social work values (5 pages is about good; **no more than 6 pages; insert page number, subtitles (section titles), double spaced; 12 point font**).

1. Me (I?) Who am I? and My Family? (20 points)

Begin your journey with the exploration of yourself and your family.

- 1) Provide your background and diverse factors including age, gender, employment status, educational level, religion, and race or ethnicity.
- 2) My family introduction
 - a. provide the definition of “family” in the textbook
 - b. write your own definition of family
 - c. provide family name (e.g., The Kims): you may provide multiple family names
- 3) State who you include as family members and describe the role(s) of each family member
- 4) In comparison to families in your community, identify two unique attributes of your family
- 5) Provide a summary table for the following information

Member’s Name	Age	Gender	Race (or ethnicity)	Relationship	Roles (may provide multiple roles)
Yoon Kim	38	Female	Asian (Korean)	Me	1. Caregiver 2. Decision maker
Kim Kardashian				Ex-wife	1. Abuser 2. Breadwinner
Soo Kardashian-Kim				Son	1. Spender 2. Trouble maker

2. My Community Introduction (20 points)

- 1) Define “community” from your textbook
- 2) Name of your community (official and nick name if any)
- 3) Describe the geographical location of your community (e.g., metropolitan, rural, suburban or urban)
- 4) Provide a summary of your community’s demographics such as the population’s gender, age, income level, education level, race, ethnicity, etc. (explain **at least 3 demographic factors** including both number and percentage based on <https://www.census.gov/>). Example: “In Kean County, males made up 48.7% (n=24,560) of the population and females made up 51.3% (n=25,202). In terms of educational level, 30% (n=15,733) of the residents are...”
- 5) Research major social institutions in your community to identify community resources.

Examples of major social institutions are as follows (Choose 4 types):

- a) Religion: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Shamanism. Names of places of worship include Church, Mosque, Synagogue
- b) Educations: primary, secondary & tertiary institutions such as universities
- c) Health: clinics, dispensary, hospitals
- d) Housing: public housing, real estate, apartments, row home, town houses
- e) Politics: government (local, state and federal), political parties
- f) Economic: distribution of goods and services for employment and industrial production
- g) Social Welfare: recreation, YWCA/YMCA, hostels, community centers, social service
- h) Media: local newspapers, radio/TV channels

6) Provide the physical street address of each institution and explain specific services or resources that the institutions provide (you may visit their websites to get information).

3. Thinking about Values, Perspectives and Ideologies (20 points)

1) Identification of your values: Now you know your perspective on welfare, and you know where you stand on the conservative-liberal continuum. Read the green section at page 11 in your textbook, and choose **two** questions. State and discuss your perspective on welfare and your political ideology related to the two questions.

2) Talk with at least 2 family members about the two questions and identify the perspectives on welfare and political ideology of your family members.

3) Identify the perspective on welfare and political ideology of your community. You cannot talk with all community members. Think about your personal experience and election results in your community, and write one paragraph about your community's perspective on welfare.

4. Thinking about Community Issues and Social Work Values (20 points)

1) Select one of the below articles:

- Philadelphia School Chief Faces Down Budget Cuts and Crises (http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/11/education/philadelphia-school-chief-faces-down-budget-cuts-and-crises.html?_r=0)
- Reading, PA: Knew It Was Poor. Now It Knows Just How Poor (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/27/us/reading-pa-tops-list-poverty-list-census-shows.html?pagewanted=all>)

2) Now let's suppose that your community is Philadelphia or Reading. Using the selected article as a base, provide a brief summary of the article and discuss the social issue and social work values (Choose one or two of the core social work values). Explain (or define) the core values that you selected (review Chapter 2).

3) Discuss how social workers can or should act to change and improve the condition.

5. Conclusion (10 points): Summarize your values and perspectives on social welfare. Where do you think your values and perspectives come from? How did they become instilled in you? Comment on how your values and views are different from/similar to the social work mission and values.

6. Your paper should be well-organized by subtitles, and your writing should be clear, concise, accurate and easy to read (10 points).

Philadelphia School Chief Faces Down Budget Cuts and Crises

By JON HURDLE FEB. 10, 2014

PHILADELPHIA — William R. Hite Jr., superintendent of schools here in one of the nation's poorest cities, is known as a man who prefers collaboration to confrontation, but he has spent the academic year taking no prisoners. He laid off almost 4,000 workers to close a \$304 million budget gap and threatened to keep school doors locked until officials found stopgap money to ensure what he considered a basic level of security for students. He says he was just warming up.

Since joining the district in October 2012 from his previous post as superintendent in Prince George's County, Md., Dr. Hite has battled what he called a perfect storm of cuts, in which state reductions coincided with the ending of federal stimulus dollars.

He had to close 24 school buildings, forcing the relocation of thousands of students to unfamiliar schools that often lacked basic personnel like guidance counselors and secretaries. Only about a quarter of the laid-off staff members have been rehired.

He endured night after night of personal attacks from hundreds of angry parents, teachers and students at public meetings as he tried to explain the closings last winter.

Then he faced a huge cheating scandal from before his tenure in which dozens of teachers, principals and administrators were accused of inflating grades on students' standardized tests. So far three principals have been dismissed.

He says he remains unfazed. He wants to reverse the cuts and raise the educational standards in a district where only 65 percent of students graduate in four years.

"The optimism is, we believe we can do this work," Dr. Hite said in an interview. "The concern is if we are going to have the investment that we need to do this work."

Others say that while they admire his pluck and drive, he is fighting a lonely and probably unwinnable battle.

James H. Lytle, a former deputy superintendent here and now a professor of educational leadership at the University of Pennsylvania, put Dr. Hite's chances of getting the money he wants at "close to zero" because of a lack of support from state legislators and the Republican governor, Tom Corbett, who prefer to see an increase in charter schools.

To ease the pressures of the job, Dr. Hite, 52, a bald and muscular 6-foot-2, swims four times a week — a routine he started since arriving in Philadelphia — and sometimes goes bike riding with his media spokesman, Fernando Gallard.

Dr. Hite lives in Philadelphia with his wife, a health care administrator, while his two daughters, ages 19 and 24, remain in their hometown, Richmond, Va., where both attended public schools.

Michael Casserly, executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, an advocacy group for urban school systems, has high praise for the Philadelphia schools chief.

"I think that Bill Hite is the right person at the right time in the right place," Mr. Casserly said.

He argued that Dr. Hite has used his political, financial and management skills to stabilize the district's finances and build support among the public and civic leaders. But he declined to predict whether Dr. Hite will succeed in getting the public funding he wants. "If anybody would be able to do it, he's the right guy," Mr. Casserly said.

For his part, Dr. Hite argued that Philadelphia should be getting more money since it has the highest proportion of students in poverty of any city in Pennsylvania, the most minority students, and the largest percentage of English-language learners. Eighty-three percent of students are economically disadvantaged, according to district statistics.

Dr. Hite, who is African-American, particularly wants to improve opportunities for black students, who represent 53 percent of the district's 135,000 students.

But Mr. Lytle, the former deputy superintendent, said Dr. Hite was taking the wrong approach given what he was up against. Rather than seeking to re-establish a traditional model of publicly funded education, Dr. Hite should be working with private nonprofits to provide services such as nursing or guidance counseling that the district can no longer afford, Mr. Lytle argued.

For all his personal charm and management skills, he added, Dr. Hite will probably not be able to prevail against state authorities who favor the continued creation of charter schools, which have been a significant drain on the district's funds.

"You could make the reasonable argument that the district is being completely deconstructed outside charter schools and perhaps for-profit schools," Mr. Lytle said.

In a characteristically evenhanded approach, Dr. Hite blamed state lawmakers, the city teachers' union, and Philadelphia's City Council for contributing to the crisis. While the state has cut funding, the union has not agreed to cut generous health benefits for its members, and the council has failed to appropriate \$120 million in sales-tax revenues for the district even though the money was authorized by the state last summer, Dr. Hite said.

"We're still fighting last year's battles," he said.

But he says he still has plenty of fight left in him.

"I didn't go through the hell I went through in Year 1 to leave in Year 2, 3, 4 or 5," he said. "The point of all that we've gone through in Year 1 is to ensure that the citizens of Philadelphia have the schools that they deserve; that the citizens of this city have a future set of leaders with the type of skills that they need to also run the city. That's why I came here."

Reading, Pa., Knew It Was Poor. Now It Knows Just How Poor.

By SABRINA TAVERNISEPT. 26, 2011

READING, Pa. — The exhausted mothers who come to the Second Street Learning Center here — a day care provider for mostly low-income families — speak of low wages, hard jobs and an economy gone bad.

Ashley Kelleher supports her family on the \$900 a month she earns as a waitress at an International House of Pancakes. Louri Williams packs cakes and pies all night for \$8 an hour, takes morning classes, and picks up her children in the afternoon. Teresa Santiago takes complaints from building supply customers for \$10 an hour, not enough to cover her \$1,900 in monthly bills.

These are common stories in Reading, a struggling city of 88,000 that has earned the unwelcome distinction of having the largest share of its residents living in poverty, barely edging out Flint, Mich., according to new Census Bureau data. The count includes only cities with populations of 65,000 or more, and has a margin of error that makes it difficult to declare a winner — or, perhaps more to the point, a loser.

Reading began the last decade at No. 32. But it broke into the top 10 in 2007, joining other places known for their high rates of poverty like Flint, Camden, N.J., and Brownsville, Tex., according to an analysis of the data for The New York Times by Andrew A. Beveridge, a demographer at Queens College.

Now it is No. 1, a ranking that the mothers at the day care center here say does not surprise them, given their first-hand knowledge of poverty-line wages, which for a parent and two children is now \$18,530.

The city had been limping for most of the past decade, since the plants that sustained it — including Lucent Technologies and the Dana Corporation, a car parts manufacturer — withered. But the past few years delivered more closings and layoffs, sending the city's poverty rate up to 41.3 percent.

Jon Scott, president of the Berks Economic Partnership, which helps businesses looking to stay in the area or move here, said that some of the city's job losses were in fact furloughs, and that many businesses were considering opening in Reading, including an industrial laundry company at the former Dana site.

According to Mr. Beveridge, employment in the city dropped by about 10 percent between 2000 and 2010.

One of Reading's more entrenched problems is education. Just 8 percent of its residents have a bachelor's degree, far below the national average of 28 percent.

"Without a bachelor's degree, forget it," said Ms. Williams, 28, who is taking classes to earn her G.E.D.. Only about 63 percent of Reading's residents have a high school diploma, compared with more than 85 percent nationally.

Lower education generally means higher poverty. About a fifth of people ages 25 to 34 with only a high school diploma in the United States were poor last year, compared with just 5 percent of college graduates, said Yiyoon Chung, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. For those without a high school diploma, the rate was 40 percent.

Ms. Santiago, 36, has an associate's degree from a local community college, but said that employers wanted to see more from job candidates. She lost her last full-time job in 2007, and has worked in low wage jobs without benefits through a temporary agency ever since.

"They even want a degree to be a secretary," said Ms. Santiago, picking up her 8-year-old son at the center.

This city has had a large influx of Hispanics over the past decade. They moved from New York and other large cities, drawn by cheaper rent and the promise of a better life. That raised the flagging population, but also reinforced the city's already acute problems with education: Just 18 percent of Hispanics in Reading had some college education last year, compared with 30 percent of the city's whites. Only 44 percent of Hispanics had a high school diploma.

Young men have been particularly hard hit. Because they are having trouble competing for jobs, they are dropping out of the labor force, leaving women to support the children.

Ms. Kelleher, 23, said she had been supporting her three children as well as the father of two of them. She would not be able to survive, she said, without the \$636 a month she gets in food stamps.

"For the past five years, it has been me paying the bills," she said at the day care center, still in her waitress uniform. She wants to get married someday, she said, but only to a partner who is financially stable.

Sixty-two percent of young fathers in the United States earned less than \$20,000 in 2002, according to Timothy Smeeding, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, citing the most recent data available from the National Survey of Family Growth.

Even for young people with a bachelor's degree, the economy is making life difficult. Vickie Moll, who runs the day care center, said the number of applications from teachers who have lost their jobs had grown as the waves of budget cuts washed over the state. "We have people in here with bachelor's degrees making \$8 an hour," she said.

Social services feel the effects, too. The Greater Berks Food Bank — Reading is the Berks County seat — is on track to distribute six million pounds of food this year, up from three and a half million pounds in 2007, said Doug Long, manager of marketing.

Pat Giles, a senior vice president at the United Way of Berks County, said: "It has really started to snowball. We have a growing population of younger, less educated, less skilled people. On top of that you have the economy going upside down."

Modesto Fiume, president of Opportunity House, the organization that runs the day care center, as well as a homeless shelter and a transitional living facility, said the number of first-time families in the shelter was up sharply: of 23 new entries in June and July, 18 were homeless for the first time.

“People are here because they honestly and truly can’t find work,” said Delia McLendon, who runs the shelters. “It didn’t used to be that way.”

In the mid-1990s, welfare reform resulted in more women joining the work force. At the time, jobs were plentiful, but now work is scarce and low-income families’ lives have become hectic balancing acts to keep the few benefits they have.

Ms. Santiago loses her subsidized day care if she is out of work for more than 13 days, she said. The loss would take months to reinstate, so she hurries to find any work, whatever it pays, every time her temp job ends. Earning more than \$10 an hour means losing health insurance, she said, though her children remain covered through Medicaid.

And jobs just seem to pay less. Ms. Santiago recently took a temporary job at a candy factory where she had worked more than eight years ago, when she was still in her 20s, before she had completed her associate’s degree. At the time she was making \$10.50 an hour. In her most recent stint, her hourly wage was \$9.25.

“Eight years ago I said, ‘I don’t want to do this, I have to further my education,’ ” she said. “And now here I am, still packing candy, and making less.”