

The Seattle School

OF THEOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGY

Academic Writing Sample for Life Experience Applications

Life Experience applicants are required to submit an academic writing sample as a part of their Life Experience Portfolio. The academic writing sample provides a means to assess the applicant's ability to articulate their understanding of an idea present in a piece of academic writing, as well as their ability to effectively express their own ideas through writing. Writing samples will be assessed for form and technique and will be expected to meet graduate-level standards as described on our [Writing Resources page](#).

Life Experience Applicants applying to the MA in Counseling Psychology program are asked to complete the Working Definition Paper to meet the academic writing sample requirement.

Academic Writing Sample Assignment

A Working Definition Paper is designed to assist the student in writing their final paper. It's format is similar to that of an annotated bibliography, which includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources.

The purpose of the annotated bibliography is to learn more about a particular topic and to assist you in formulating a thesis for future academic writing (i.e. a final research paper). In a Working Definition Paper are you asked to:

1) **Summarize**

Summarize the source. What are it's main arguments? What is it's central point? What topics or themes are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say?

2) **Assess**

After summarizing a source, evaluate it. Is it a useful source? Is it this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source?

3) **Reflect**

Once you've summarized and assessed a source, put some words to your own response. Did you find the content to be helpful to you? Do you anticipate that it would assist you in shaping a future argument? How has it changed or impact your thoughts about the

particular topic or theme that it discussed?

For this assignment, you are asked to write 2-3 page Working Definition Paper on a chapter from Christopher Bollas' book, *In Cracking Up: The Work of Unconscious Experience*. In the chapter, "[A Separate Sense](#)," you will explore themes related to the therapeutic process: healing dialogue and active listening.

Formatting Requirements: Your Working Definition Paper must meet APA style requirements, as listed on The Seattle School's [Writing Resources page](#).

Note: The Admissions Review Committee understands that you are being asked to write at a graduate level, even though you are not yet a graduate student. You are not expected to understand all of the terms or concepts addressed in this particular piece of writing, nor are you expected to complete this assignment perfectly. Instead, you are expected to do your best and to exhibit your current capacity to follow instructions and to engage the presented material.