

Writing Theory Papers

The Key to Getting Your
Papers Approved

By Robin Booth, ACPE Supervisor

Theory Papers



- ◆ Read the Certification Manual
- ◆ Know what the Readers are looking for
- ◆ Give the Readers what they are looking for
- ◆ Answer the questions

Theory Papers

- ◆ Papers should be professionally written
 - This means that grammar, syntax, spelling should all be graduate level work.
 - Use an editor if you do not write well
 - Have a number of people proof read your papers before submitting them.
 - **DO NOT PLAGERIZE!!!**

Theory Papers

- ◆ Follow directions
 - ◆ Five pages
 - ◆ Standard 1 inch margins
 - ◆ Font size 12 points/ Times New Roman
 - ◆ Document with footnotes for materials cited directly or paraphrased
 - ◆ Use page numbers

Theory Papers

- ◆ One page preface stating main thesis of each paper; state congruence of the three positions clearly and concisely
- ◆ One page personal introduction
 - ◆ Should include faith group
 - ◆ Gender
 - ◆ Social location
 - ◆ Other pertinent information that relates you to your positions

Theory Paper

- ◆ Readers are looking for:
 - ◆ Integration of theories with your history
 - ◆ Evidence of knowledge
 - ◆ Do you know the concepts of the theory?
 - ◆ Have you used significant primary resources?
 - ◆ Are you able to apply concepts to the practice of supervision?

Theory Papers

- ◆ Readers are looking for:
 - ◆ Who are the theorist/theologian the writer is using
 - ◆ Does the writer show evidence of familiarity with relevant literature
 - ◆ Are these current theorist? If not, why?
 - ◆ Can these theories be applied to CPE Supervision?
 - ◆ Are the theories compatible with one another?

Theory Papers

- ◆ Readers are looking for:
 - ◆ If you have answered the questions in the certification manual and the grid
 - ◆ Make use of both the manual and the grid
 - ◆ If you are articulating the “why” of supervision rather than “how”

Theory Papers

- ◆ Have a central theorist or two. Too many theorist will present like a book report, avoid this.
- ◆ Know the theorist and the school/group to which (s)he belongs.
- ◆ Know the major concepts of this theory thoroughly and demonstrate your knowledge of this theory.

Theory Papers

- ◆ Critical Purchase: One of the major stumbling blocks: Ask yourself the following questions:
 - What do you/they foreground or focus on? What do you/they value? What is **not** focused on, maybe even overlooked? How could/does your heightened awareness of “X” impact your supervision?
 - What do you/they assume?
 - Where are your/their limits?
 - What happens or where do you go when you meet “the edges of your theory”: the limits in yourself, your students, your supervisory practice?*

*From Barbara Brumleve’s research for Certification Commission, 2010

Theology Paper

- ◆ Focus is on one's understanding of God and how this understanding impact the manner in which one functions as a CPE Supervisor
- ◆ This concept of God should be consistent with one's religious tradition, its teachings and practices

Theology Paper

- ◆ This paper should address:
 - ◆ One's understanding of God/Divine
 - ◆ Characteristics of God
 - ◆ How these characteristics impact one's supervision
 - ◆ Who are persons as creatures of God?
 - ◆ How one's cultural background has influenced your understanding of God

Theology Paper

- ◆ This paper should address:
 - ◆ How one understands suffering, sin, illness
 - ◆ How humankind relates to the Divine
 - ◆ How this concept of the Divine impact human relationships
 - ◆ Who are the theologians that speak to one's understanding of God/Divine?
 - ◆ How does one make use of these theologians?
 - ◆ Key concepts and understanding of these concepts

Theology Paper

◆ Remember to

- Represent the theologians accurately
- When you use a concept, give an example of how you use it in supervision
- Do your concepts flow together? Are they congruent with one another?
- Articulate the “why” of supervision, not the “how” of supervision
- What is your critical purchase of this theologian

Personality Theory

- ◆ The focus of this paper is one's understanding of how the personality is formed and how one grows and develops
- ◆ How does one's understanding of personality inform your supervisory assessment, goals, strategies and interventions?

Personality Theory

- ◆ Readers are looking for
 - ◆ Who are the theorists that inform one's understanding of personality?
 - ◆ The writer's understanding of the theorist and a deep working knowledge of the theory
 - ◆ One's understanding of human nature
 - how personality develops
 - concepts and terms from the theory
 - theorist presented accurately

Personality Theory

- ◆ The Readers are looking for
 - ◆ Do the central themes resonate. Does this paper flow and do the concepts build upon each other
 - ◆ Does the writer use various sources, primary and secondary sources
 - ◆ Does the writer make use of relevant literature
 - ◆ What is the writer's critical purchase of this theory
 - ◆ What works and doesn't work
 - ◆ What does one do when the theory breaks down

Personality Theory

- ◆ The Readers are looking for
 - ◆ How does one make use of this theory to make assessments of the student's readiness for learning
 - ◆ How does this theory inform the goals for the student
 - ◆ How does this theory inform the supervisor's interventions and supervisory alliance

Personality Theory

- ◆ The Reader's are looking for
 - ◆ Is this theory congruent with the writer's theology paper?
 - ◆ Is this theory congruent with the writer's educational theory?
 - ◆ How does the writer's cultural background influence his/her understanding of personality theory and development

Personality Theory

- ◆ The Readers are looking for
 - ◆ The “whys” not the “how's” of the theory
 - ◆ When one uses a key concept, follow it with an example of your supervisory practice
 - ◆ The paper has to flow, not be spliced together
 - ◆ Does the writer have mastery of the materials

Educational Theory

- ◆ The focus of this paper is how do people learn – individually, dialogically and in groups
- ◆ The writer's understanding of the clinical method of learning as it relates to his/her theory of education
- ◆ How does one's culture influence the educational process?

Educational Theory

- ◆ The Readers are looking for
 - ◆ What educational theory guides the writer in his/her understanding of how one learns
 - ◆ What are the key concepts of this theory? Does the writer have a good working knowledge of this theory?
 - ◆ How does this theory assist the writer in making assessments and interventions with the students?
 - ◆ How does this theory assist the writer in the evaluation of students?

Educational Theory

- ◆ The Readers are looking for
 - ◆ One's understanding of how an individual learns
 - ◆ One's understanding of how an individual learns in groups
 - ◆ How one's theory assist the supervisor to form a supervisory alliance with the student?
 - ◆ How does one's theory make use of the various components of the CPE process? Orientation, verbatim seminar, IPR, evaluation process

Educational Theory

- ◆ The Readers are looking for
 - ◆ Understanding of group theory – learning within a group setting
 - ◆ Critical purchase of the theory
 - ◆ Coherent with personality theory and theology
 - ◆ A good working knowledge of the theory

Educational Theory

- ◆ Readers are looking for
 - ◆ Defining key concepts
 - ◆ Using examples for supervisory practice
 - ◆ Cultural influences/ integration of theory with personhood

Theory Papers

- ◆ Read, think, evaluate and remember
 - We are looking for integration and practice.
 - These papers are not research papers
 - They are papers which should reflect the supervisor's understanding of God, personality and learning.