

**REFLECTIVE WRITING THEMES
CAS PORTFOLIO**

Theme	Example
Differences – How we learn from our differences with each other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - age - languages - culture - mental or physical - nationality - faith beliefs - appearance - ? 	Learning from others who are of a different age: from a story of volunteering as a precinct election worker: “...I spent the day with old people. I sat around and listened to their stories about “when I was in high school”. I learned about war stories and how wonderful their children are. And stories of their travels around the world. I learned about myself too. They were very kind to me and I hope I am like them someday.”
Feeling Included/Excluded – Feeling like part of, or excluded from a group, a team, a community,	Being “part of the team” at an archeological site: “When the other archeologists gave me my own box [of artifacts to examine] it reassured me that I was learning and that I did know quite a bit. It gave me confidence in my abilities to know that they thought I was capable enough to analyze these artifacts. Once I got started, I realized I knew more than I thought I did because I could do it all on my own. I felt more independent, but at the same time I felt a greater sense of being a part of the team because I felt like I was really contributing. I felt really invested in the project because I was actually doing something, not just helping the others.”
Trust & Confidence	Helping a parent build a personal computer: Confidence of another person in your skills: “I have recently taught my Dad how to build a computer. And it actually worked! First I showed him how to research the necessary parts, and how to compile a parts list. ..”
Meaning and the Emotions with it	Participating in a campaign against drunk driving: “When I went to a dedication for a young woman killed by a Drunk Driver I felt like I was part of a bigger picture. I was helping my community through being there and supporting this course. The D.A. who was prosecuting the case made a really good point when he said, “if one person sees this sign and decides not drink and drive then that’s one accident, one life saved.” This was a very moving moment because not only were the parents there, but so was a significant number of people from the community. “
Building Relationships	Working with a parent at a kindergarten class: “After the day was over a student came into the classroom and talked to my mom’s assistant for a couple of minutes. In the middle of their conversation, she sprinted over to give me a hug. It was a very meaningful hug. It lasted for a long time. I actually felt like I had made a difference in her life just by showing I cared. It made me glad that I could make a child so happy simply by being there and showing I cared.”
	TURN PAGE OVER

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<p>Friendship</p>	<p>Teaching English to children in Mexico:</p> <p>“On my first day teaching English, a girl gave me a note that said “Yo quiero ser tu amiga” I want to be your friend, “confia in mi”[trust in me]. I was deeply moved by the fact that she already was sure she wanted to get to know me when I had barely even said anything at all. I think they were curious to know and learn about the United States, just as much as I was curious to learn about Mexico. They asked so many questions and I was happy to answer them...I learned a lot about helping people by becoming their friend as well as their teacher.”</p>
<p>Awareness of, and knowing about other people’s “story”</p>	<p>Listening to the stories of War Veterans on Veterans Day, from a neighbor and grandparents:</p> <p>“The event [Veterans’ Day] was not ideal for me because of my relative discomfort with ‘seniors’, but I really felt like these men had some incredible stories that they should have some outlet with which to share them. Thinking about these men’s stories encouraged me to ask an elderly neighbor to recount her life’s stories, to record them for future generations. I did the same with my too surviving grandparents last year, and you come to think of the elderly people in a different light; you remember that they were once your age and that they live a life full of love and loss.”</p>
<p>Feeling “uncomfortable” or “comfortable” in a situation</p>	<p>From volunteering at a museum and working with an older volunteer:</p> <p>“A ...75 yr old guy from Brooklyn. He’s very gregarious, yet odd. So hard to relate to him but he’s so intent on having a conversation. He skis 4 times a week. Not comfortable speaking with him, but rewarding.”</p>
<p>Learning about yourself, your own “story”, what you can do</p>	<p>Translating for a doctor with elderly Russian speaking patients at a hospital:</p> <p>“It made me feel like I had maybe helped them feel better because its really hard to try and explain yourself to a doctor/professional without knowing the language that they speak. They felt more comfortable around the doctors when I was there translating, they didn’t have to worry about saying something wrong or worry that they couldn’t figure out what to say. I felt really appreciated and good about myself because although these Russian seniors had medical problems, they were just so happy that I came with them and spent time doing something nice for them. I was glad that I helped put a smile on their face for a while. I appreciate knowing another language.”</p>
<p>Welcoming Spaces and People - Someone who encouraged you in learning or trying something new or challenging</p>	<p>Working with a retired archeologist at a site:</p> <p>“One person who really helped me was Bill H...He is a retired professor and it was his idea to give me my own box [of artifacts to examine]. He helped me throughout the time I was at the lab by showing me different artifacts and encouraging me to come to my own conclusions. He is very friendly and talkative and it is fun to work with him because he has this vast amount of knowledge.”</p>