

## CHOOSING A TOPIC FOR AN ESSAY

Several approaches may be used to identify learning topics. One can start with knowledge, competencies, or experiences. In writing the autobiography, the student may have identified particular bodies of knowledge or significant learning experiences.

Sometimes a body of knowledge will be associated with a single learning experience, and thinking about that experience will help to identify the knowledge; for instance, knowledge of Mayan culture may have been gained from a trip to Mexico. There may be other instances, however, where a given experience may be associated with several areas of knowledge. For example, a financial manager may have acquired knowledge in supervision, budgeting, and technical writing. Thus, the student may find it helpful to think of certain jobs or accomplishments and identify the skills and knowledge required for each.

Knowledge in some subjects may have been acquired from many experiences over a period of time, rather than being associated with a single experience. The student may want to identify some knowledge areas first, and then think about the experiences associated with them. Reviewing the topic ideas in this module might help in identifying areas where one has knowledge.

Another approach is to make a list of competencies. Begin each statement with “I know...” or “I can....” This approach is useful in further identifying one’s knowledge and skills within a given course area—“Regarding supervision, I know...I can....” The student can then discuss each body of knowledge or skill in more detail.

When identifying areas of knowledge, the exploration should not be limited to work-related learning. Much college-equivalent learning can be gained from non-work-related experiences, including hobbies (art, music, drama, travel, foreign cultures), reading (literature, history, psychology), and community and church work (youth leadership, political science, theology). These are just some examples.

It is acceptable and desirable to include in the essay mention of any books that have been read, or other references that have been used in the past, which have added to the student’s understanding of the subject. The student should mention the titles and authors of such works, especially if their ideas are used in the essay. Also, the student should discuss what prompted him or her to use these resources, how they have added to the student’s understanding of the subject, and how their information has been used.

Following are suggestions for essay topics for which college credit may be granted. The student should not feel limited to these topics if his or her experience has been more diverse.

1. **Existing Courses:** Check the *Concordia University Catalog* for existing courses and the topics covered by them.
2. **Art:** Interior decorating, art studies, oil or watercolor painting, photography, jewelry making, art history, woodworking

3. **Education:** Comparative education, educational strategies, organization day care centers, working with parents, religious education, learning resource centers, teaching methods, adult education
4. **Health and Physical Education:** Physical fitness, athletic training, sports, coaching, health nutrition, methods of childbirth, first aid, scuba diving, individual or team sports
5. **Life and Physical Sciences:** Environment, ecology, energy, automotive physics, electronics, organic gardening, lymnology
6. **Psychology:** Aging, alcoholism, behavior modification (required references to reading), child abuse, coping with illness or disabilities, counseling, divorce, drug abuse, family crises interviewing, juvenile delinquency, parenting, psychology of advertising, stress, working mothers, volunteerism, death and dying, dealing with the terminally ill, single life, pregnancy
7. **Social Sciences:** Business (accounting, marketing, marketing research, wage negotiations, labor unions, labor disputes, credit unions, production planning, quality control, personnel, public relations, real estate, sales, advertising, purchasing and inventory control, finance, taxation, regulation, business law, training, interviewing), culture comparisons, enculturation, immigration, history of a particular period or place, social work, welfare, marriage and family, courts, justice system, community organizations, agencies, resources, finances, fund raising, urban planning, volunteer work, economics for consumers