How to Write a Verbatim

Set the paper up as follows, noting that no more than four pages may be used for the entire report.

- Please type all reports.
- Write your name and date on the top left corner of the page and the course number.
- Leave at least one third of the page on the right as a margin for comments.
- Never use full names. Use first names or initials.
- Double-space between passages of speech.
- Divide the verbatim into the following five sections.

1. Introduction

Give the date this experience took place. Note: the experience should be your own and current and personal. Provide the reader with a sense of the factual information you had prior to this experience.

2. Verbatim

Sit down as soon as possible after this experience and jot down a stream of key words that will help you remember the sequence of the conversation. Take time to recall your feelings during and after this exchange with as much detail as possible.

Enter only direct quotations when you begin to type up the encounter. Use a separate paragraph for each speech, which is identified by the initials of the person speaking, and the number of the speech, i.e., M1, P1, or P2 (where M is you and P1 or P2, etc., are the other person with whom you are relating.) Place all non-verbal communications in brackets as well as significant thoughts and feelings of which you are aware. Note periods of silence and places where you cannot remember the exact words spoken.

Note: Only provide the most critical aspect of the conversation under reflection. It is understood that you will not be able to remember a conversation word for word, but try to restate what you remember, as best you can. What you remember is significant regardless of whether it is literally what was said or done.

3. Personal Awareness

What was on your mind before this interaction? Were you aware of any anxiety or excitement? Was there anything that was unrelated to the experience that may have affected your behavior during this experience? Are there socio-cultural or other factors that may have influenced how you process this verbatim (language, economic, racial or ethnic differences, age, education, etc.?) What motivated your responses in this particular situation?
4. Theological Analysis

Use this section to reflect theologically on your ministry encounter. To do this exhaustively would take many pages, so focus on what you think offers the most insight or perplexes you the most. Our group discussion will respond and fill in from there. Think through the questions below and refer to Killen and DeBeer’s *The Art of Theological Reflection* for insight.

Images: Go back over the verbatim and list the most significant images that appear to you. Do any of these images refer to God, and, if so, which ones? Do any scriptural references come to mind?

Practices: Reflect on the events as a set of practices. What ritual actions took place? How do the space, position of bodies, movements, settings and other physical factors lend meaning to this encounter?

Embedded Theology: What “embedded theology” seems to be operating in the situation, i.e. with what theological issues is this person concerned (issues of trust, hope, illness, despair, etc.)? Did the individual speak openly of God and, if so, how would you describe the God they worship? Were fear, love, and other qualities associated with their God-talk? Does your embedded theology differ from that of the other persons in the situation? How do those differences affect your words and actions?

Deliberative Theology: Move now to think more deeply about the theological issues presented here:
- What is the call of the Gospel in this context? What would salvation look like here? Was any aspect of divine activity revealed in this experience for you?
- What does the encounter reveal about the human condition? Sin? Structural evil? Grace?
- What does this encounter say about vocation? What course of action is fitting following this situation? What aspects of your own faith were explored, challenged, or reaffirmed? Now that you have reentered this experience, what faith response is called for by your or by the others involved? What have you learned from this experience? What might you be able to do to help this person grow socially, emotionally, or spiritually? How did you or will you follow up on this situation?

5. Learning Goals

What do you hope to learn from having your classmates discuss this experience?