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# EE/RPPF

For use from May/November 2018

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Candidate personal code:

## Extended essay - Reflections on planning and progress form

**Candidate:** This form is to be completed by the candidate during the course and completion of their EE. This document records reflections on your planning and progress, and the nature of your discussions with your supervisor. You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor: The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session is once a significant amount of your research has been completed, and the final session will be in the form of a viva voce once you have completed and handed in your EE. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. The three reflections combined must amount to no more than 500 words.

**The completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the EE for first assessment May 2018. It must be submitted together with the completed EE for assessment under Criterion E.**

**Supervisor:** You must have three reflection sessions with each candidate, one early on in the process, an interim meeting and then the final viva voce. Other check-in sessions are permitted but do not need to be recorded on this sheet. After each reflection session candidates must record their reflections and as the supervisor you must sign and date this form.

### First reflection session

Candidate comments:

My supervisor and I discussed my initial research question, "How does normalizing mental illnesses act as a placebo effect among the masses?". With more people expressing their illnesses on social media, I am interested in researching whether it causes more people to diagnose themselves, even when they do not have a mental illness. However, I could not find any statistics providing evidence, so I had to change it. Alternatively, came up with the question "To what extent does visual media affect the prevalence of mental illness in society?" I plan to research whether media on mental illness increases the rate of the mental illness it features after its release. For evidence, I plan to discuss how psychological concepts like copycat behavior can influence the rates of mental illness by finding data on the rate change of a mental illness before and after the release of a certain form of media, evaluating whether it was influenced by the release of that media. My only concern is that I may not find much direct empirical evidence on this subject, but there are a lot of studies on topics like copycat behavior that I can apply to support my stance.

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Supervisor initials



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**Interim reflection**

Candidate comments:

I realized my question was too broad and decided to narrow my scope of research. After discussing with my supervisor, I changed my question to, "To what extent does the "copycat effect" explain similar suicide occurrences subsequent to mass media coverage on non-fictional and fictional suicides?". I modified my question after finding several scientific studies debating the validity of the "copycat effect" because there is no formal theory listed in any psychology textbooks. I found psychology textbooks to research widely accepted theories that could potentially substantiate the copycat effect. I analyzed the scientific studies I found, sorting them out as either primary sources or narrative reviews and either fiction or nonfiction. Accordingly, I divided my essay into three categories: the foundation of the copycat effect and its significance in non-fictional and fictional media. One difficulty I discussed with my supervisor was incorporating relevant news into my essay, which I wanted to include but am finding difficult to include since such stories are not thoroughly investigated.

Date:

Supervisor initials:

**Final reflection - Viva voce**

Candidate comments:

Initially, I had trouble coming to a conclusive answer about my findings due to several confounding results. However, this issue was quickly solved after I researched further on different methods of gathering data, ultimately using meta-analysis to confirm my findings. After quantifying my data, discovering patterns among the several cases I studied became much easier and gave me a holistic perspective on the several ways the "copycat effect" pervades in non-fictional and fictional media. Overall, the topic I chose highly interested me, which made writing my EE very engaging. After learning about the foundation of the copycat effect, the results I found made a lot of sense, especially regarding the high prevalence of copycat suicides imitating celebrities. Given this research, I plan to continue studying how stricter media regulations can be implemented to curb these effects from occurring.

Date:

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Supervisor comments:

**Supervisor:** By submitting this candidate work for assessment, you are taking responsibility for its authenticity. No piece of candidate work should be uploaded/submitted to the e-Coursework system if its authenticity is in doubt or if contradictory comments are added to this form. If your text in the box below raises any doubt on the authenticity of the work, this component will not be assessed.

This student was exceptionally driven to investigate a real world problem and stayed very organized throughout her thorough research efforts. She was driven by personal interest and her observations in societal interests and trends. She took a disciplined and academic approach to gather appropriate research and revise her knowledge based on her meta-analysis. She focused on evaluating a variety of sources to fully investigate her topic. This student had taken AP Psychology as a junior and had 1 year of TOK as a senior (our school doesn't have IB Psych or 2 years of TOK).



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