Reflective Essay

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Introduction

For this reflection I was able to look back at some specific coursework that influenced me. The initial courses that came to mind were not based on hard skills but courses that allowed me to demonstrate my soft skills. Soft skills are skills I've been developing my whole life that involve how I see the world and how I interact with people. Classes like Ethics and Cyber-Law allowed me to identify my analytical and empathy based skills. I was able to apply these skills to solving problems and managing conflicts through case studies and ethical analysis of situations. In entrepreneurship in professional studies, I was able to express my style of leadership and apply it towards starting a business. This project helped me showcase my ability to identify and mitigate risks and obstacles. I highlighted these skills because they were skills that I had previously learned and used for many years in the military but it wasn't until I had these courses did I actually consider them as things I was good at. I saw them more as things that were necessary and I was who I had to be and not unique in any way. I think that my ability to look at and manage conflicts, solve problems and think critically are very important skills for developing as an individual and I hope that I can apply these skills to my everyday life to impact not just my future but the lives of everyone I might interact with.

Conflict management and Emotional Intelligence

In my first artifact for this category of skills "Social Implications of Cybersecurity Policy" I addressed the rise of the "Internet of Things" or IoT. Everything in our world is beginning to be connected to a network of other devices, from critical infrastructure to our everyday appliances such as light bulbs and refrigerators. This connection creates a huge

conflict in terms of security that affects everyone whether they realize it or not. Now that

everything is connected that also means that it is vulnerable. If your network is insecure then

everything connected to your network is as well. This can have a devastating outcome in the

event of a cyber attack. Through this writing and research I was able to understand the conflict

facing the use of IoT and understand some of the risk management aspects of addressing the

problem. Things like keeping key infrastructure off of internet based connections and requiring

home appliances to be developed with a certain level of security or they cannot be sold to U.S

consumers. This writing helped me identify my conflict management skills by requiring me to

think of best practices to manage and mitigate risks at all levels of IoT operations.

In the Case Analysis for "Whistleblowing" I was tasked at looking at the ethical

considerations of the Manning leaks. As a soldier who was in Iraq at the time of the events my

initial feelings were mixed. But, for this case I would need to be able to look at the situation

through an objective lens and try to understand the ethical motivations behind the actions of

Manning if there were any and if they were moral or not. After looking at all the information

leaked and how Manning acted to do it I was able to discern that it was an immoral action.

Manning had no goal other than to disrupt and destroy the public view of the military. Manning

offered no solutions or expressed any desire for anything to change and because of this the

actions were immoral. This case allowed me to think about the intentions and outcomes of an

individual through an empathetic viewpoint. I came from a completely different background in

the military that would consider the actions of Manning as pathetic. Though this assignment

asked me to put my personal feelings aside and look at Mannings situation through an

empathetic perspective and try to understand the possible motivations behind the actions.

In my reflective essay on ethics, I was able to look back on the ethics course and see what things stood out to me and helped me as a person. The most notable concepts were that we need to use empathy whenever possible. As I reflected I realized that there are many approaches to ethics to try and understand if something is morally wrong but they don't always come to the same conclusions and can be counter productive. But, the one thing that stays the same is that we can attempt to see the actions of someone in an empathetic way instead of just judging them for the outcomes of their actions alone. I think this is important and I found this skill useful because I would also want people to look at my actions the same way not just as a production of an outcome but as something that took thought and had meaning.

Problem-solving

For "Political Implications of Cybersecurity Policy" I had to address the problem of cybersecurity policies and how the private and public sectors are in conflict. This artifact helped me think about how two entities need to work together to solve problems. The government is ineffective and uneducated in the way cybersecurity works and all their proposals are a waste of taxpayers money and accomplish nothing. While the private sector is making all the breakthroughs and doing the hard work to contribute to cybersecurity policies. The lesson here is that the government needs to admit its shortcomings and use its influence to prop up the private sector so that the proper regulations and practices are addressed and acted on. This problem, while simple on the surface, is tied up in bureaucracy and becomes much more complex by nature. In this writing I was able to approach this problem from both perspectives and see that the only way forward was for mutual support and implementation.

In "Ethical Implications of cybersecurity policy" I was able to look at the ethical concerns when implementing a cyber security policy. This mostly came down to privacy of individuals and how policies have to be implemented in a way that does not violate the individuals privacy but is still effective at applying cybersecurity principles. This was not an easy task as the government requires a certain level of reporting for cyber incidents which include sensitive information violating private companies privacy policies. By identifying these issues I was able to understand the need for privacy and cybersecurity policies on both sides to be fluent with each other or you have conflicts of interest that are exposed in the difference in policies. This was just another example of a problem having the solution of cooperation and understanding.

As a project for my class on entrepreneurship I created a "Just Cheesesteaks" food truck business. This project helped me identify many aspects of running a business and then apply solutions into a plan to operate a business. When looking at starting a business I had to research the landscape and understand how it will operate and what is needed to start. The problems starting a food truck business involved acquiring the resources, permits and legal licenses, the proper location and marketing. I had to approach each one of these concepts with creativity and understanding so that I could stand out and create something that would be successful. This project helped me think about problem solving on a competitive level with other businesses trying to accomplish the same thing and how I would stand out from the crowd.

Critical Thinking

In my "Case Analysis on User Data" I was faced with many questions and situations about how our data is mined and used online. There are organizations that mine data and do it for good reasons helping to identify terrorists or questionable actions but did the acquisition of this data come at the expense of someone else's privacy and could the mined data be wrong and identify someone who has nothing to do with anything. This artifact really made me think about how data is collected and what is right in terms of collection and use. The problem is there is no real clear answer and there aren't any regulatory measures being taken in the US, only in the EU are there steps being taken to protect people's data from being mined through regulatory measures.

In the "Case Analysis on Google Street View" I looked at the practices of google street view and how it affected people who had nothing to do with it. Google Street View was capturing people at their homes, exposing personal information such as the cars they drive, where their kids go to school, their license plates, schedules and many other things. Google collected all this data and publicly displayed it on their apps and only if you requested your information be taken down would they consider doing so. The actions of Google were outrageous; they knew what they could do and what they could get away with and still didn't care if they crossed any lines at all. This analysis really made me think critically about how big corporations like Google operate and what they value more than anything else and why we need to understand what is going on in cyberspace and how we are being used at the benefit of others.

In my "Case Analysis on Cyber Conflict" I addressed the ongoing cyberwar between Iran and Israel. This war is very complex and confusing and most of the time they don't even know if the other side is the one committing the attacks. We learned from the stuxnet and flame attacks that other countries are also involved in meddling with this cyberwarfare as a way to test things

out. Each government is acting in a way that is affecting the lives and even costing the lives of their citizens with what seems to be no regard for that life as the government act knowing what the retaliation might be. This analysis helped me look at the bigger picture in the conflict and see that it wasn't just two governments fighting each other for dominance but seeing which side is willing to sacrifice more to win.

Conclusion

I think the most important thing that helped me develop my skills and use them effectively was how the courses I took promoted creativity and opportunity to express and see the skills that I had. Many of the assignments weren't right or wrong assignments but critical thinking and problem solving oriented. Where there isn't just one solution, they let your mind go in whatever direction you wanted while hopefully understanding how you got there and why it matters. I think I was able to understand this early on and apply my critical thinking and problem solving skills to many of my assignments. The writing analysis and case studies really helped me organize my thoughts and create a structure for how to look at things. I learned that I need to be able to express these thoughts in a logical way that others can understand for the benefit of anyone concerned. Being able to accurately express myself is a skill I think that is overlooked, some people are always "without words" they have feelings but can't express them. I feel that the writing and critical thought required in many of the writing courses I've taken have helped me with these forms of expression so that I can communicate better with other people by expressing my thoughts clearly and concisely.