Writing Assignment #3: Reflective Essay

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Introduction

I am a senior at Old Dominion University and am on pace to graduate Spring of 2024. Over the last four years, I have studied cybersecurity, and in my sophomore year, picked up a minor in Risk Management and Insurance. While studying cybersecurity, I also learned several valuable skills. Regarding skills, I can say that I've learned technical and non-technical skills. To mention a few of the technical skills, I learned network security, incident response, security architecture, ethical hacking, and security analysis. For non-technical, I learned problem-solving, ethical considerations, continuous learning, and team collaboration. These skills on both the technical and non-technical side will benefit me in my career journey. During my time studying cybersecurity, I took several interdisciplinary courses. These courses consist of interdisciplinary theory and concepts, several courses related to my minor, cybersecurity ethics, cyber criminology, and of course, IDS 493. Out of them all, the most influential to me are IDS 493 and cybersecurity ethics.

IDS Program, Degree Objectives, & Course Materials

The Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) program is extremely valuable and before taking this course I was not aware of how important and valuable it really is. To my understanding, the IDS program is in place to allow students to take a holistic approach to learning. This approach encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to look at problems from different perspectives, which in this case would be different disciplines, to better understand the problem at hand and come up with the best possible solution. In addition, the program is also meant to encourage adaptability, innovation, and preparation for diverse careers. While the program touches on the things mentioned above, the program also emphasizes the importance of an

ePortfolio. It is required of students to make and build a comprehensive and thorough ePortfolio so that they can better understand their strengths and weaknesses, put their work on display, and keep a record for themselves of what they have done and what they may still need to do or even work on. When discussing overarching themes in my undergraduate coursework, it is easy to identify them. Cybersecurity is such a large and broad field but when you narrow it down, all the career paths require you to know the basics. The basics can double down as being overarching themes. To name a few, cyber risk management, compliance/legal considerations, and security policies and governance. These overarching themes along with the technical skills mentioned above, could be said to be a part of the degree objectives. According to the Old Dominion University website, "This program prepares graduates with the skills necessary to protect computer systems, networks, and online data from attack and compromise. Throughout the program, students will learn to troubleshoot and to identify potential security lapses through classroom instruction, hands-on computer lab sessions, and opportunities to participate in research projects". The website also states that the degree exhibits an interdisciplinary nature that "brings together cybersecurity focused expertise from multiple disciplines".

Internship

Regarding the internship experience, this past summer, I interned at TowneBank and that provided me with an interdisciplinary experience. Along with learning 3 different cybersecurity roles, I was also able to investigate other fields and see how their work ties into ours and sort of learn that as well. Not only was the internship an interdisciplinary experience but taking the interdisciplinary courses helped with that process. I was able to bring adaptability to the table due to my wide range of knowledge across different disciplines. More specifically with the

knowledge from my minor, I was able to bring knowledge from the risk management side of that and apply it to cyber risk and this allowed me to thrive in that aspect of the internship. The interdisciplinary courses here at ODU helped me with that experience in more ways than I can imagine, and this course (IDS 493) has been eye-opening to what employers want to see as well as helping me better advertise myself to potential employers.

Overarching Themes

As mentioned earlier my overarching themes are risk management, compliance/legal considerations, and security policies and governance. These overarching themes have impacted my growth in significant ways. Due to them all being related to the primary role that was assigned in my internship, it was helpful to have knowledge of the topics beforehand. If it weren't for having this knowledge, I'm not sure how enjoyable the internship would've been or if I would've even stayed in that role. Instead, due to the role requiring only a low amount of learning such as the systems, software, and such, it was almost second nature and I found it to be something that I'd like to pursue in terms of a long-term career.

Theme 1: Cyber Risk Management

Cyber risk management involves identifying, assessing, and mitigating any potential risks related to information systems, networks, and/or data. Learning this theme changed how I looked at everything because it isn't just something that applies to cybersecurity but instead to almost every aspect of life. Everything that we do in life comes with some sort of risk, so we have things in place that mitigate such risks. Because of this, I go into every situation with a plan, and

this is accomplished by evaluating and analyzing situations to the fullest or best of my ability to ensure that I see it from all possible angles.

Theme 2: Compliance/Legal Considerations

Compliance is all about the adherence of organizations to established rules, regulations, policies, and standards. These must be followed in the cyber world to maintain best practices and are often made from industry-wide frameworks. Learning this helps me significantly regarding my future career as it is a big part of what I plan to do as a cyber risk analyst. This also changed how I think in relation to ethics. Understanding what is right and wrong along with why is important and has encouraged me to not only act ethically and morally but also to encourage others to do the same. It has also improved my work ethic because it showed me that it pays to do things the right way and to avoid taking shortcuts or doing things halfway. Along with risk management, these two go hand in hand when describing the role and duties of a cyber risk analyst. Without these themes, my path would be uncertain, and I wouldn't know how to proceed in my journey after college.

Theme 3: Security Policies & Governance

This theme is like the last one in terms of security policies. I mentioned that security policies were a part of compliance, which they are because policies go hand in hand with rules and regulations, but governance expands on it a bit more. In comparison to the last overarching theme, this theme is also essential for ensuring the security of an organization's digital and physical assets. Policies essentially outline the rules and regulations while governance works by providing the framework for ways to implement and enforce the policies. Learning the policies

and governance was the first thing that I had to do during my internship as it was the fundamentals of cybersecurity and after learning it in school and from my mentors at TowneBank, I can understand the field much better than before.

ePortfolio Reflection

When reflecting on my individual process of building my ePortfolio, I can say that it has been an eye-opening experience. I've realized just how important this is and how much good it can do for me regarding future employment and advertising myself. I will admit that I've had trouble finding the artifacts to put into my ePortfolio, but this class provides a good bit so after finishing this paper, I will have another artifact to add. In addition to helping me with future employment and advertisement, it also serves as a personal tool. I say this because it allows me to look back at my work and identify my strengths and weaknesses so that way I can either expand on my strengths and/or work on my weaknesses so that they are no longer weaknesses. To my understanding, ePortfolio theory is all about reflection. To elaborate, the theory emphasizes and encourages individuals to think critically about the work that they've done as well as their own personal development. When one can understand this and put it together, they are more likely to thrive in professional settings and be better equipped to demonstrate their competencies and growth through the ePortfolio.

Narrative Identity

When speaking about my narrative identity, this course really allowed me to tap into that and understand it better than ever. One's developing narrative is an ongoing process and is essentially a way for individuals to construct and interpret the story of their lives. I was able to

think back on my experiences, values, and beliefs and put them together to form a cohesive narrative that shows my growth and development along with a sense of continuity and meaning. This narrative is continuing as stated before so it forever evolving so my narrative identity is dynamic. This plays a critical role in self-perception and in turn, influences the decision that I make in the future.

Conclusion

To conclude, the IDS program has been beneficial to my personal and professional progression. My overarching themes are in line with what I want to do after graduation which Is perfect as there are artifacts within my ePortfolio that portray my knowledge and interest in that field. It was nice to be able to look back on events of my past and connect them to where I am today. I never really got the chance to identify why chose the path I did but this class provided me with the opportunity to do so and I'm glad I was able to. I look forward to using my ePortfolio in the future and continuing to grow and develop.

References

Cybersecurity (B.S.). (2022, August 1). Old Dominion University.

https://www.odu.edu/academics/programs/undergraduate/cybersecurity