Writing Assignment: Reflection

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Abstract

This essay reflects on how my interdisciplinary education helped me build strong technical, critical thinking, and writing skills. Through projects such as ethical hacking, digital forensics, the interdisciplinary research process, and writing assignments, I was able to connect knowledge from different fields and apply it in practical ways. Each artifact shows how I grew as a learner and prepared for my future career. By blending ideas and methods from multiple disciplines, I developed a flexible skill set that will help me succeed in today's fast-changing professional world. My experiences have shown me that learning doesn't happen in a straight line, it requires adapting, questioning, and connecting different kinds of knowledge. Building this ePortfolio gave me a new appreciation for how my academic work fits into the bigger picture of my personal and professional goals.

Writing Assignment: Reflection

Over the course of my Interdisciplinary Studies program at Old Dominion University, I developed a range of important skills that are key to my career goals. Three major skillsets stood out during my journey: technical skills, critical thinking skills, and writing skills. Each of these skills came from working across different disciplines such as cybersecurity, digital forensics, interdisciplinary research, and professional writing. By using methods and knowledge from multiple fields, I was able to complete a variety of challenging projects that prepared me for real-world work. In this essay, I will reflect on how my academic experiences shaped my abilities and career readiness, focusing on the key artifacts that show my growth.

Technical Skills: Ethical Hacking Project

One of the first projects that helped me build my technical skills was the ethical hacking project. This assignment involved learning how hackers think and operate, but from a defensive, ethical standpoint. I had to research different types of cyberattacks, understand security vulnerabilities, and simulate hacking scenarios safely. What stood out to me during this project was how much interdisciplinary knowledge was required from computer science concepts to ethics and even legal issues. It pushed me to think not just as a technician, but as a responsible professional. I realized that being good with technology isn't just about knowing how systems work but also understanding the consequences of actions in different fields such law and business. This project gave me a strong foundation for a cybersecurity-focused career.

Technical Skills: ePortfolio

Another technical artifact that shows my growth is the creation of my ePortfolio. Designing the site required a lot more than just entering journal entries. I had to learn about web design tools, basic coding principles, and digital organization. Building the ePortfolio helped me

develop real-world tech skills such as troubleshooting problems, embedding artifacts, and thinking about user experience. It also taught me how to present my work professionally online, which is a major career skill that is needed in today's world. Setting up my ePortfolio was not always easy I had to problem-solve when links didn't work or when the layout was not correctly aligned but that process taught me resilience and adaptability.

Critical Thinking Skills: IDS 300W PowerPoint Interdisciplinary Research Process

In IDS 300W, I created a presentation covering the ten steps of the interdisciplinary research process. This project helped me improve my critical thinking skills by teaching me how to break down complex problems and analyze them from multiple angles. I learned that real-world issues are rarely simple; they usually require input from different disciplines to find a complete solution. Preparing the presentation also improved my public speaking and organizational skills. I had to think carefully about how to present information clearly and logically, which are skills that employers look for when hiring researchers, analysts, and managers.

Critical Thinking Skills: Digital Forensics Project

The digital forensics project was another important artifact that strengthened my critical thinking skills. In this assignment, I had to carefully gather, analyze, and interpret digital evidence while maintaining ethical standards. It wasn't just about technical ability, it was about being methodical, detail-oriented, and making thoughtful decisions based on evidence. Working through the project taught me how small mistakes in documentation or interpretation can have major consequences, especially in legal or security-related settings. It also pushed me to think such as an investigator, questioning assumptions and digging deeper to find the real story behind the data.

One of the biggest challenges was learning how to organize the vast amount of information in a way that told a clear and logical story. I realized that technical skills alone were not enough; I had to communicate my findings effectively to people who might not have the same background. This project showed me how essential it is to bridge the gap between technical complexity and clear communication, a skill that will be vital for working in cybersecurity, information assurance, or any tech-driven career. Completing the digital forensics project gave me a firsthand understanding of the responsibility that comes with handling sensitive data and the level of professionalism the field demands. It also reinforced how critical it is to stay updated with evolving technologies and legal standards, since digital evidence practices are constantly changing.

Critical Thinking Skills: Information Assurance Assignment

Finally, the information assurance assignment helped me connect critical thinking to risk management. Information assurance is about protecting data and ensuring that systems can recover from attacks. During this project, I had to analyze threats, vulnerabilities, and possible countermeasures, thinking not just about what could go wrong but how systems could stay resilient. It was a challenge to balance technical solutions with broader organizational goals, but that's what real-world cybersecurity professionals must do. This experience strengthened my ability to think about problems from multiple perspectives and propose thoughtful, interdisciplinary solutions.

Writing Skills: Interdisciplinary Studies Paper

The interdisciplinary studies paper was one of the most challenging and rewarding writing assignments I completed during the program. It required me to bring together research from multiple disciplines to tackle a complex problem. I had to think beyond a single perspective

and instead find meaningful connections between different fields, which helped me strengthen my research and analytical skills. Writing this paper made me realize that real-world problems rarely have simple, one-dimensional solutions. It also helped me become more confident in navigating academic research databases, evaluating sources, and constructing arguments that respect multiple viewpoints.

While working on the paper, I learned the importance of flexibility sometimes the research would take me in unexpected directions, and I had to be open to adjusting my original approach. I also discovered that interdisciplinary writing demands a balance between depth and breadth: you must dive deep enough into each field while still keeping your main argument clear and focused. These lessons will be crucial in my professional future, where being able to connect ideas from different industries and adapt to new information quickly can set me apart. The interdisciplinary studies paper showed me that complex thinking isn't just an academic exercise it is a real advantage in a constantly changing world.

Writing Skills: Personal Narrative Essay

The personal narrative essay offered a different but equally valuable writing experience. Instead of writing an academic paper, I reflected on my personal experiences and growth. This assignment helped me see writing as a tool for self-reflection and professional storytelling. Being able to tell your story effectively is an important career skill, whether you are interviewing for jobs, networking, or building your personal brand. The personal narrative also taught me how to make my writing more engaging and authentic, which is a skill that applies even in technical fields where connecting with people matters.

As I wrote about my own journey, I realized how important it is to communicate emotions, motivations, and challenges in a way that readers can relate to. It made me more aware

of the human side of professional communication, something that often gets overlooked in highly

technical careers. Developing this style of writing will help me build stronger relationships with

colleagues, clients, and future employers. It also reminded me that professional success isn't just

about skills it is about the story you tell about who you are and what you bring to the table.

Conclusion

Looking back on my interdisciplinary education, I can clearly see how the combination of

technical, critical thinking, and writing skills has shaped my growth as both a student and a

future professional. Courses such as Interdisciplinary Studies 300W laid the foundation by

teaching me how to approach problems from multiple angles, question assumptions, and build

strong, research-based arguments. Projects such as ethical hacking, digital forensics, and

information assurance challenged me to sharpen my technical skills while staying mindful of

ethical and communication standards. Meanwhile, writing assignments such as the

interdisciplinary studies paper and personal narrative essay helped me develop a voice that is

adaptable, reflective, and professional.

Each of these artifacts showed me that success requires more than just technical aspects it

demands flexibility, curiosity, and the ability to bridge gaps between different fields and

audiences. Interdisciplinary methods and theories have been crucial to my learning because they

mirror the realities of the modern workplace, where professionals must be able to think across

boundaries and adapt to new challenges. Developing my ePortfolio gave me the chance to see

how my coursework, projects, and personal reflections all connect into a larger professional

identity. Being an interdisciplinary thinker means being prepared for complexity, change, and

collaboration skills that are in high demand across industries. As I move forward into my career,

I know that the ability to connect ideas, communicate clearly, and apply a flexible mindset will

set me apart. This program did not just give me knowledge, it gave me the confidence to

navigate whatever comes next.