

## **E-Portfolio: Reflection**

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## **Introduction**

My e-portfolio represents a variety of different style courses I've taken over the course of my time at ODU. It'll provide a blend criminal justice, cybersecurity, information technology classes. I initially started at ODU with just criminal justice, but tagged along cybercrime about halfway through my schooling. The three main skills I decided to speak on are Investigative Analysis, Research and Reflection, and Technical. My coursework, or artifacts, in criminal justice and cybersecurity have led me to develop a solid foundation using these same skills. My E-Portfolio should also, in part showcase the growth that led up to point.

### **Skill: Investigative Analysis**

Investigative analysis in this context means carefully collecting or interpreting evidence. It's one of those tasks where you need to know all the facts possible before moving forward. Investigative analysis typically follows a step by step procedure and is crucial to follow if one wants to be succeeded in the field. According to Fossey & Crow (2018), "A good case provides the reader with rich contextual details—information about the organizational setting, the characters, and the community or relevant larger environment" (p.1). Unfortunately, investigative material will be considered invalid if the certain procedures are not followed or certain elements are not explained fully. Establishing the facts is everything.

### ***CRJS 310 – Cybercrime Case Study***

This was a very exciting assignment to be part of. Us students were provided with real-life affidavits that were submitted for warrants. I got to see the elements and composition of what a typical affidavit looks like, witness the investigative procedures from start to finish, view how they collected evidence, and see for myself the strategies that criminals use when performing their crimes. As for my goal in the assignment, I was tasked with presenting the case outside of a

classroom setting, meaning my assignment wasn't delivered with the intended audience of students or teachers in mind. It made me think of the assignment from a different perspective knowing the affidavits were legit. It was encouraging, like getting a taste of the legit work that investigators have to do. Pairing that with the delivery method as if presenting a real case truly shifted me into the real-life application side of work.

### ***CYSE 407 – Final Paper***

For this paper, I was assigned a case, only this time I was executing the warrant instead of submitting for one. Also, this time around, I had a lot more freedom in determining the facts of the case such as how the evidence was found or what was found. As a result of this, I had to apply more technical knowledge in terms of evidence collection with data recovery, whether it be images, messages, payments, or files. For example, I had to describe the process I took for performing a forensic analysis on both a laptop and cell phone, where I had to use technical terms to describe exactly what it is that I was doing with the devices.

### ***CRJS 409 – OPSEC Assignment***

This assignment taught me the importance of operational security (OPSEC). It is used to both protect sensitive information, as well as identify the danger and risks present. This project revolved around how advantages are gained by adversaries, and learning how it is that they exploit the systems they come across systems. I put together a presentation that went into each stage of the OPSEC process, which is a five stage cycle starting from identifying critical information, to analyzing threats, assessing vulnerabilities, accessing risk, and lastly, applying countermeasures. I also had to think critically on each of the steps, because afterwards in the assignment, I was tasked to rank the OPSEC stages from most to least important. This meant I had to have a thorough understanding each stage to make a determination of where each stage

should be ranked. I ranked “Identify Critical Information” at the number one spot since it is the prize or valuable being sought out. However, Ferdous et. al. (2024). disagree, stating that out of the five steps in OPSEC, the most important of them all is to “Identify and Analyze Potential Threats.” I don’t disagree too much since I ranked it third. As for the assignment itself, it’s almost as if this assignment is a mix between the traditional investigative procedures from CRJS 310 presentation and the more cybercity centered analysis that was done with my CYSE 407 final paper.

### **Research and Reflection**

There is always room for research in the field of criminal justice. From theories to concepts, or even statistics, I’ve had to pull from many different kinds of academic sources. Equally as important is self-reflection, both which are on the analytical writing style of work. In short, research helps me better understand the way society functions, especially in relation to crime, while self-reflection better helps me understand myself.

### ***CRJS 395- Final Project***

This was a very rewarding assignment. It was tricky at first since you have to be honest with yourself during these reflections. This includes pointing out areas in which I might need improvement, or areas that I’m straight up weaker in. The class concepts helped me view the assignment through the eyes of a leader, where I’m aware that I have the power to build my own team. It’s just a matter of collaboration and team building. This assignment helped me personally reflect and recognize my traits, and with reflection and recognition comes the opportunity for improvement. Interestingly, I consider myself an introvert and found this quote on leadership and reflection which states that Introverts could be more likely to engage in reflection because of their introspective nature (Nesbit, 2012). This could explain why I seemed to have an easy time

with the assignment. While I haven't had many opportunities to practice a leadership role, this assignment helped expose me to a scenario in which I was a leader.

### ***CRJS 421 – Why I am (or am not) Deviant***

I worked in pairs with another person this assignment with the goal of analyze physician assisted suicide as a potential act of deviance. My discussion was supported with ration choice theory and labeling theory. My section of the assignment involved presenting a Powerpoint that explains how deviance is a result of factors like social perception and ethics, tying into my theories of choice. In comparing both the theories, I got to see how personal decision making and societal labeling crossover. I had already taken numerous classes before that discussed criminological theories, so the theory side was not new to me, it only got reinforced further which is a good thing. It's allowed me to become that much more proficient in criminology, providing me with the development in my field that I'm looking for.

### ***CRJS 436 – Capstone Research Project***

For my capstone research project, I conducted a full on research study that explored how students balance their academic and non-academic obligations. I was tasked with many tasks, starting with the initial research question, and then moving onto literature reviews of qualitative data. After this, I created an approved interview guide, conducted interviews, and use thematic coding to identify patterns in the participant's experiences. One of the most difficult parts of the capstone class in my opinion was performing the thematic coding. It's not only me who says it, according to Belotto, "This approach addressed some of the challenges resulting from the open-ended questioning that is used in qualitative research, where participants may provide lengthy and complex responses, digress, or discuss multiple themes, all which can greatly add to the difficulty of coding, and potentially reduce interrater reliability (Belotto, 2018, as cited in

Campbell et al., 2013, p. 1). It involved a lot of sections, and some decent creativity to come up with the categorization for these sections. I even had a moment during the thematic coding process where my work got deleted, so that was certainly a learning process. Everything worked out in the end, but it's safe to say this class was a true test and improvement to my qualitative analysis and data organization.

### **Technical**

My technical skills involve practical programming as well as networking, all which I gained through my experiences with the courses I'll be presenting. Aside from programming and networking, there is also a technical showcase of my mapping skills. I've also accumulated a proficient understanding of the tools used within networks, how they communicate, how they function, and how they're protected and maintained. However, for the sake of the assignments I'm displaying, they'll be more applicable hard skills rather than those technical understandings mentioned, though they crossover and help improve my understanding of the following project.

#### ***IT 205 – Final Project***

This course was my first ever exposure to programming. It's set the foundation for my technical understanding. From functions to loops, to conditionals and classes, the project itself introduced me to the logic and practice of coding structures. The project showcases a rock paper-scissor game using python, and alongside the project I provided written out instructions for the user on how to run the code. It was certainly a challenging course, but the final project helped me step out of my comfort zone and see for myself the world of programming.

#### ***CYSE 250 – Final Project***

In this course, I prepared a socket based network program that permits users to both send and receive encrypted messages through measures of authentication. I was tasked with incorporating

encryption and decryption into my code, user authentication file handling, prior Python knowledge like loops, along with the introduction of some not so familiar concepts like functions and dictionaries. I gained a brand-new understanding of how data travels securely across networks and realized its significance. Socket based client-server programming permits for two systems to communicate from a network, ensuring there is a secure exchange of information between users (Sundararajan et al., 2011). There's also the link between my previous cybersecurity courses, where confidentiality, integrity and authentication directly translate over to programming.

### ***CRJS 344 – Final***

Instead of writing code, this technical skill focuses on the creation of maps. Not just creating them but understanding how to access the resources needed to create said maps. I enjoyed this class greatly, and I believe it's partly because the map is like a visual representation of my work, just like the E-Portfolio is. For some reason I take more pride in, or I can better appreciate my work when it's in a visual format like that. As for my learning experiences, I learned the importance of data collection across the environment and the population. This put a new twist on my criminological understanding, where could visually recognize the patterns.

### **Conclusion**

I'm grown significantly ever since my first day at ODU. I've become technically proficient and well established my analytical skills to address issues in cybercrime, and non-cybercrime alike. My understanding of criminological theories translates over to cybercrime applications, where I not only have a good chance of understanding the criminal's mental approach, but his actual plan of action like the tools they plan on using. Between my skills of Investigative Analysis, Research and Reflection, and Technical, I've made for a collection of

skills that are needed in the current day criminal justice work. All in all, these works and artifacts have formed me a strong foundation.

## References

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