Introduction

When I think back to everything I've experienced during my college run, it all feels like it happened yesterday. My degree is categorized as an Interdisciplinary Studies degree, it combines a vast variety of degree programs and courses into one specific degree field. I believe this allowed me to gain more in-depth experiences than I would have if I pursued a traditional degree. Even though in my mind it all went by so fast, I don't want to underplay how difficult these courses were. Every one of them required a different mindset and set of skills to excel. I believe each of those courses allowed me to strengthen a different skill. As I am pursuing a bachelor's in Cybersecurity, most of my formal coursework has been related to the challenges I am most likely to face in my career. These challenges require problem-solving skills, adaptability, multitasking, and great research skills to combat cyber threats. I can't pinpoint a single course that encapsulated all of my Cybersecurity skills, as they all were extremely influential in my career development. However, on the Interdisciplinary Studies side of things, there is one course that I can say had the most influence. The course which was funnily enough named *Interdisciplinary Studies* gave me the basic foundation to understand how to use interdisciplinary methods to my advantage on any problem I may encounter. Excluding my general education requirements for my degree program and extra classes I needed to reach a credit limit, all of my coursework no matter what it focused on had three specific challenges I needed to overcome.

Understanding, Solving, and Application

Throughout my school career, I was told the first step of attempting any action is to understand what exactly it is that you're doing. Be it starting an assignment, playing a sport, or even engaging in conversation. You have to understand what exactly you're going to do before you do it, or it just won't work out. This viewpoint laid the foundation for my ability to complete my coursework. Though in the field of Interdisciplinary Studies and Cybersecurity, fully understanding what exactly you have to do is a lot different than actually doing it. This is where another concept of understanding was taught to me. This type of thinking, known as systems thinking in Interdisciplinary Studies, requires breaking down a problem into specific parts to understand a potential specific outcome (Morganelli, 2020). I used a dynamic version of systems thinking to understand every aspect of a problem and where every single influence of it was garnered. I then applied and integrated them all together to further my understanding of the exact problem or action I was currently on. This allowed me to break down seemingly complex problems into digestible bite-sized pieces which I then either worked on little by little to eventually solve the bigger picture or accumulated them back together to understand exactly what the problem was and what it wanted. I learned this method worked extremely well when relating to programming issues I faced during my computer science courses. My first semester of college which held my first coding class was one of my more stressful ones due to a lack of an actual method. I just threw whatever stuck until I eventually solved the problem at hand. When I got to more complex coding classes, I understood this method was fading fast in its effectiveness. I was at a loss until I used systems thinking to understand what I first needed to accomplish. After that, I used a method of parts to fully flesh out my coding and to complete problems that would have taken me much longer to solve before. While I don't consider myself

an expert programmer, this method of systems breakdown and integration has allowed me to excel and grow exponentially faster than I was before.

I originally only applied this method for my programming courses. However, I began to realize this sort of method also worked extremely well for my coursework and daily life. This method worked for normal problems, tests, and writing assignments, albeit with a few variations on each. I also began to model my process towards ePortfolio creation with these concepts in mind. This was done by segmenting the groundwork into different parts and then solving and integrating them one by one back into the original process. While it may seem robotic, this method allowed me to give attention and detail to each specific piece of my portfolio equally instead of skipping out or putting too much on details for some. After applying this method constantly I began to notice an issue that became apparent as my coursework and workload began to increase. As my coursework grew more in complexity and size, I began to struggle as my method started to crumble under the stress.

Prioritized Multitasking

I realized I had to incorporate another method alongside my system's viewpoint of understanding. Modifying my original method, I began to prioritize specific assignments and work based on many different factors. Some factors include deadlines, workload, and importance. Before my modifications, my method struggled against multiple, complex problems all at once. It eventually became such a hindrance that I began to become confused about which parts were of certain problems. I decided that I needed to multitask in a method that would prevent confusion and allow my coursework to be given dedicated time and effort. After designating tasks based on their importance, I then used a shortened version of my original method which held broader aspects of the problem rather than specific portions. This new

method, while not allowing for as deep of an overview, allowed me to complete tasks at an accelerated pace with little loss in the way of detail. By prioritizing topics that I designated of most importance, I began to add more detail into those than equal detail for the entire scope. This allowed me to optimize my way of finishing tasks and problems while maintaining the overall message I wanted to convey. While my original method worked far better for my programming courses, my newer method was the better choice for all other aspects of my workload. Combining this method with multitasking allowed me to grow in a way where I could focus on multiple tasks while maintaining an accurate level of detail on multiple tasks at once depending on their importance. I used this optimized method on my ePortfolio as I portrayed my digital artifacts in a way where the ones I believed were the most important to myself and my career were the ones I portrayed. It allowed me to weed out some of the fat I accumulated through my four years of college and my almost fifteen years of computer and Cybersecurity experience.

How to Adapt

While not specifically mentioned earlier, both of these applied methods demonstrated what I believe to be the most important aspect of my career. The ability to adapt. Adaptation, a skill which has been shown since life has been on earth applies to anything, an environment, a situation, etc. Regarding my coursework and career, the ability to adapt is one of the strongest skills a person can have. If a new intrusion method or vulnerability becomes apparent, a cybersecurity analyst must be able to adapt to the scenario and defend against it. Throughout all of my courses in the IDS field, the skills taught to me have allowed me to further my ability to adapt to most scenarios. Take for example how I created my own optimized method of systems thinking. Originally, I faced a problem that required me to adapt and create a new method to

solve it. When this new method started to not work, I then adapted and modified the method to work in most scenarios. The method itself is a way to adapt to any situations I may face as I can break down a complex problem at hand and understand the aspects and influences of each part. I then relate these bite-sized pieces to problems I've encountered before and establish common ground between them. After such I integrate the problem back together with the common ground I've established to understand the situation at hand. This allows me to adapt to most situations related to my career on the fly and allows for creative solutions to seemingly impossible problems. I believe that if my career was not under an Interdisciplinary Studies path, I wouldn't have had such a strong grasp on adaptation. In regards to my ePortfolio, adaptability has given me the ability to create a creative process towards completing an ePortfolio along with providing me with a necessary skill needed in the workforce.

Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, I believe that through my career path as a Cybersecurity major in the Interdisciplinary Studies field, I've gained prominent skills that I would have struggled to gain if I had gone through a more direct field path. My courses and their coursework allowed me to establish and optimize methods to further develop my understanding of situations and complex problems along with furthering my adaptation skills in a way that allows me to excel in my career path. I believe Interdisciplinary Studies has allowed me to develop my problem-solving, multitasking, research, and adaptation skills far deeper than any other methods I can think of. These methods have allowed me to create my way to solve problems which I can modify to any problem or situation that I find myself in my career field or anywhere I see fit.

References

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