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IDS 493 Electronic Portfolio Project

Old Dominion University

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## Reflective Essay

### Interdisciplinary Studies

The assigned task of choosing only a few of the many skills that I have acquired and improved over the four years at Old Dominion University took some time, self-analysis, and deliberation. I have come to the conclusion that writing, communication, rhetoric, time management, and problem-solving would be the five most helpful skills I have honed. The reason for choosing each of these skills will be broken down further in the body paragraphs. The most formative classes for these skills versus the ones that are the most influential are completely different. For example, early in my undergraduate classes, I learned time management from my Anatomy and Physiology 2 class. The course was work intensive, had a separate lab segment, and required a lot of time-crunched deadlines. I want to go into each skill in more depth in the following paragraphs.

The first skill that I refined in my time in university that I think is important enough to mention would be rhetoric. In high school, writing was a significant part of our curriculum, and Rhetoric and Logic were each taught for an entire year. I honed my ability to rhetorically analyze a piece of work, both from my perspective and the perspective of another person or group of people. It also gives me the competence to argue my point clearly and concisely. One could argue that this is part of communication skills, but I believe it is its own topic, or at the very least a sub-topic of communication. The reason for this differentiation is that simple communication, and being able to skillfully debate with someone, are two separate but equally important skills. One distinction you can make is that communication is a tool that can be used to express rhetoric. There are often situations where I am having a conversation with someone with whom I might not share certain opinions and we therefore may have opposing positions. In this instance, communication teaches us how to effectively elaborate on, and bring our point across. However, it does not teach us how to defend that point, and

that is where I believe rhetoric is different. Persuasion is a large part of rhetoric and it is also a large part of life. Therefore, being able to sharpen such a skill has been exciting and will serve me well as I venture off into the working world. My artifacts in the ePortfolio exhibiting my rhetoric skills are, I believe, some of my best writing.

Time management is one of the most important things you can do as a student. The strides I have made in this regard are priceless and will be integral in my life at work, home and as a parent. I am not talking about time management as waking up at a certain time to make the 15-minute commute to your class or job. I am talking more about time management of being able to reach several deadlines because you're able to allocate your time in a way that is going to be most effective for you to be able to complete your tasks efficiently and accurately. To be able to order things by level of importance. But also, to be able to know if something is not a priority when you have many things on your plate at once and be comfortable moving that thing to the back burner. That is the time management that I feel that I've learned here at university. There are no artifacts in my ePortfolio that represent my time management skills, but being able to put together the portfolio while also completing all other coursework would indicate my time management abilities.

Communication is extremely important because it allows you to articulate what you want to say, and present it in a way that can be easily understood and received better by your listeners. This includes people with opposing opinions or people with the same opinion. Whether explaining how to do something or assigning tasks in a group meeting, listening to others, and considering different ideas, communication plays a key part. Communication is a skill that you can learn and it will be applicable in any environment. There are no jobs in the world where you do not need to be able to communicate with your employer, peers, and employees. And in some instances, you need to be able to use your skills and communication to discuss things with clients or future business partners, in a way that can attract them to the company. Effective communication is also key to good personal relationships. That is why communication made its way onto this list, and I believe is an important skill that I've been fortunate enough to be taught here during my time. In my ePortfolio, I believe I have been able to adequately showcase my communication skills with my writing samples.

The next skill to be mentioned is that of problem-solving. This is one of the most applicable to my desired career. I will constantly be confronted with varying conditions, and therefore have to use deductive reasoning in math to figure out whether an investment could work out long-term. There is

also a degree of intuition needed in the job. The ability to see things differently, from all angles, is a key component to determining the probability of success with an investment. However, at the beginning of my career, when I am setting the pace and proving myself to my employers, I have to rely on the skills I developed in college to apply to this workplace. Problem-solving is another skill that will not be readily evident among the artifacts in my ePortfolio. However, once again, this is a necessary adeptness when navigating life at university.

The final skill that I would like to discuss here is writing. Many people will hear my career path and think that is the furthest thing from writing. And in some ways they are right. However, it is not necessarily the act of writing, it is the skill of creating a piece of written work that accurately conveys the points you are trying to make. It is the way it trains your brain. You see things in a different way than other people see things when you train your brain to think like a writer. For years you were able to describe how you feel and describe just about anything to anyone. As a writer you learn how you give your perspective, to change people's viewpoints. Writing is not a tool that I'm going to use as much in my field, but it is a tool that can help me get ahead. When you know how to put abstract concepts and feelings into words and explain them to people who maybe have never studied anything close to that, then that is a skill that can be applicable in any field. That iWith any narrative essay assignment, the writer must always answer the question "So what?". I mean, how is this applicable to my life? For me, it is applicable because I am pursuing a career in finance, with an emphasis on either investment banking or stock brokerage, both of which require not only skills in finance but also written communication. These are both extremely high-stress and high-demand jobs, and they require all of the skills that I have listed above as well as a high understanding of math. Problem-solving and communication are two of the arguably most applicable skills for my career that I have learned at college thus far. But the other skills I've listed have also been mentioned because they will serve their purpose in those fields. Both of the jobs that I have taken into consideration have a lot of responsibilities where I would be communicating with clients, researching, analyzing, and reporting on various equity positions, and persuading people that a particular investment is or is not a good fit for them. This is something I would not be able to do without excellent communication skills. Successfully expounding on the results of my research to persuade someone who is on the fence about an investment, or to talk someone out of wasting money on an investment that you do not see working out for them, would be very rewarding for all involved.s why writing not only made this list but has helped me realize what I wanted to become and how I want to do it. My entire ePortfolio is a collection of many of my written pieces. Some are good, some are experimental and, I think, some

are excellent. Taken as a whole, the artifacts sufficiently portray my journey through the written word at Old Dominion University.

Now I ask myself, "So what?". How is this applicable to my life? For me, it is applicable because I am pursuing a career in finance, with an emphasis on either investment banking or stock brokerage, both of which require not only skills in finance but also written communication. These are both extremely high-stress and high-demand jobs, and they require all of the skills that I have listed above as well as a high understanding of math. Problem-solving and communication are two of the arguably most applicable skills for my career that I have learned at college thus far. But the other skills I've listed have also been mentioned because they will serve their purpose in those fields. Both of the jobs that I have taken into consideration have a lot of responsibilities where I would be communicating with clients, researching, analyzing, and reporting on various equity positions, and persuading people that a particular investment is or is not a good fit for them. This is something I would not be able to do without excellent communication skills. Successfully expounding on the results of my research to persuade someone who is on the fence about an investment, or to talk someone out of wasting money on an investment that you do not see working out for them, would be very rewarding for all involved.

In conclusion, of the many skills that I have acquired over the four years at Old Dominion University writing, rhetoric, communication, time management, and problem solving have been the most crucial. Through the IDS program, I was able to find my passion and was taught to connect the different fields I learned to hone and apply my skills to the field of finance. The Interdisciplinary Studies program here at ODU through its system and study was able to show me that there is a connection between everything. If you can take the best of the different fields of research you are able to have a better-formulated idea of just about any field. This helped me develop the skills that I have listed. These skills were each pulled from different areas of study and through IDS helped me connect them all together. I believe that it will also help me in my future endeavors and chosen field of career.