

**Reflective Essay**

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## **Introduction**

Throughout my years in school I have had the opportunity to learn many useful soft and hard skills from all of my different course. During this time, I have also added experience to go with these skills to help get a first-hand experience using and seeing how each of these can be very beneficial in the real world. Some of the soft skills that I have learned include customer service, problem solving, team work, and work ethic. These are all extremely valuable and skills that I want to continue to grow as I gain more experience in to workforce. Some hard skills that I have developed include Ticket Management, IT trouble shooting, handling data center hardware, and proficiency in network monitoring tools. These skills and many of my other hard skills have been introduced through my degree program and then have been reinforced through experience working in the network operations center. Actually using these skills first-hand has really allowed me to understand the concepts and further my knowledge by seeing how they are used in the real world and how they affect users and operations. Overall I have been very fortunate to have access to this experience and a wealth of knowledge that has come for the workforce and my many professors throughout my degree program.

## **Customer Service**

Customer service is one of my top soft skills and the skill that I have the most experience using. With my experience going back 6+ years I have been able to learn the best ways to approach different situations. All this experience has allowed me to be able to provide top notch customer service to end-users and customers when they are dealing with any technical issues. My most valuable experience has come from being a supervisor at Martin's Foods which involved all check out experience and any customer issues throughout the store. I currently still use all these skills while providing tier 1 support when taking off hour helpdesk calls for both

end-users and customers. My artifacts to show this skill includes technical support and tracking with service now, customer service supervisor experience, and my interdisciplinary course through ODU. Through each of these artifacts I have learned from ticket tracking for customer related IT issues and documentation, angry customers, and understanding other perspectives through the interdisciplinary process. Customer service will always play a role and in my future goals in an abundance of different ways. Communication skills for interviews and always assisting either end-users or customers on every level of the IT industry. My goal is to climb to more senior positions and they still assist end-users as tickets/issues get escalated.

### **Team Work**

Team work is another skill that I have had a lot of experience which has allowed me to grow into a great teammate. This started way back at a young age being on sports teams throughout middle school and high school. While this was for sports it is also taught that you have to do what is best for the team and give respect and encouragement to all of your teammates. This has continued to be the way I have approached team work in the professional setting when it comes to working with my team and other teams or vendors to get issues resolved in the best way possible. For this skill my artifacts are Cross country and Track captain star, Flash foods project lead, and data center projects. Being a team captain gave me the opportunity to learn the best way to approach a leadership role while staying focused on working together. Working as a lead for the flash foods project thought me to look from different perspectives while also presenting a clear goal for all departments based on their needs. Now finally I get to work with the server team to install and decommission servers. This has thought me the importance of communication in team work because making sure all racks, U's, and port numbers are correct keeps everything operating the way it should without any issues. Team work

is another skill that will always be a part of every job that I look at obtaining in the future. As I grow in the IT field it is important to continue to use these approaches with anyone that I am working with because we are working towards the same goal and it's critical to always show respect and encouragement to everyone.

### **Problem Solving**

Problem solving is a skill that I have been extremely increasing while assisting end-users with tier 1 support. It is very important to follow a trouble shooting process while problem solving any issue. This is a process that I worked on while working as a supervisor at Martin's. There was a lot of issues that came up based around customer experience and it was my job to identify the problem and also find a solution that took the bad experience and turned it into a great experience and a returning customer. For this skill my artifacts include CompTIA Certifications, CS463 Course Project, and CYSE270 Linux Virtual Machine. For these my CompTIA certifications went through the generic IT trouble shooting process and those are still steps that I use to provide tier 1 support. Both of these course projects were set up but came with a bunch of errors especially with my Java programming project. For each of these I had to go through each error and find the solution that would fix the error while also not messing up any of the other processes that were running. This skill is heavily related to my career goals because it is one of the biggest and most used skills in the IT industry. This is why I plan to continue to grow and add depth to my problem solving knowledge and process to assist me in my future career roles.

## Conclusion

Overall my degree courses and first-hand experience has given me the opportunity to develop my soft and hard skills that are relevant in my current role and will be very valuable throughout my future career in the IT field. I think having both schooling and actual work experience has really allowed me to develop these skills. Through my associates in Computer Science, Bachelors in Cyber Security, and IT certifications I have been able to learn the concepts and how they work in the IT industry. Then being able to apply them and see how they work in the real world IT environment. I believe that the most important take away from Interdisciplinary courses was to look at issues from multiple perspectives. This has helped me with trouble shooting issues and in customer service by understanding how the end-user feels having to deal with this issue. This came from my IDS300W where we cover all the steps of the interdisciplinary process. This process and understanding different perspectives is something that I will continue to use and develop throughout the rest of my career. Finally, I plan to continue taking on the rest of my career goals with the same passion, respect, and work ethic as I have used to complete my Bachelors in Cyber Security!