Owin Ifill

CYSE 368

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Professor Duvall

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Internship: The Innovation Lab

Reflection 1

This is my second semester working with The Innovation Lab. So, these first 30 hours compared to the beginning of my first semester hours are a bit different. Since I knew how things operated, I was getting to know my fellow interns and helping them with training. Helping them learn about the equipment we use and teaching them how to use it properly. I honestly enjoy getting to know new people. I believe it's very important to get to know your colleges in the workspace. It creates a safer, more comfortable working environment. Getting to know their personality, finding common interests will help create a more enjoyable working space and prevent any unnecessary alterations. When you create a good rapport with your coworkers they end up being more willing to open up about needing help on a particular task or having a question and vice versa helping you with a task when needed. Getting to know all of my new colleagues that I met working at The Innovation Lab has made doing the task a lot more enjoyable, especially all of the mundane repetitive tasks. In the Innovation Lab, we do STEM related events all the way from K-12. In the first week my boss had a special task for me, which was creating an elementary school's T-shirts for one of the upcoming STEM Day events. There is

a 5 machine process for creating the T-shirts. The design was already created. But to create a design there is different software on the computer used to make them. So, I upload the file to the next machine which prints out the design on a sheet. Once the design is on the sheet it goes over to the next machine that puts this fine sand-like material on the design so that it will be able to stick onto the T-shirt. Once completed you move it to the next machine that dries the ink of the design and the sand like substance onto the sheet. Then finally you use a heat press to transfer the design onto the T-shirt. That was what I was working on while my boss was showing some of the new interns around. Once they were shown around the building, and what some of the machines do and how to operate them then they came into help me with this little project. That's when I got the time to talk to get to know them. Which made the time speed up way faster. As you can imagine it's not the most complicated work, but it is very repetitive doing it for every T-shirt. I finished all the T-shirts my boss wanted me to get done 3rd- 5th graders on Thursday of that week. I asked her if she wanted me to get started on the next batch for k-2nd grade and was told that would be a task for another time. We would have to clean up the machines first. Week 2, I had two STEAM events for the iLab. The first one was for high school seniors in an engineering program. The second one was for a STEAM Day at an elementary school. I enjoy working with both the older and younger students. For the first event, we helped the students design a boat. We ran a little lab so they could see what type of boats worked the best, and the different features they had. Then the next step was to go into a CAD program and let them get familiar with the software so that they can eventually create their design. I will see the senior students again because it is a multiweek project. With the elementary school STEAM Day event, me and my colleagues met at the school. I went over the iLab early that morning to pick up all the supplies we needed. With the kids we like to use these little robots called shero's. They are robots that we

code to control. First, I had to show my colleges how they worked. The type of code is called block coding which is simple and easy for younger kids to understand but they still need to use math and angles to get it to move. I would say 3rd-5th graders are the targeted age range for those types of things. It's so fun seeing the kids get all excited about coding a robot. This past week we were working with kindergarteners. The idea of their field trip to the iLab was to help them be creative and help them bring their ideas to life. The kindergarteners would create these shape monsters, many had cool designs for their age. Then we would take a picture of their design and upload it to a program onto the computer so a laser cutter could cut out their design. The laser cutter we used is to cut out wood. Working with 5 year olds to be creative isn't much work at all because it comes natural to them but getting them to pay attention is a whole other story. This past week what I've learned was more about patience and I enjoyed every minute interacting with them. It's events like these that help ignite a passion about STEAM learning for them. I finished out the week working on making more T-shirts, finishing our T-shirt project completely.

Professor Interview

The professor I chose to interview was Dr. Korb. I am enrolled in his Cyber War class. This was a class I wanted to take this class for a while and, I am finally glad I had the chance to during my last semester here at ODU.

Dr. Korb explained that his path into the cyber and IT field was not a traditional one. He was originally a graduate student in international studies at ODU starting in 2015. After the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election, he became more interested in cyber topics, especially disinformation, internet culture, and how online activity can influence politics. Over time, his interests expanded into cyber warfare as a whole. He worked closely with other professors on research projects and cybersecurity conferences, which helped him build experience in the field. While finishing his

dissertation in 2024, he was offered a teaching position. According to Dr. Korb, having knowledge in both cybersecurity and international relations is important for someone in this field. However, he emphasized that critical thinking is even more important. Being able to connect these two areas and explain how they influence each other is a key part of his job. He also stated that it is important to explain complex topics in a way that people without a technical background can understand. Dr. Korb identified several soft skills that are important in his role, including empathy, creativity, digital literacy, and self-discipline. He explained that he wants his students to succeed and does his best to support them when they need help. Creativity is important when finding different ways to help students understand the material. Digital literacy helps him recognize credible sources and identify disinformation. Self-discipline is also necessary to stay engaged with students, especially in an online course setting. When discussing technical skills, Dr. Korb said that strong writing and organizational skills are the most important. These skills help him plan his courses and clearly communicate information to students. Advanced technical skills are less important for his specific role, but basic computer skills and familiarity with online learning platforms are still required. For students who want to become professors, Dr. Korb recommended starting as a teaching assistant or research assistant. These positions allow students to gain experience working with faculty, learning how courses are run, and interacting with students. He also mentioned that these opportunities can be competitive, so students should apply as soon as they become available.