Reflection on Preliminary PDP and Future Applications

The preliminary Professional Development Plan (PDP) provided a structured framework to set and achieve my goals for this semester. Overall, the goals I set were ambitious yet realistic, effectively aligning with my long-term career aspirations in AI research and development. They included measurable milestones such as presenting at academic seminars, improving public speaking skills, and networking with professionals in the AI field. Reflecting on these, the balance of the goals felt "just right"—challenging enough to push my limits without becoming overwhelming.

Tracking goal completion through detailed action steps and timelines was a key strength of the PDP. I consistently monitored progress, such as preparing for a seminar presentation by rehearsing multiple times and attending workshops to refine my delivery. This method of goal tracking not only kept me on schedule but also provided a sense of accomplishment when milestones were met. While I did not explicitly use rewards, the intrinsic motivation of seeing tangible progress sufficed to maintain momentum.

An important aspect of my PDP was adaptability. For example, I explored opportunities in interdisciplinary research after realizing the broader applications of AI through informational interviews and academic conferences. This pivot allowed me to learn more about AI applications in healthcare and finance, areas I had not previously considered.

One area for improvement could be incorporating clearer intermediate rewards to celebrate progress. While I met most goals this semester, some, like conducting informational interviews, required more deliberate scheduling and networking. These experiences were insightful, albeit challenging, especially when balancing them with academic and project responsibilities.

Overall, the preliminary PDP remains highly relevant to my career objectives. Sharing it with mentors and receiving feedback has further validated its direction and execution. Moving forward, I plan to continue leveraging the PDP format, refining it as needed to accommodate new insights and opportunities. The process has been immensely beneficial in instilling discipline, fostering professional growth, and ensuring alignment between short-term tasks and long-term ambitions. I can envision using a similar framework to set and achieve career milestones in the future, ensuring sustained progress in my journey toward becoming a leader in AI research.